SOCIAL MEDIA, PROTEST AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES: 2010 TO 2017

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is an original report of my work. It has been written by me and not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university. All the sources I have consulted for this thesis have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Jeremiah M. and Doris N. Maseko. Thank you for everything.

ABSTRACT

This study's central focus is to assess how various classes of people in in distinct localities across Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in citizen participation concerning municipal governance processes. While largely drawing on interviews, the study also uses quantitative descriptive data. While some scholars believe that social media use will contribute to civic decline, others think that it has a role to play in re-invigorating civic life. This study has found that there is a gap in understanding important differences in the ways various classes in different contexts mobilise and adapt social media and that the capacity of the "poor" and their social movements to engage as collective citizens using social media has been understated. The wealthy social movements rely more on litigation and money power. Each social group adapts social media to suit its socio-political imperatives and context. South Africa's major municipalities still lean towards traditional spaces of citizen participation and bureaucratic insulation. I argue that social media in the hands of these municipalities is unlikely to deepen democracy.

Keywords: Citizen participation, classes, social movements, local government, democracy, social media, youth, South Africa.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBRRA	Camps Bay and Clifton Ratepayers and Residents Association
OUTA	Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
ANC	African National Congress
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
NDP	National Development Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
PPU	Public Participation Unit
NPO	Non-profit organisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the political uses of social media in the context of South Africa's uneven social landscape and conflicted history. While this study's central focus is to assess how city managers and various classes of citizens in Cape Town and Johannesburg mobilise social media in citizen participation, it sees politics as a term that encompasses almost all facets of life including the personal domain. It draws on theories that explore the complex and dynamic links between local democracy, development, and social media, using mainly qualitative data based on interviews. The study argues for more localised research looking at specific geographically defined classes, social knowledges, social networks, and content that develops in networks.

Local government has been a site of intense class and racial mobilisation as both elite ratepayers and the poor and working-class have revolted and mobilised using social media in various ways and for often opposed reasons. This study draws on interviews with officials from the Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities, the biggest metros in South Africa. Additionally, representatives of South African civic organisations such as Camps Bay and Clifton Rate Payers and Residents Association (CBRRA), Seskhona, Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse, formerly Opposition to Urban Tolling Alliance (OUTA), South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), and youth focus groups have also been interviewed and compared for this study. It is hoped that more understanding of localised meaning and content can emerge showing that democracy itself has different modalities and meanings in different places (Camps Bay and Khayelitsha for example).

This chapter sets out this study's rationale, nature, and scope and outlines its overall structure. The background and conceptual apparatus for this study are briefly introduced in this chapter. Further discussions on the research question and sub-questions are presented, including discussions on the overview of research and design, the study's limitations, ethics statement, working definitions of commonly used terms as they pertain to this study, and an overview of its chapters.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Since 1994, the South African government claims to have made strides in uniting the country, consolidating democracy, non-racialism, and delivering basic services, but many contest the durability and depth of these changes (Garman and Wasserman, 2017; World Bank Report, 2018) while others refer to a neoliberal crisis at the local level with neoliberal forms of governance, privatisation, cost recovery and cut-offs (McDonald and Pape, 2002; Ruiters, 2018). The end of apartheid and the introduction of a legal framework, such as the Constitution of 1996, formally ensured everyone's right to vote in free and fair democratic elections in a non-racial South Africa. Access to services also ostensibly meant that all "races"[1] could potentially live as fulfilled and active citizens in a unitary state (Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, more than two decades after a racist apartheid regime that trapped many people in poverty and racialised spaces was ousted, the country still faces enormous developmental, nation-building, socio-spatial inequality, and structural challenges. The economic and spatial inequality gap and social exclusion continue to widen and have, led to protracted, widespread violent disruptive protests inside and outside of black townships and cities. More than half the country still lives below the national poverty line and the nation's wealth remains in the hands of a small elite (World Bank Report, 2018). Trust between the state and citizens and faith in representative democracy has waned. The two biggest Metros – Johannesburg and Cape Town have both experimented with neoliberal models of service delivery: already in the early 1990s, Johannesburg openly introduced IGOLI 2002 supported by Treasury, whereas Cape Town has introduced neoliberal reforms by stealth (McDonald, 2012).

At the local and ward level, which is a central tier of the state for implementing citizen participation in local government, general challenges to engagement, spatial service delivery inequalities in housing, and service delivery remain profound. They include the persistent *defacto* spatial apartheid (in various forms; housing transport, private schools, etc) high unemployment, poverty, competition for educational resources and health services, high population densities in black areas, crime, gangsterism, vandalism of public infrastructure, illiteracy, and substance abuse (Turok, 2001; Human Sciences Research

[1]The term "race" in this study refers to political projects and all the constructions and naturalisations of various groups in South Africa. The invention of race has been a major issue. Race is defined as social and politically constructed not as a biological concept (SA History, 2018).

Council, 2015; Ruiters, 2018). In this context, there is a significant scholarly gap in understanding the rapidly changing modes of (mis)communication between the neoliberalising state and citizens given new media, and citizen-to-citizen communication and mobilisation among different classes of people. There are also paradoxes in the use of new media that need to be better understood since the conventional view mostly sees the digital divide as a central issue rather than how empirically the poor and wealthy use social media and how the state uses it to subvert democracy. The issues of classes, forms of power and residential differences (townships vs suburbs) and forms of communication and participation have been neglected.

The study draws on an eclectic definition of class, following Alexander et al. (2013) whose important work on Soweto combined different theoretical traditions ranging from Marx to Weber in ways that fit the South African context. In this thesis, the term "class" has a stronger geographical/neighbourhood inflexion. As Alexander (2013: 4) explains,

> A worker might be materially and culturally "better off" than somebody regarded as 'poor', but workers and the poor tend to share households and neighbourhoods, a person can be a worker one day and "poor" the next (and vice versa), and disposable income is linked to household demographics. The idea of habitus fits … with people holding multiple class identifications.

In terms of understanding the state, I draw on Philip Abram's prescient observation (1988: 62) that studying the state is one of the hardest tasks for scholars.

> Any attempt to examine politically institutionalised power at close quarters is, in short, liable to bring to light the fact that an integral element of such power is the quite straightforward ability to withhold information, deny observation and dictate the terms of knowledge.

The state for Abram essentially is a closed bureaucracy that obfuscates, provides partial information, and dissimulates with spin doctoring, gimmicks, and its own inwards interests regarded as primary.

Regarding handling or formulating a response to protests, South African local governments are typically caught between two stools. Firstly, they struggle to see protest as rational and legitimate, and secondly, they insist that protestors follow "proper, legal or official" communication channels such as the ward committees, public hearings - also referred to as "invited spaces of participation" (Miraftab, 2009). Furthermore, it has been observed that the government's responses to citizen participation are often symbolic and a bureaucratic "tick box" exercise (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015).

The South African government maintains with some degree of truth that improved citizen participation and communication in local government is the key to addressing some of the economic and social challenges that remain post-1994 (Miraftab, 2009). Yet, a rather limited concept of the citizen and participation is invoked. Meanwhile, due to the limited success or lack of interest in using official platforms, citizens have continued to invent new spaces of mobilisation, political communication, and protest. These "invented spaces" often include new media, new flows of information, and social media (Miraftab, 2009). In rethinking participation, Garman and Wasserman (2017), suggest that where citizens are still marginalised and cannot fully participate, such as in modern-day South Africa, protest should be taken seriously as a legitimate form of political expression. Furthermore, they argue that the media still plays an important role in representing the voices of the marginalised.

Social media is a broad term that is not easily understandable and may involve applications and social networking sites such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009). Furthermore, these platforms are interactive where users share, co-create and exchange content, sometimes in real-time (Church and De Oliveira, 2013). For purposes of this study, social media will refer mostly to Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp.

Certain significant case studies in the South African context will also be used to illustrate the roles of social media in organising groups of citizens in Cape Town and Johannesburg. These include the so-called "poo protests" of 2010 in Cape Town and the ongoing billing crisis in Johannesburg that now spans almost two decades. In the latter, a non-profit, middle-class civil rights organisation called OUTA emerged. The organisation is an anti-corruption advocacy organisation now operating nationwide and focused on dealing with maladministration and corruption at all levels of government (national, provincial, and national) (https://www.outa.co.za/vision-mission, accessed 28 March 2021). Furthermore, how the administrations of the two metropolitan municipalities seek to use social media as a counter to popular movements will also be comparatively explored.

The study period was selected because it represents the most current and completed financial cycle in two of South Africa's biggest metropolitan municipalities. It covers the period 2010 to 2017 because it is in line with the five-year development plans of both metropolitan municipalities, known as the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). During this

period, significant resources are allocated in the IDP to citizenship building and participation. The IDP is a central formal mechanism for participation in South African local government policy, but a major challenge is that formal processes of representative democracy are often not meaningful for all citizens, especially the poor (Tapscott, 2007).

The preparation of IDPs became a legal requirement for local councils in November 1996 in terms of the Local Government Transition Act Second Amendment Act, 1996 to create policies and guidelines for planning for local communities (Petzer et al., 2000). In the same breadth, Tshoose (2015) argues that the challenge for local government in South Africa is centred not in creating new institutions to promote public participation, but on whether those in power fully embrace the concept, spirit, and intent of public participation.

In terms of the first of the two study areas, the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality has been governed by a multi-party coalition led by the main opposition political party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), since the 2006 municipal elections. The DA, which also prides itself on its political messaging, increased its share of the vote in the 2011 municipal elections to over 60 per cent, thereby giving the party a firm majority and allowing it to govern the metropolitan municipality without its former coalition partners (Republic of South Africa, 2018). Furthermore, a hung council in Johannesburg following the 2016 municipal election saw the more "modernising" DA take over the administration of the metropolitan municipality with the aid of other opposition parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The coalition between opposition parties was broken by the resignation of then DA Mayor Herman Mashaba in October 2019. Before this coalition, the metropolitan municipality was run outright by the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The changes in the administration of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality also add to the comparative dimension of this study.

Globally, social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp are having a complex impact on citizen participation in local government processes and politics as evidenced by the number of users worldwide using these platforms daily (Evans-Cowley, 2010; Twitchen and Adams, 2012; Born, 2018). For instance, Facebook had over 2 billion monthly users who spend almost an hour a day on average on the site (Born, 2018), and the numbers are still growing.

There is a big debate worldwide about social media use, the "information society", and the nature of democratic politics. Common issues relate to notions such as "counter-publics,"

online third-spaces, network logics and “pavement Internet” (Shirky, 2008; Walton, 2014). Social media has come under attack by several scholars (Day, Janus, and Davis, 2005; Boulianne, 2009 and 2015; Gladwell, 2010). They argue that citizens are surfing the Internet for frivolous, apolitical purposes instead of engaging in meaningful practical civic and political activities. These scholars predict challenging times for citizenship and see further declines in civic life.

However, others such as Shirky (2008); Diamond (2010), and Papacharissi (2010) argue that social media may have positive impacts on citizen participation. Furthermore, they say social media could serve to activate those citizens who are already pre-disposed or interested in politics or could mobilize politically inactive populations. The Black Lives Matters movement in the US for instance extensively uses media and many exposures of police brutality and racism rely on citizens who become “reporter-witnesses” (Jackson et al., 2016).

It is argued, especially by cyber-optimistic scholars such as Shirky (2008); Soriano (2013); Diamond (2010); Friedman (2007); Dahlgren (2013), Castells (2012) and others that interactivity and participation have made contemporary societies and governance *more* democratic, accountable, and open. They further argue interactivity and participation are sometimes shallow especially when used as a tick-box programme by government officials.

But given that some citizens are perceived to be more equal than others, Garman (2020: 251) raises interesting concerns:

> The central issue, which underlies all debate, argument, and engagement now in South Africa’s public sphere, I would suggest, is not so much about whether a voice is being adequately protected, but whether privileged, educated and advantaged people can listen in the ways that are being demanded of them.

The point applies forcefully to the powerful in local government who tend to play safe and game the system to meet performance targets – the staple of new public management and managerialism that distorts communication and finding better ways of involving citizens (Pollitt, 2013).

As this study will demonstrate, we need to disaggregate what we mean by the “citizen”, and focus on different modalities and forms of power exercised by different social classes vis-a-vis the state. Again there are still major challenges to the effective implementation of citizen participation in neoliberal cities in South Africa such as the way local government functions

as a revenue collector and business with highly paid elite managers who listen mainly to the wealthy ratepayers and investors (Ruiters, 2018). Neoliberal rationality reduces all human complexity and social relations, and activities into bargain-seeking and consumer exchange (McDonald and Ruiters, 2005). The issue of political will and seeing citizens, not as things particularly in disadvantaged communities as the owners of the state requires a different mindset. There is the problem that the "protesting public" may be seen as a hindrance or threat to development projects by politicians and public officials.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) argue that the term "social media" itself is broad and is not easily understood. It may involve applications and social networking sites such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. More importantly, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp (as they pertain to this study) are interactive platforms where users share, co-create and exchange content. All three platforms use instant mobile messaging applications to send real-time text messages to individuals or groups (Church and De Oliveira, 2013).

The disagreement among scholars about the use, potential, and impact of social media on civic and political engagement is critical to the research problem. While some scholars believe that social media use will contribute to civic decline by spreading inaccurate and uncivil disinformation, for instance, others think that it has a role to play in re-invigorating civic life. A prior question is why should citizens actively participate in formal policymaking and decision-making? Earlier scholars, such as Nozick (1974), use the theory of libertarianism to justify political non-participation as an individual citizen's freedom of choice. He argues that citizens have "fundamental rights to liberty" and freedom from the state. Nozick adds that government has no business coercing people to do what it wants them to do, especially if they do not harm or violate others in their choices. His view is shared by Sandel (2009), who argues that the state or government cannot enact legislation forcing people to take part in activities they do not want to especially if no one's rights are being harmed. Preiss (2016) counters that while liberal governments affirm personal responsibility as a central moral and political value, libertarian theorists write relatively little about the theory and practice of this value, making it difficult to translate in "modern-day" democracies.

The second normative question is centred on the significance of citizen participation/abstentionism in politics and governance and which innovative technologies could enable it and what forms of participation/non-participation need consideration? In 2014, the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) said, in a study, that it was worried about the number of South Africans declining to exercise their right to vote (News24, 2014). Of all the 25.3 million eligible voters in the 2014 national and provincial election in South Africa, 43 per cent did not vote (Dailymaverick, 2019a). The SAIRR study also found that while 86 per cent of eligible voters cast their ballot in the 1994 national and provincial election, by 2009, that figure had fallen to 70 per cent due to various issues such as perceived corruption in government and lack of accountability by public officials. South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), for instance, has been trying to change the public's perceptions around voting using innovative technologies such as Twitter and Facebook to keep voters up to date about developments in the voting process as they happen. Yet, it is precisely during this period that South Africa became the "protest capital of the world" and forms of violent insurrectionist protest started to re-emerge (Bond and Mottiar, 2013; Alexander, 2010). South Africa is caught in a paradox of declining electoralism and pavement politics (Bundy, 1987) and direct-action protests (Alexander, 2010). In these protests, such as the 2015 Fees-Must-Fall protests, social media, and technology, as well as physical occupation of strategic spaces (2015 steps-of-Parliament protests, dumping of poo in public spaces in Cape Town in 2013, the continuous blocking of roads, etc), play a big role as sites of projecting and broadcasting the protests.

A third contested area is public administration scholarship such as (Pollit 2011; Denhardt and Denhardt 2011) and critiques of New Public Management, which address issues such as power and hierarchy in governance, effective service delivery, and meaningful citizenship. New Public Management advocates business-like government in which public administrators behave entrepreneurially towards "customers" not citizens. Social media could enable customer-driven citizenship through customer surveys for example. The problem in the literature is that too much emphasis is placed on the power of the media platforms and less on the users. While there are many studies of social media usage and social movements, few compare the ways the rich and poor mobilise and how social media gets localised.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES

The main research question of this study is as follows,

- In which ways do social media enhance or devalue the participation of different groups of citizens in local government in Cape Town and Johannesburg?

The following sub-questions drive this thesis,

- How does the local state use social media to draw citizens into democratic forms of governance?
- How do different groups of citizens view social media as a productive platform for their participation?
- How do various classes and communities in Cape Town and Johannesburg mobilise and utilise social media in interactions with their respective city administrations and political representatives?
- How do the City of Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities and their leaders use the feedback obtained from social media platforms, particularly given that they are run by different political parties?
  How does social media complement other modes of communication channels and what is the range of media and combinations that are used?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has both practical and theoretical significance for five reasons. Firstly, the results/findings of this study will allow scholars and local government organisations in South Africa to improve their services to the public and to interrogate dominant narratives about how different classes engage in media citizenship. Generalisations about social media need to be qualified by the differences in the way different classes and socio-spatial milieus as well as older as opposed to younger people, or males and females use of social media. This study is not definitive but suggestive.

Secondly, it builds upon various studies by scholars such as Wasserman (2020); Bagul and Bytheway (2013); Chiumbu and Ligaga (2013) that have previously focused on the use of and impact of social media on protest and citizen participation at the local level and seeks to complement existing research in the field.

Thirdly, it is hoped that the findings of this study will help to rethink differentiated citizenship (Young, 1999; 2000) amid growing concerns about acutely violent service delivery protests. As Kymlicka (1996: 158) notes citing Young,

> special representation rights should be extended to “oppressed groups” because they are at a disadvantage in the political process, and “the solution lies at least in part in providing institutionalized means for the explicit recognition and representation of oppressed groups.

An important element, however, is the citizen-to-citizen interface and new media which reveals many interesting paradoxes. For example, poor communities are often incredibly inventive and knowledgeable in social media against the dominant narrative, which only stresses the digital divide and underestimates the agency of the impoverished classes.

Fourthly, this study hopes to contribute to the theoretical understanding of how social media (Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp) are changing/intensifying societal relationships between organisations and individual citizens, and how these generate new forms of value.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses mostly qualitative methods to determine whether and how the various groups of people and communities in Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in protest and citizen participation. A total of 48 in-depth and semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews formed the basis for this study. Information and interviewees came from a variety of sources and movements including officials from the Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities, Seskhona, SANCO, CBRRA, OUTA, and some youth focus groups. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were also favoured for this study because, they allow interviewees to add new issues and become active in the knowledge creation process and are useful to “find out what issues are of most concern for a community or group when little or no information is available” (Morgan, 1996).

The research participants included high-level municipal officials and civic organisations and their office bearers operating in the two metropolitan municipalities. In gathering rich qualitative data, some of the research participants were encouraged to talk about their real-life experiences using a form of “contemporary storytelling” (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998). Other data collection methods included direct and indirect observation, examining many documents, and following issues typically discussed on social media, protests, and citizen

participation. A detailed overview of the methodological choices made in this study and the procedures used to answer the main research question and sub-questions is provided in Chapter 4 of this study.

STUDY AREAS DEFINED

The **City of Cape Town** is divided into 24 subcouncils as seen in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: City of Cape Town subcouncils

Source: City of Cape Town (2020)

The city defines a subcouncil as, “a geographically defined area within the city which is made up of between three and six neighbouring wards” (City of Cape Town, 2020:1). Furthermore, the city argues that subcouncils exist to ensure that issues affecting communities are easily heard so they can be dealt with by authorities. These issues include

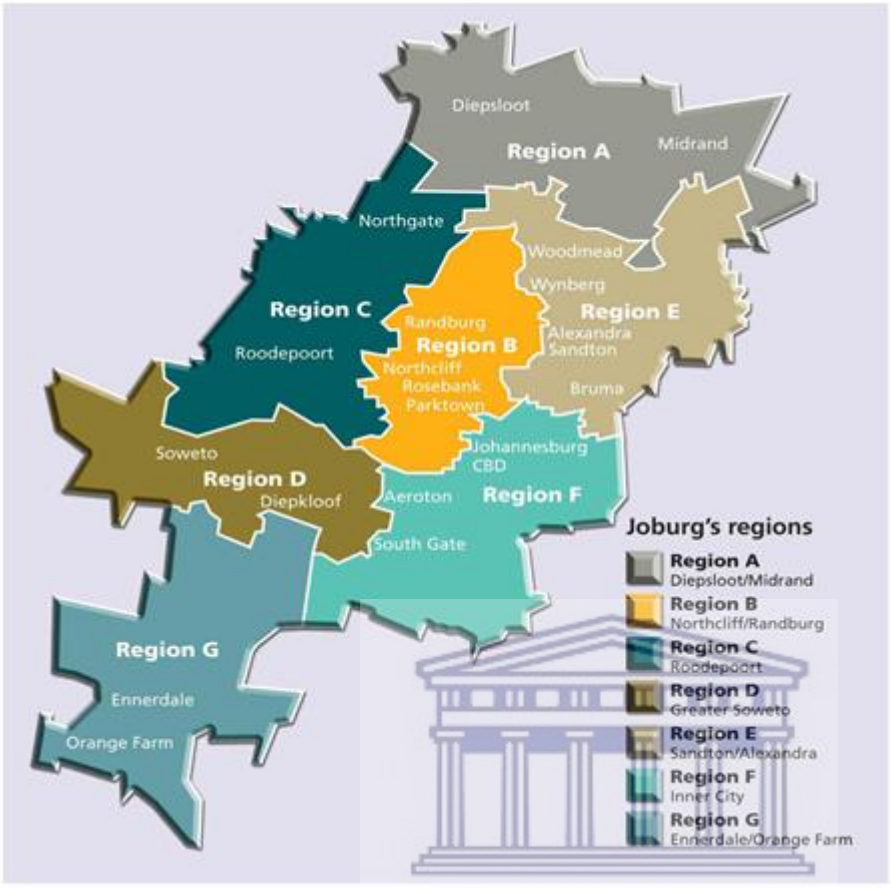
governance issues, service delivery requests, building and planning applications, fault reporting, and other matters. In the context of enabling citizen participation, subcouncils will hold meetings once a month, or whenever an urgent issue arises and needs immediate attention (City of Cape Town, 2020).

The City of Cape Town is governed by a DA majority (Democratic Alliance, 2019). The DA unseated the ANC in the August 2016 local election after the ANC had run the municipality since apartheid ended in 1994 (Democratic Alliance, 2019). Citizens living in Cape Town are served by the respective metropolitan municipality and the DA provincial government. These two levels of government often have complimentary, but sometimes overlapping responsibilities (Foli and Van Belle, 2015). It is worth noting that in Cape Town, the DA runs both the province and the metropolitan municipality and so it is easier for the party to manage the delivery of services at the provincial and local level as they ascribe to the same DA policies. Cape Town's population in 2020 was estimated at over 4.6 million, making the city South Africa's second-most populous after Johannesburg (World Population Review, 2020).

In an opinion piece penned in 2021, writer and political economist Ismail Lagardien warned that, "Perception may be the biggest problem with the DA. They are perceived to be an exclusively white party that looks after white interests (most of whom vote for the DA) and are blamed for everything that goes wrong in Cape Town, or wherever they govern." He also argues that despite falling short of an "outstanding" record at municipal level backed by audit reports of sound financial accountability, the DA has not served the people of black townships very well ravaged by squalor and poverty. "Intellectual honesty compels us to accept that the sprawl and spread of informal settlements, the destruction of infrastructure (especially railway lines, train stations and rolling stock) are a national problem" (Lagardien, 2021: 1).

The **City of Johannesburg** is divided into seven service delivery regions as shown in Figure 2 below. In 2016 it had more than 1,8 million households with 18 per cent of its 4,9 million residents living in shacks (RSA, Community Survey 2016).

Figure 2: Map of Johannesburg sub-councils



Source: City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (2020)

Johannesburg is a divided city with glaring disparities between the geographically split north which is rich and the poor South (Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, 2018). Sandton lies north of Johannesburg and had a population of 222, 415 according to the 2011 Census (Republic of South Africa, 2011) with Soweto having over 1.2 million. Sandton is one of South Africa's most affluent areas, with many square kilometres of prestigious business and office space set among tall trees, green areas, and golf courses. Black densely populated townships still lack basic services and live-in squalor (Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, 2018).

In 1999 Johannesburg Metro became the site of a neoliberal restructuring exercise called iGoli 2002. The iGoli 2002 plan as Harvey (2005: 122) explains was meant to "deal with its financial and organizational crises (and) according to its architects, was to radically change the Metropolitan Council's overall organisational form to create "independent ringfenced units." Moreover, the city "believed that only by separating various departments into

independent ringfenced units, driven by hard budget constraints, would performance improve". Corporatisation also appeared to open for specific focussed "customer" management and profiling as well as greater autonomy and flexibility for these commercialised units. Citizenship as an identity was interpolated overnight as "customership".

ETHICS STATEMENT

As this is a qualitative study, the researcher sought to avoid harm to participants, although some phenomena studied might be sensitive. The researcher undertook to always protect the anonymity of respondents. He also applied for ethical clearance to conduct this study from the relevant Ethical Committee in the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty of the University of Western Cape.

Since the study also dealt with social media research using Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, the researcher was keenly aware of ethical concerns around using these platforms. The concerns centred around the research method on vulnerable groups, reporting and handling data, particularly when it came to issues of invasion of privacy, consent, maintaining the anonymity of respondents, and traceability of data. The researcher followed the ethical guidelines always set down by the university and sought the advice of his supervisor, where necessary. Chapter 2 will give a global view of the literature and key debates.

CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this chapter critically explores global literature and debates related to key concepts. The first section introduces the reader to critical theory and concepts in this field of study, including explaining some of the historical and contemporary debates about communications technology and politics. This chapter reviews the literature to intellectually justify the contribution of this study, contextualise the main research question, and advance our understanding of the phenomenon to be examined. It also provides an overview of the existing secondary sources that have been consulted by the researcher. The second section of this chapter covers the main concepts and themes in the international literature by introducing the reader to a central debate comparing and contrasting the views of "cyber-optimists" against those of "cyber-pessimists" and "cyber-realists". It also incorporates debates about key terms such as public spaces for political participation and social media. The third section covers the literature from a South African perspective and explains the concept of urban politics using the local context.

Cyber-optimists think of the Internet as one of the biggest tools for democratisation and political freedom. Researchers, governments, and citizens alike, it is argued, have little choice, and must embrace new technological changes and try and incorporate them into their programmes and policies in a fast-changing world. Embracing new technology does not mean that citizens should discard their old beliefs, values, and morals. It means that they should accept new ways of doing things and must be able to adapt to an advanced technological world.

In this study, a democratic society suggests that people will be involved in decision-making through elections and citizen participation. Democratic citizenship is about the active involvement of citizens in governance (Sandel, 1996, cited by De Vries, 2018). Sandel also argues that citizens are not just voters or customers but share authority and collaborate with administrators in a democratic society. For example, local government councillors are elected directly by residents to represent their interests in the local council.

Citizen participation on social media can happen in all spheres of government, including the national, provincial, and local levels. The local level is favoured because of the notion shared by Ekelin (2007), Panopoulou et al. (2009), and others that it is easier to raise issues

and awareness about government programmes at this level. Moreover, they argue that it is also easier to rally support around local issues than for national issues. It seems that the problem in countries such as South Africa is that a lot of mobile participation initiatives were designed with national or provincial issues in mind and not with issues at the local level of government (Ekelin, 2007).

According to Denhardt and Denhardt (2000), traditional hierarchical approaches to citizen participation globally were top-down and limited in their focus on employees of local government and citizens. They proposed a new public service/government with seven broad key principles that would hopefully improve citizen participation to include more people at the local level. The principles include helping citizens to articulate and meet their demands instead of trying to control the participation process; contributing towards creating shared interest and responsibility and not seeking to find instant solutions for individual choices; working through collaborative processes; serving citizens and not just responding to the demands of customers. Denhardt and Denhardt (2000), therefore, argue that a new public service/government has the dual task to transform the public space into a democratic institution that values all citizens while improving the capacity of municipalities to play a developmental role. Being a young democracy, the opportunity for new initiatives and practices, such as using social media to foster citizen participation, still exists in South Africa's public administration space.

People who read the same newspapers, for instance, see themselves as being part of the same public sphere, but that public sphere ceases to exist when social media is introduced as it is individualistic or confined to an in-crowd. Van Krieken (2016) argues that the public sphere is a concept that is central to the study of the media because of the idea that media plays a role as a facilitator of democracy. The Habermasian concept of a public sphere is important in helping scholars to understand how citizens can be able to use online platforms to interact with their political representatives to address some of these social challenges mentioned above, as well as ensure accountability and transparency in local government processes. Supporters of such a vision insist that the unique interactive characteristics of social media could effectively help to further legitimise democratic processes in many countries (Blumler and Gurevitch, 2000; Dahlberg, 2001). Derived from the normative Habermasian public-sphere theory, optimistic views of democratic theory suggest that the Internet might encourage the development of an alternative space essential for participatory democracy (Otto, Fourie, and Froneman, 2007).

Understanding the concept of the public sphere is critical to contextualising the above debates. For starters, Chiumbu and Ligaga (2013) argue that the public sphere concept is widely used to analyse social media participation and deliberation, a key focus area of this study. It is also fundamental to analysing government programmes/processes and the operations of civil society in liberal democracies (Willems, 2012). The public sphere concept has been at the heart of communication studies and political discussions for a long time (Bruns and Highfield, 2015). It dates to the rising urban middle class of the modern late 18th Century and is seen as a domain of social life where public opinion can be formed (Habermas, 1991a). In a public sphere, "the citizen plays the role of a private person who is not acting on behalf of a business or private interests but as one who is dealing with matters of *general interest* to form a public sphere" (Mwengenmeir, 2013: 1). There is no intimidating force behind the public sphere, but its citizens assemble and unite freely to exchange opinions based on argument and rational persuasion. In a public sphere, state power is considered as public power partly legitimised through public opinion (Habermas, 1991a). Habermas (1989) sees the public sphere as a connection between public life and civil society. He argues that in an ideal world, the public sphere emerges as a neutral social space in which private members of the public can engage in debate about important social issues and social life (Van Krieken, 2016).

Friedland, Hove, and Rojas (2006) also argue that a public sphere involves mediated communication that relies on print and electronic mass media. It circulates in the elite discourse produced by professionals such as journalists, editors, producers, and publishers. Furthermore, the public sphere dominates political communication in general because only the mass media can publish information, worldviews, and opinions to large numbers of people across vast distances (Friedland, Hove, and Rojas, 2006). This dominance, however, has both advantages and disadvantages. Given his initial ideas on the public sphere, Habermas himself has revisited the concept to revise and update it to match changes (Van Krieken, 2016; Mwengenmeir, 2013). This is because, according to Mwengenmeir (2013), Habermas' liberal model of a public sphere does not exist in industrially advanced modern democracies of the 21st Century. For example, Habermas himself admitted that the participation of women and the inclusion of minorities in political processes were not guaranteed by his earlier model of the 18th Century which was centred on "class" as the basis for participation and deliberation on issues of public concern (Mwengenmeir, 2013. Following his revision of the public sphere concept in his *Theory of*

Communicative Action at the beginning of the 21st Century, Habermas (1992) came to appreciate "popular cultural subversion of hierarchical relations."

The public sphere acts as a separate space to the economy and the state and discussions take place freely and democratically to generate public opinion and attitudes (Habermas, 1991b). Furthermore, Habermas argues that public opinion can either be used to generate support or challenge the operations of the state. Regardless of the opinion held by the individual, public opinion serves to influence the state's decision. Social media is, therefore, seen as a communicative infrastructure in an ideal public sphere that can facilitate the free flow of information and ideas, enable the deliberation of issues of public concern, and the transmission of public will to the authorities (Johannessen, Sæbø and Flak, 2016). Authorities are then held accountable for their actions using social media (Van Krieken, 2016). He further adds that,

> Despite the fact that the public sphere was initially dominated by the bourgeoisie, Habermas believes that the ideal public sphere is accessible to all regardless of their class positions. He contends that it is not class that binds participants to the public sphere, and binds them together, but the mutual will to discuss issues that are in the public interest. Indeed, for Habermas, the very success of the public sphere depends upon robust rational critical debate in which everyone is an equal participant and has equal opportunities to convince others of the strengths of their arguments. He notes a number of factors that are necessary for its success, including the extent of access that people have to the public sphere, the degree of autonomy that they hold, the absence of hierarchy, the quality of participation, and the rule of law" (Van Krieken, 2:49-3.33).

According to Van Krieken (2016), Habermas has also noted that in modern times, the principles of the ideal public sphere are in decline as the public is no longer made up of individuals. It is now made up of organisations that institutionally exert their influence on the public sphere and debate. This, Van Krieken, further argues, has led to the weakening of the bonds of members of the public. The changing structure and role of the media have also led to this decline.

Habermas' deliberative public sphere, although influential in communication theory, has been severely criticised for its white male-dominance and not accounting for the exclusion of certain groups, especially the poor, in public participation. Some scholars such as Schreiber (2017) argues that the exclusion of the poor and women means that public participation (whether traditional or online) is limited. These scholars suggest that multiple public spheres are perhaps a solution to the problem of exclusion discussed above. Putnam (2000:35) further argues that for the less privileged, access to public life has come through events such as protests. He also says voter participation alone does mean communities are

less engaged but declining electoral participation are a true sign of disengagement from community life. Democracy, warns Dahlgren (2009), ultimately thrives where citizens interact with those in power.

In trying to broadly understand the relationship between technology and society, two important theorists, namely Marshall McLuhan and Raymond Williams, can be first considered. According to Taylor (n.d.), these two scholars exemplify both ends of the debate on the "significance of the medium of communication versus the message delivered." McLuhan, on one hand, argues for technological determinism and the structural priority of form or medium over content -- a view contends that media technologies such as social media shape people and revolutionise culture and society (Smith and Marx, 1994). Social networks are, therefore, affected by the medium/platform used to convey the content (Strate, 2017). Williams, on the other hand, argues for social constructivism. It argues that the impacts of communication technologies are culturally and socially constructed (Jones, 1998). According to Freedman (2002), in social constructivism, it is argued by Williams that society shapes technology by determining its usefulness or uselessness. Furthermore, its development and use are a matter of political and social choice (Taylor, n.d.). He also argues that both scholars agree that communication technology changes the world. Specifically, the emergence of new media has altered the way people understand and perceive the world.

Contemporary organisations operate in an environment characterised by extensive use of the Internet, disruptive technologies, and in particular digital media (Strate, 2017). Buying behaviour, for instance, has evolved rapidly as many people purchase products online rather than in physical stores as evidenced by giant global retailers such as Amazon. William's position is that society (in this case capital) shapes how technology applies in such an environment. The concept extends to decisions made in the adoption and development of existing and emerging media technologies (Laing, 1991). Thus, people and organisations are *forced* into using some new media technologies.

In the digital age, the overall methods of communication (the medium/platform and the media) influence both how and what people think (Taylor, n.d.). Bandura (2006) argues that in human-technology relationships, people delegate tasks such as birthday reminders, alarm clocks, and appointment calendars to their electronic devices and often see these devices as their personal assistants and companions rather than simple tools (Neff and

Nagy, 2018). According to Haraway (1991), her cyborg manifesto written in 1985 articulates that human bodies are inseparable from machines and the Internet has deeply changed human consciousness, thinking, imagination, and human psychology. She argues that the essentialist idea of an authentic original “human nature” has been deeply challenged as possible futures beckon.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

There are many types of democracies and many types of democrats. “Though contemporary Western scholars and practitioners of democracy have tended to repeat a particular set of narratives and discourses, recent research shows us that there are in fact hundreds of different adjectives of democracy” (Gagnon and Chou, 2013:1). He adds that what one theorist, political leader, or nation invokes as democracy, others may label it as something altogether different.

According to Gagnon and Chou (2013), there are two theoretical frameworks of democracy: procedural democracy and substantive democracy. They argue that substantive democracy focuses on the socio-economic conditions of the people. The bulk of scholars of democracy focus on procedural democracy. Procedural democracy examines the institutional arrangements for instance, the holdings of elections, public participation, rule of law, and the supremacy of the constitution, etc. It is associated with liberal democracy and separation of powers rather than popular control. Sometimes political scientists refer to procedural democracy as a minimalist school of thought (Steyn-Kotze, 2011).

Flew (2011) advances the idea that traditional theories of citizenship such as the one developed by Marshall (civil, political, and social) lack a meaningful connection with recent developments related to the explosion of media. He developed the concept of “media citizenship” which has yet to be fully integrated into political theory. Flew (2011) observes three trends in media citizenship debates: the first is the traditional public service broadcaster (PSB) concept where a state-owned national entity serves the public interest by providing information to facilitate enlightened citizen choices and debates – much like the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation). The second is the commercial idea of citizens as consumers, which works “with the totality of media representations—ranging from information to entertainment—to

understand how they shape contemporary subjectivities, and to identify elements of citizen formation" (Flew 2011: 219). The third is a bottom-up media citizenship where citizens generate their own news through social media and other formats. Along these lines, Miller et al. (2019: 184) suggests,

> Initially Facebook was dismissed as something trivial for young people, but after that iconic moment when mothers began to send friend requests to their children, the platform changed into a place thoroughly populated by kinship. This meant that the prior separation of peers from relatives was dissolved. Later other people, such as those who worked together or lived near one another, also felt it was appropriate to friend on Facebook.

DEMOCRATIC LISTENING IN MEDIA AND PARTICIPATORY POLITICS

Several scholars such as Beckford (1996), Dreher (2017), Crawford (2009) and Newton (2011) have vowed for the concept of democratic listening as they believe that our ability to listen to other viewpoints is critical to making informed policy. They argue that a focus on listening is also important in the development of democratic theory and meaningful democratic deliberation. This section will explore democratic listening in media and participatory politics sighting the works of some of these scholars above.

According to Beckford (1996), while the role of shared speech in political action has received much theoretical attention, too little thought has focused on the practice of listening in political interaction, especially in face-to-face interactions. She argues that political listening is central to the development of democratic theory. Beckford's argument is taken on further by scholar Tanja Dreher who argues that,

> Democracy is commonly associated with finding a voice, speaking up and out, making oneself heard. The crucial role of listening in this process is often neglected or merely given lip-service. Listening is important for voice to operate not only as speech but as communication. It is an important theme in both democracy and media studies particularly in a time characterised by increasing opportunities for communication in both online and offline settings. (Dreher, 2017)

Dreher, therefore, argues that listening brings democracy to life and makes people feel valued and respected because their ideas and inputs are being heard. Listening is good for participation because it contributes to innovation and encourages new ideas from participants (Newton, 2011). According to Dreher (2009), paying attention to listening also results in important questions being asked about media and multiculturalism and how media enables or constrains listening in different societies. She argues that to highlight listening

also shifts the focus on marginalized voices to institutions which shape what can be heard in the media.

Newtown (2011) argues that there are six main actors in democratic listening, and these are,

- Individual citizens who have important roles in expressing their voice and listening to make judgements about issues.
- Interest groups which allow people to organise themselves to be heard more clearly and represent common interests.
- Non-citizens are those who the law chooses not to recognise or protect at different times such as illegal immigrants, gays and lesbians, trans people, disabled, elderly, children, the homeless, or those who fall outside state boundaries. These people often lack the means or capacity to express their voice in a democratic arena.
- Politicians and political parties who sometimes listen to special interests or populist trends.
- Government of the day bearing in mind that each government has a capacity to listen or ignore citizens' concerns.
- Bureaucracy is a distinct actor in the democratic arena. Newtown argues that bureaucracy is what continues when governments fall and addresses critical areas of freedom of information and clarifies legislation amongst others.

The popularity of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp have increased the avenues for people to "have a voice" online (Crawford, 2009). She argues that the focus here is on people's ability to be heard by the masses and challenging the role of public organisations who previously controlled information that was fed to mass audiences. Crawford argues that,

> In Internet studies, certain forms of attention and engagement have been valued over others. In particular, much attention has been given to the concept of participation, and the value of 'speaking up' in online spaces of debate such as blogs, wikis, news sites and discussion lists. Online participation is often discussed within a frame of democratic potential, of citizens contributing their 'voice' to a wider forum and playing their part in creating an online public sphere. Participation is generally understood as posting in public or semi-public spaces, and rarely is attention given to other forms of participation, such as private email discussions, or behind-the-scenes direct messaging in social media environments (Craford, 2009: 1).

Crawford also made an important observation about politicians and their active listening online. It followed her observations after a joint Congress address by then US President Barack Obama in 2009. She says,

> For politicians, services such as Facebook and Twitter give access to millions of users and offer the capacity to build a sense of camaraderie and connection with their constituency. But as the popularity of social media increases amongst politicians, important differences are emerging in the ways in which they (and their staff) engage in these spaces. In particular, some politicians are actively listening to their friends and followers – by which I mean recognising and responding to comments – while some continue to adopt a broadcast-only model. In the case of Twitter, at the time of writing, President Obama has close to 350,000 followers, and he follows approximately 331,000. His campaign team used Twitter extensively to send updates about the location and content of speeches and rallies prior to his election. After that time, restrictions commenced in regard to presidential use of digital technologies, and updates have slowed to a trickle. Even during the times of heaviest use, Obama's campaign did not directly reply to any followers, or indicate that direct messages were being heard (Crawford, 2009: 4-5)

Crawford seems to suggest that many public organisations follow this pattern of behaviour displayed by the "Obama camp", especially once they have completed their political campaigns. They also rely on their employees to update their social media platforms while others choose to hire the services of professional micro-bloggers to craft responses online because of the busy schedules of executives. This approach effectively transfers all responsibility for engaging in a social media space to a third party. The potential of misrepresentation by third parties seems to widen in this scenario.

She further argues that while organisations outsource their responsibilities to engage online, it is still difficult to outsource the act of listening.

> When professionals are hired to simulate the presence of a company or celebrity online, they are commonly reduced to the level of an impersonal, unidirectional marketing broadcast. The benefit of being able to hear customers' views, respond to their comments and concerns, and gain insight into how the company is being discussed is sharply reduced. As Bob Pearson, vice president of communities and conversations at Dell argues: 'Quite frankly, one of the most important things we do with Twitter is listen. I don't think you can hire someone to listen for you. (Crawford, 2009: 5)

As this study is focused online, researcher and academic Amber Macintyre also added her voice to the emerging field of digital listening. She says,

> Digital listening is an umbrella term for monitoring and analysing what someone does or says on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Both the behaviour (retweeting, liking, sharing an image or commenting on a post) and the content (hashtags, tweets, posts and comments) are analysed. Companies who offer these services are able to measure which topics are being discussed among users at a given time or to monitor the sentiment of the content, such as whether people feel positively or negatively towards a candidate (Macintyre, 2019)

She argues that traditionally, political strategists and campaigns use events such as polls to gauge voters' opinions, digital listening technology allows this to happen quicker using fewer resources such as an individual smartphone.

CYBER-PESSIMISM, COMMUNICATIVE CAPITALISM, AND THREATS TO DEMOCRACY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

There is a growing literature pointing to the severe limits, dangers, and problems of social media. When social media platforms first emerged, many scholars predicted a positive future for the public sphere. They argue the social media effect might be a key solution for the problems of mass media under authoritarian governments and big corporations. Social media platforms were mostly start-ups by ordinary young people who wished to change the world.

Since then, the developments have not proceeded in the way which was supposed to be (Trump and fake news and other examples of commercial use of personal information provide warnings). Platforms have grown up to a dramatic extent and they also dramatically commercialised themselves. That commercialisation included their subscribers who were ordinary people from all over the world who became unknowing victims of cyber-trawling.

Valtysson (2012) warns that social media is a *pre-programmed* environment that allows for certain interactions, encourages certain behaviours, and acts, and excludes certain uses. Like all spaces, it is “saturated” with (political) power as has always been the case with the notion of the public sphere (Valtysson, 2012 and Winner, 1986). As Mitrou et al. (2014:1) argue,

> YouTube and Twitter may become a topos of participatory panopticism, an omniopticon in which the many watch the many, and can reconstruct sensitive information out of seemingly anonymous data/content. Individuals may be confronted with social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination risks both in their workplace and in their social environment. … this type of surveillance facilitates the exculpation of such penetrating and privacy-violating technologies and amplifies the threshold of societal tolerance towards a panopticon-like state of surveillance.

Other commentators have paraphrased Descartes “I think therefore I am” to “I tweet therefore I became” (Rayner, 2012). This refers to the fact that many people rely on social media to project themselves as persons and for self-definition. Social media becomes part of “performativity of the self”. Thus,

> Sharing content is not just a neutral exchange of information, however. Mostly, when we share content on social media services, we do it transparently, visibly, that is in the presence of a crowd. The act of sharing is a performance (Rayner, 2012:1).

According to Dahlgren (2005), a general international consensus emerged in the early 1990s that democracy has hit upon hard times. Therefore, this gave rise to the idea that social media would somehow have a positive impact on rejuvenating democracy and fostering citizen participation. Dahlgren (2005: 152) also argues that "The goal of ushering all citizens into one unitary public sphere, with one specific set of communicative and cultural traditions, is usually rejected on the grounds of pluralism and difference. There must exist spaces in which citizens belonging to different groups and cultures, or speaking in registers or even languages, will find participation meaningful."

However, in recent years, internal threats to democracy have increased. As Sharma (2013: 308) shows despite laws framed as the "right to know" "citizens and Indian activists are compelled to become proficient in bureaucratic literacy to audit and petition the state. Sharma shows "officials strategically alter the language and procedures of administration, shifting the interplay between writing and orality in their daily work and changing what they record and how they do so to avert scrutiny and preserve state secrecy in the age of transparency".

External forces have long tried to influence the outcome of elections more recently using the Internet (Tenove, 2017; Goldschmidt, 2013). A well-documented example is the use of technologically designed bots designed to corrupt information systems, polling, and voting in the American presidential election in 2016. The report showed that the Democratic Party's systems had been hacked as far back as July 2015. Trump eventually won the election. Foreign actors can use digital techniques to impact the outcome of governance processes in democracies in three main ways, especially during an election (Tenove, 2017). Firstly, they can use digital techniques to manipulate fair opportunities for citizen participation (such as interfering with the voting system, election databases, or contributing to public debates). Secondly to influence public deliberation, which enables citizens to share and understand each other's insights and perspectives, and thirdly, to impact the work of electoral commissions, political parties, and other organisations, including the enforcement of electoral regulations.

The distribution of fake news and the use of bots (one of the tools used to spread fake news) to manipulate democratic outcomes and public policy is, therefore, a growing concern globally (Bucataru, 2018). For example, as of May 2019, Facebook had removed more than 3 billion fake accounts on its social media platform (Associated Press, 2019). Facebook also observed a "steep increase" in the creation of abusive, fake accounts in the months from October 2018 to March 2019 (Associated Press, 2019). In 2018, Twitter and Facebook admitted that they were "far too slow" to respond to the spread of misinformation (https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-01-23-facebook-admits-social-media-threat-to-democracy/, accessed 10 February, 2019). As admitted by Facebook, the explosion of fake news arguably poses a threat to democracy and news to be tackled the problem "head-on", turning the social media platforms into a force for "good". "We're as determined as ever to fight the negative influences and ensure that our platform is unquestionably a source for democratic good," (Katie Harbath, Facebook's head of global politics and government outreach, ibid. Daily Maverick).

Authoritarian leaders prefer "uni-directional communication" compared to a "democratic preference for multi-directional social media communication—a stylistic difference" (Bulovsky, 2019: 20). Bulovsky (2019: 23) elaborates that,

> Uni-directional communication involves the projection of opinions with little to no interaction in the other direction. Conversely, multi-directional communication describes a relatively open and circular flow of discourse, with engagement of different opinions. Which communication style a leader adopts depends in large part on their regime's incentive structure.

A review of the literature that follows shows that there are polarities in the debate that goes beyond style. Cyber-pessimists argue that the most common uses of the Internet are for casual social interaction, information-searching, and email (Day, Janus, and Davis, 2005; National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2002; Nie and Erbring, 2000). Technology is being used primarily for entertainment and, therefore, citizens may have *less* time to devote to civic activities or social activities. Many people are also reliant on social media for social acceptance by measuring the number of "likes" for their posts. There is a concern that young people are less interested in democratic engagement and that young people are disengaging from traditional political institutions. In the popularized version, such concerns take the form of a *decline narrative* often expressed as "generational differences and long-held stereotypes and anxieties toward young people" (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2017: 1891).

Crucially, “Facebook, YouTube, Twitter are all commercial entities which exist to make a profit through collating user data which is willingly uploaded as content and using this to sell highly targeted advertising” (Sytaffel, n.d.: 1). Iosifidis and Wheeler (2016: 2) further argue that,

> One common characteristic among social media sites is that they are widely accessible across the corporate sector as well as socio-economic classes for free. Online social networking sites have been often perceived as revolutionary new media tools, because on the one hand they change the face of business as we know it (for example, they enable the creation of a brand name; targeted advertising marketing; and so on), and on the other they allow greater citizen participation in the dissemination of information and creation of content. The networked population is gaining greater access to information, enhanced opportunities to engage in public speech, and an ability to undertake collective action.

For instance, on the Internet, people leave data trails behind them (harvested from cookies and IP addresses) every time they interact. Big tech companies are increasingly aware of the value of this online data and identity, including the benefits of using this information for business and advertising purposes (Iosifidis and Wheeler, 2016). They also argue that,

> Every time a user searches online for the best restaurant deal or just share news with Facebook ‘friends’, or tweet to their followers, the online presence leaves cyber footprints that are collected by giant companies like Facebook, Twitter, Google, and Microsoft, providing new insight into all aspects of everyday life. This is a key to the mechanisms through which the social media extracts surplus profit and vital to their financial coordination. As social media users do not actually pay for the service, they are *the commodity* themselves, and one of the reasons online social platforms exist is because they commercially exploit people joining them, putting information and data in these. But the economics of social media actually contradicts the claim that consumers have become producers and that the current knowledge age brings greater freedom and citizen empowerment (2016: 3).

Recent cyber-pessimists (Morozov, 2011; Gladwell, 2010; Lindgren, 2017) argue the Internet may also promote reactionary and degrading processes such as child pornography, human trafficking, religious intolerance, fascism, and racism. Cyber-pessimists such as Putnam (2000); MacKenzie and Wacjcman (1999) argue that the rise of the Internet has led to a proliferation of right-wing propaganda which can result in the collapse of modern governments. Lindgren (2017) argues that the Internet has led the world to a stage where people are using search engines such as Google to look for answers to life’s problems instead of asking a friend. Cyber-pessimists question the revolutionary, democratic potential, and general benefits of social media in bringing about political change for various reasons. For example, Gladwell (2010) argues that social media platforms are built around weak ties with “friends” that one will probably never meet in real life.

According to Dean (2003), the notion of the public sphere described above is inapplicable to the Internet. In later years she also argued that the Internet is damaging to practices of democracy and its use in citizen participation fragments citizenship (Dean, 2005). Specifically, according to Dean (2003), the expansion and intensification of social media have given rise to what she termed "communicative capitalism." Dean (2003: 3-4) argues that,

> In communicative capitalism, what has been heralded as central to enlightenment ideals of democracy takes material form in new technologies. Access, information, and communication, as well as open networks of discussion and opinion-formation, are conditions for rule by the public that seem to have been realized through global telecommunications. But instead of leading to more equitable distributions of wealth and influence, instead of enabling the emergence of a richer variety in modes of living and practices of freedom, the deluge of screens and spectacles undermines political opportunity and efficacy for most of the world's people. … speed, simultaneity, and interconnectivity of electronic telecommunications networks produce massive distortions and concentrations of wealth. Not only does the possibility of super profits in the finance and services complex lead to hypermobility in capital and the devalorisation of manufacturing, but financial markets themselves acquire the capacity to discipline national governments. Similarly, within nations like the US, the proliferation of media has been accompanied by a shift in political participation. Rather than actively organized in parties and unions, politics has become a domain of financially mediated and professionalized practices centred on advertising, public relations, and the means of mass communication. Indeed, with the commodification of communication, more and more domains of life seem to have been reformatted in terms of market and spectacle….

Internet access does not automatically translate into greater access to information and resources (Meusburger, 2018). According to Sytaffel (n.d.: 1),

> While contemporary media technologies have greatly increased the ability of certain previously marginalised groups to effectively communicate their concerns and participate in mediated discourse, the material reality of information technology commodities within the network society has not seen social inequalities diminish and democratic participation increase. The digital divide exists as one of many divides between the haves and have-nots in contemporary society alongside divisions in wealth, education, health care, and technical expertise. Expecting the introduction of digital communications platforms to enact a process whereby these inequalities simply dissipate in the face of the deterministic properties of new technology is a utopian fantasy.

As Espen Aarseth (1997:67) reminds us,

> The belief that new (and ever more complex) technologies are in and of themselves democratic is not only false but dangerous. New technology creates new opportunities, but there is no reason to believe that the increased complexity of our technological lives works toward increased equality for all subjected to the technology.

Cyber-pessimists also argue that the digital divide poses a new threat to democracy (Lee, 2018). But after repeated scares around the impact of factors such as fake news, cyber-

security, and technology addiction, major social media platforms are making changes to how they sort and display content, thus impacting businesses, including governments (Lee, 2018). More and more news content, academic research and information are commodified and unavailable to the public and require a subscription. Indeed, in the wake of the scandal over the misuse of user data by Cambridge Analytica, Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have now been branded "a threat to democracy" (see *New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/us/politics/cambridge-analytica-scandal-fallout.html, accessed 30 May 2019).

At an individual level, social media can also have devastating effects. Makwana et al. (2018) argue that it can have an impact on body image, self-concept, and body dissatisfaction. It can also cause people to doubt themselves such that they may not want to participate in governance processes. "Social Media is not real life" argues McCluskey (2016). He argues that it is a means of fake self-promotion. Furthermore, social media usage can also lead to cyberbullying, especially among the youth. Typical types of bullying include aggressive and unpleasant emails, private emails, and public comments, posting unflattering and manipulated photos (Petersen, 2019).

Whilst there remain positive elements to social media, including the ability to foster and accountability and transparency between citizens and their governments, there is now a risk of negative factors surpassing these benefits. In 2019, columnist of the UK *Guardian*, Raymond Saymour also warned of another bad side of social media in the form of addiction. He wrote that many users of the various platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp) were addicted to social media at the expense of forming real human relationships and interacting with each other. Petersen (2019) further added that users were hooked on likes, retweets, hashtags, approvals, and attention which could be enough to cause them anxiety. Seymour argues that Internet users are no different from gamblers at the casino's slot machines. He stated that slot machines give gamblers what they want, and they keep going for more. Sometimes, users don't get what they want, but they still go for more.

Finally, Kruse et al. (2018), who have done empirical work, argue that in social media,

> respondents do not engage in communicative action typical of the public sphere because they avoid political discourse online. Three factors influence this: (1) fear of online harassment and workplace surveillance; (2) engagement only with politically similar others; and (3) characterization of social media as a place for "happy" interactions. In addition, we find that these three factors interrelate, often

sequentially, and we explore similarities and minor differences between Millennials and Generation Xers regarding each factor.

CYBER-OPTIMISTS

Fuchs (2014) quoting Habermas (1991b) argues that a public sphere would require horizontal communication. Cyber-optimists broadly maintain that social media has been revolutionary in enhancing political freedoms and improving dialogue and deliberative democracy. The Internet is a form of technology with "intrinsically democratic characteristics and enjoys widespread popular acceptance" (Soriano, 2013: 334), and (Oreskovich (2011) further argues that if you want to liberate a society, just give them the Internet. The Internet is potentially free of hierarchy, can allow for interaction and talking, and listening without other social clues (appearance, etc. Its "hypertextuality creates an unlimited treasure of information and a potential for education, two of the prerequisites for a rational reasoning, enlightened public" (Brants, 2006: 143). It allows for asynchronous and live interactions.

Shirky (2008) and Diamond (2010) have branded social media as "liberation technology" and "technology of freedom" which assists activist groupings in their quest to reinvigorate democratic processes. Liberation technology is defined as any form of information and communication technology that can expand political, social, and economic freedom (Diamond, 2010). He also argues that,

> Liberation technology enables citizens to report news, expose wrongdoing, express opinions, mobilize protest, monitor elections, scrutinize government, deepen participation, and expand the horizons of freedom. … Liberation technology is any form of information and communication technology that can expand political, social, and economic freedom. In the contemporary era, it means essentially the modern, interrelated forms of digital ICT—the computer, the Internet, the mobile phone, and countless innovative applications for them, including "new social media" such as Facebook and Twitter. Digital ICT has some exciting advantages over earlier technologies. The Internet's decentralized character and ability (along with mobile-phone networks) to reach large numbers of people very quickly are well suited to grassroots organizing. In sharp contrast to radio and television, the new ICTs are two-way and even multiway forms of communication. With tools such as Twitter (a social-networking Larry Diamond 71 and microblogging service allowing its users to send and read messages with up to 140 characters), a user can instantly reach hundreds or even thousands of "followers." Users are thus not just passive recipients but journalists, commentators, videographers, entertainers, and organizers. Although most of this use is not political, the technology can empower those who wish to become political and to challenge authoritarian rule (Diamond, 2010: 10).

Cautious cyber-optimists such as Dahlgren (2013) and Root (2012) argue that social media platforms potentially enhance access to information, enable citizen interactions and

facilitate discussions and opinion formation. Another, Castells (2012) argues that networked movements in modern times are based largely on the Internet. He further suggests that social media are spawning new repertoires of collective action such as in the Arab Revolution of 2011. The Arab Spring of North Africa and the Middle East gave rise to a series of demonstrations, protests, and coups that fuelled interest in how social media might affect citizens' participation in civic and political life (Boulianne, 2015).

Yochai Benkler developed the term "the networked public sphere" which refers to a cluster of technologies and practices used by people to talk to each other about important issues in their lives and society. He argues that it is a major shift from a mass-media public sphere, often controlled by governments or a small number of commercial enterprises, to a much broader forum that is accessible to many people. More importantly, Benkler argues that individuals in a *networked public sphere* enjoy increased freedoms to participate and create information and knowledge (Benkler, 2006).

Further, the Internet allows users to maintain greater anonymity and can be a beneficial tool as far as government censorship is concerned (Soriano, 2013). Whilst this sounds commonplace, it needs to be recalled that two decades ago, the idea that news could be produced by grassroots people rather than professionals, such as journalists, was itself radical. Since then, Indymedia collectives and citizen news websites have grown in over 150 different countries although many initiatives have been mainstreamed and corporatized (Lang, 2017).

Cyber-optimists such as Friedman (2007) also argue that the volume and speed at which information flows on the Internet may have helped governments to increase their response times and productivity and services to their citizens in certain instances. According to Mickoleit, (2014), governments have also used social media to empower their citizens. Mickoleit (2014) further argues that governments have witnessed how individuals and interest groups are influencing political agendas and policy processes through social media by discussing important topics such as elections, political campaigns, disasters and emergencies, political unrest on Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp.

With the growth and evolution of social media, a new space has been carved out for global activism with the introduction of prominent movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, and others. The evolution of Twitter particularly has changed how Americans view social media's impact on political and civic engagement. For example, the

#BlackLivesMatter was first coined in 2013 following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin. The US-based Pew Research Centre found that the hashtag had over 17 0000 tweets a day as of May 2018. Conversations were related to race, violence, and law enforcement. While Twitter activism can be passive "with little to no follow-through", the MeToo grassroots campaign to expose violence against women "was effective on Twitter and other social media sites because it encouraged victims to end their silence" (Sturgess et al., 2018).

CYBER-REALISTS

The idea of cyber-realists follows the discussions of Morozov (2009 and 2011) and Lim (2013).[2] Cyber-realists adopt a more cautious approach that transcends both the cyber-optimist and cyber-pessimist schools of thought. Morozov (2011) on studying the socio-political environment in which social media operates and rejects the view that social media has a single preordained outcome. He criticises cyber-optimism for promoting the gospel of "technological solutionism", where technical fixes are seen as an answer to democratic challenges. He like Miller (2016) refers to "Internet cultures" which may not be easily understood by outsiders who despite "knowing something about local politics" may not "understand the role that the Internet plays in a given context" (2009: 11). He warns "To ascribe such great importance to Twitter is to disregard the fact that it is very poorly suited to planning protests in a repressive environment like Iran's. The protests that engulfed the streets of Tehran were not spontaneous nor were they "flashmobs"; they were carefully planned and executed" (2009: 12). Similarly, Miller (2016) argues that social media needs to be disaggregated and actual use and content needs to be understood in specific local contexts.

Morozov (2011) also warns that in countries such as China, Iran, Syria, and Egypt, social media is being used by authoritarian regimes to track, suppress, and silence dissidents. He argues that "A Twitter revolution is only possible in a regime where the state apparatus is

[2] The term cyber-realists is a phrase that might not adequately capture the methodological approaches of social constructionist thinkers who stress the social context of technologies.

completely ignorant of the Internet and has no virtual presence of its own. However, most authoritarian states are now moving in the opposite direction" (2009: 13). Cyber-optimists, cyber-pessimists, and cyber-realists all agree that the Internet has introduced a fresh game context and a new set of rules that can be taken advantage of by some over others (Soriano, 2013). As Mundt et al., (2018: 11) noted,

> While it greatly facilitates opportunities for information transmission, the ease with which opponents can access these same social media platforms means that there is a constant need to monitor what is being posted online.

Cyber realism might also be ascribed to recent scholarship around "things" and patterns of use and consumption. Comparative studies on actual usage of "things" from cell phones to cars show that context is all-important. Anthropologists who individually lived with different communities across the world for 15 months found "the only way to appreciate and understand something as intimate and ubiquitous as social media is to be immersed in the lives of the people who post …. Only then can we discover how people all around the world have already transformed social media in such unexpected ways and assess the consequences." (Miller et al., 2019: 283). Miller (2016: 5) argues that three common mistakes are made,

> The temptation to presume any causative relation between the nature of that platform and its content, however, will be shown to be often misleading and mistaken. The second argument is that precisely because social media exists largely in the content of what people post, it is *always local*. The third argument is that social media should never be considered as a place or world separated from ordinary life. Such a mistake perpetuated the early misconception of the internet as a virtual place.

Miller's ethnographic study of a small town in the UK (2016: 162) showed that "almost all the local councillors were middle aged with grown-up children. On the one hand they lacked experience and confidence in the use of social media, but sometimes they also imagined social media as some kind of panacea regarding a generally acknowledged problem – the lack of involvement of young people in local politics". Councillors mainly received emails from citizens while journalists followed Twitter hoping for an outrageous posting. The biggest issues, however, were that of privacy and intrusion and social media etiquette. Locals were sceptical of politicians in general but more responsive when councillors presented themselves as an authentic local sharing similar circumstance. The ability to represent a constituency presumes that the councillor at the very least lived in the area and had kids at the same local school for example.

Politics plays out in social media in different ways in different class groupings in the UK. Among low-income minority groups there might be more postings about anti-immigrant groups (Miller 2016). A group of friends sharing Facebook “one group de-friended about a dozen of their classmates after the latter had shared a set of postings that they considered racist”. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu observed, “the overt expression of politics has become one element of the way in which people express their personal taste, akin to the clothes they wear and food they enjoy. It rather serves as an instrument by which people decide the people whom they like and dislike rather than as a conduit for discussion of the policies themselves” (Miller 2016” 164).

Cyber-realists also argue that technology plays several important roles in the lives of many people such as feeding, clothing, finding employment, and sheltering them (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999). Furthermore, they argue that agency matters as much as technology, not just for providing material conditions such as transport, entertainment, wealth, health, and other services, it contributes to the way people live together socially. MacKenzie and Wacjcman (1999: 5) also claim that,

> The view that technology just changes, either following science or of its own accord, promotes a passive attitude to technological change. It focuses our minds on how to adapt to technological change, not on how to shape it. It removes a vital aspect of how we live from the sphere of public discussion, choice, and politics. Precisely because technological determinism is partly right as a theory of society (technology matters not just physically and biologically, but also matters to our human relations to each other) its deficiency as a theory of technology impoverishes the political life of our societies.

CONCLUSION

This chapter described the global literature and debates related to some of the key concepts under study. It detailed the complex relationship between technology and society and explained the concept of the public sphere and the local sphere, which is critical to contextualising and understanding the key areas under debate in this study. The various schools of thought about the impact of the Internet on the processes of political change globally and locally were also discussed. In large measure, this thesis will argue that “cyber-realists” and cyber-localists (Daniel Miller, 2019 and his co-thinkers has extensively developed this term using ethnographies) have a more nuanced understanding of the debate and the ways technologies are adapted and the role of human agency. Put differently

the “cyber-localists” argue that we need to “switch from thinking that ‘Twitter or Instagram does this or that to us’ to realising that these are things we have done to Twitter and Instagram” (Miller et al, 2019:182). In other words, Miller argues there is no direct causality between technology and the way different groups in different settings engage with the technology or platform. Social media provide for different tools, which political agents might use to subvert or deepen democracy. Chapter 3 will provide a South African perspective to the various areas under study.

CHAPTER 3: SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRACY, MUNICIPALITIES, DIGITAL INEQUALITY AND CITIZENS

> Effective and quality public participation is a cornerstone and lifeblood of a democratic state (Hon. Hope Papo, March 2012)
>
> Public participation is an umbrella concept for the various ways in which the people are mobilised to interact with their public representatives and other fulltime practitioners of state craft, in order to achieve specified societal goals (Former Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Sydney Mufumadi, 2012)

DEBATING DEMOCRACY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this chapter, I will review the different understandings of democracy, political parties and their strengths and weakness particularly in relation to local level democracy and digital inequality. This chapter also outlines the optimist, pessimist, and realist views on social media, democracy, and local politics in South Africa. The literature seems to lack a critical understanding of internal processes inside a municipality, and how communication itself is a form of politics.

South Africa became a democracy in 1994 after transitioning from the formal system of apartheid and white supremacy to one of one person one vote in a complex quasi-federal system of spheres with nine provinces and elected local governments (Siddle and Koelble, 2016; Rossouw, 2019). South Africa's transition period paved the way for the first local government elections in 2000 (Hoosain, 2016), giving South Africans an opportunity to participate in the governance of their local authorities by electing councillors (Siddle and Koelble, 2016). Before 1994, local government in South Africa was often described as a racist, subservient, exploitative, and illegitimate society (de Visser, 2005). Yet much of this socio-geographical exclusion still exists in South African society as this study will demonstrate later across different geographical scales, particularly in rural-urban and township-suburb divides. Further, the hard-won democracy continues to be an elusive reality, particularly at the grassroots level, as evidenced by the ever-increasing public protests (Hough, 2008; Atkinson, 2007; Friedman, 2015; Rossouw, 2019).

In South Africa, the outlook for democracy is not promising partly due to its dependence on opposition politics to ensure accountability (Schrire, 2001) and because the different forms

of state capture. Others like Coughlan, (2020) note the weak material basis of democracy in the delivery of services. The poor financial status of some local governments has led to deepening levels of distrust in government institutions. Local government was originally set up to be self-sustaining and meant to recover costs but is structurally constrained and is not able to do so. This drives a wedge between the state and local citizens. Some groups of citizens have given up while others resort to litigation.

Looking at South Africa's political and electoral geography in more detail is revealing. The affluent suburbs in post-1994 South Africa remain predominantly white (Friedman, 2015). He argues that the opposition DA seems to be a dominant political party in these areas, and this has affected how residents engage with and mobilise against their local municipalities. For example, Friedman argues that residents in affluent areas can be termed as "middle-class" and are often well-organised and know their rights with regards to the delivery of services, they complain the loudest but remain closest to their lawyers and are quick to litigate. On the other hand, the ruling ANC, and new black parties such as the EFF dominate political life in the townships (Friedman, 2015), but often fail to utilise vital avenues of "democratic constitutionalism" while the rich can do so more effectively (Schedler, 2012). "Invited spaces" are also compromised by unresponsive recalcitrant negative attitudes by local officials, local policies, and bureaucrats who in the end demoralise the citizens (Von Holdt et al., 2011; Ruiters 2018). Von Holdt et al. (2011: 7) suggest that,

> The processes and dislocations of rapid class formation, the fierce struggles within and between elites and subalterns, the tensions between differential and insurgent citizenship, the instabilities and contestations over hierarchy, status and social order, and the prevalence of violence in social and political conflict, together give rise to a precarious society. A precarious society is characterised by social fragmentation and competing local moral orders which not only generates precarious lives, but a social world in which society itself becomes precarious.

"Class formation" here is used to signal the growing black elite and their social distance from the black township voters. Siddle and Koelble (2016) also argue that the establishment of the new democratic order after 1994 in South Africa promised to change the lives of marginalised groups such as Blacks by rebuilding their communities as the basis for a democratic, integrated, prosperous, and non-racial society. The new local government system post-1994 meant that citizens could now mobilise and participate in local government processes (Siddle and Koelble, 2016). However, evidence points to the contrary with spatio-racialised identities still strong.

To understand the best conditions for citizen participation in South Africa, this study will distinguish between representative and deliberative democracy, both of which are typical in the system of government in South Africa. Representative democracy emphasizes the role of politicians after the mandate they receive on election day (Ballard, 2005). Participatory democracy is often contrasted with the idea of representative democracy. Fransman (2005) argues that in the case of local municipalities, representative democracy is the election of councillors by citizens to act as their representatives in the decision-making processes and structures of their municipalities. It is intended that in addition to voting every five years, forms of participation need to encourage debate, dialogue, accountability, and communication between the local government authority and residents (Fransman, 2005). However, various scholars and critics say this form of democracy is not without its challenges. Deliberative democracy, by contrast, argues that in addition to a well-functioning electoral system, citizens should have opportunities to challenge and debate policies and their implementation on an ongoing basis (Ballard, 2005; Smith, 2020).

Ballard, (2005) and Smith (2020) as democratic pessimists argue that too often decisions are made by relatively closed groups, whether politicians, civil servants, scientific experts, who do not understand the lives of many of those who will be affected by their decisions" (Smith, 2020). According to Smith (2020), participation and deliberation can lead to more trustworthy decisions that people are willing to accept. Sadly, Smith has noted that politicians are not held in high regard and research data shows that many people think politicians make decisions in their own interests, in the interests of their party, or the interests of those with wealth and influence.

It is important to reflect on the continuing role of legacy media, for example, radio, talk shows, television, and newspapers in politics in a democracy such as South Africa to understand why citizens may (due to changing times and technologies) choose other ways to communicate. The problematic nature of an imagined equal, non-racial, *common* space in a capitalist state (and racialised society) and the consumption of media-related products needs to be stressed (Chiumbu and Ligaga, 2013; Calhoun, 1992; Fraser, 1992). These critical scholars argue that groups such as women, black people, indigenous language speakers, gays and lesbians and people with disabilities, and the spatially inferior are still excluded from participating in local government processes by multiple processes including legacy media and stigmatisation. Another important variable aside from the cost of data is the ability to read English according to De Lanerolle (2012). De Lanerolle (2012) examined

the use of the internet in South Africa and suggests that English language literacy may prove to be an insurmountable barrier unless the languages of content online changes. This suggestion, however, needs to be further investigated (see section in this chapter that deals with the digital divide and digital literacy).

New media technologies could provide numerous avenues for political and social expression for previously excluded groups (Gimmler, 2001; Dahlgren, 2005). Social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have re-energised the public sphere by allowing people to air their views to a larger audience (Chiumbu and Ligaga, 2013). They refer to the work of cultural theorist Henry Jenkins (2006) who argues that the emergence of the Internet has introduced a new paradigm shift making it possible for users of new media products to demand the right to participate in governance processes. Social media, therefore, offer enhanced forms of participation where users have more control over media content (Chiumbu and Ligaga, 2013).

The notion of a "counter-public sphere" has framed debates on the role of new media technologies and notions of participation. Henry Jenkins (2006) argues that the emergence of these Web 2.0 applications has introduced a new paradigm shift in the way media content is produced and circulated. He further states that audiences, occupying a space at the intersection between old and new media, are demanding the right to participate within the culture. Chiumbu and Ligaga (2013: 245) further note on the positive side that,

> New media also introduce new forms of publics not confined to the traditional forms of hierarchical relationships with the media houses, but a dispersed audience located in various spaces. Thus, the conceptualisation of this new public requires an understanding of the kinds of discourses engaged in by this public both temporally and spatially.

Legacy media (newspapers and television) in democratic South Africa is an industry and a practice that claims to be fundamental to the promotion of freedom of expression and access to information by citizens (MISA, 2013). Furthermore, legacy media says it facilitates dialogues between citizens and the government in a way that officials can become aware of what citizens expect from them. However, due to various social ills and challenges such as inequality, racism, poverty, and unemployment, millions of people in South Africa still do not have access to media products or have access to only specialised niche media that is mainly sensational (MISA, 2013). Given its strong social influence, legacy media (radio and television) may, therefore, be subject to manipulation and abuse by the state and powerful politicians and business groups. These groups may use it to their own ends because they

realise its importance in shaping public opinion by keeping key issues out of the media (Kaul, 2013). Media ownership and practice in Africa has primarily existed to serve the needs of so-called “colonial masters” (Ronning and Kupe, 2005). In South Africa, the debate continues around media ownership which is still largely in “white hands” (Daniels, 2016). Ronning and Kupe (2015) argue that after formal independence, radio, television, and newspapers have been linked either to the legacy of an authoritarian colonial state, colonial business empires or to a liberation movement with its own political agenda. Given this exclusionary context, what role could social media ideally play?

South Africa’s public broadcaster, SABC, for example, is expected to be independent and closer to the democratic ideal. However, there is an ongoing public debate about its independence. The SABC has been heavily criticised by various social commentators for its editorial independence. There has been widespread criticism about allegedly high levels of interference from some powerful members of the ruling ANC (Chatora, 2009). Without access to information, citizens are not able to hold their representatives in government accountable (Berman and Wizner, 1999). Furthermore, radio, television, and newspapers must carry fair coverage of political parties and their issues, otherwise, citizens who follow them will look to other avenues such as social media to get involved in the political process.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

At 20 million Internet users in 2014, South Africa had the third-highest number of Internet users in Africa after Nigeria and Egypt (Netgate, 2014) but with a large majority using cellular phones. According to Matsheza (2011), the cost of landline connections is out of the reach of most of the South African population, and even when people can afford to pay for it, they often must wait for long periods for installation.

As of August 2018, the four main mobile networks in South Africa were Vodacom, MTN, Cell C, and Telkom based on mobile connections (Businesstech, 2018). Table 1 below shows the mobile connections to the networks in 2018 bearing in mind that some people own more than one cellphone and are also connected to more than one network.

Table 1: South Africa's mobile networks August 2018

Mobile Network	Users (millions)
Vodacom	41.6
MTN	30.2
Cell C	16.3
Telkom	5.2

Source: Businesstech (2018)

Vodacom has 38.1 million prepaid and only 6.2 million contract customers (Vodacom, trading update for the quarter ended 31 December 2020). Those on contract generally have lower-cost access to "bundled" data.

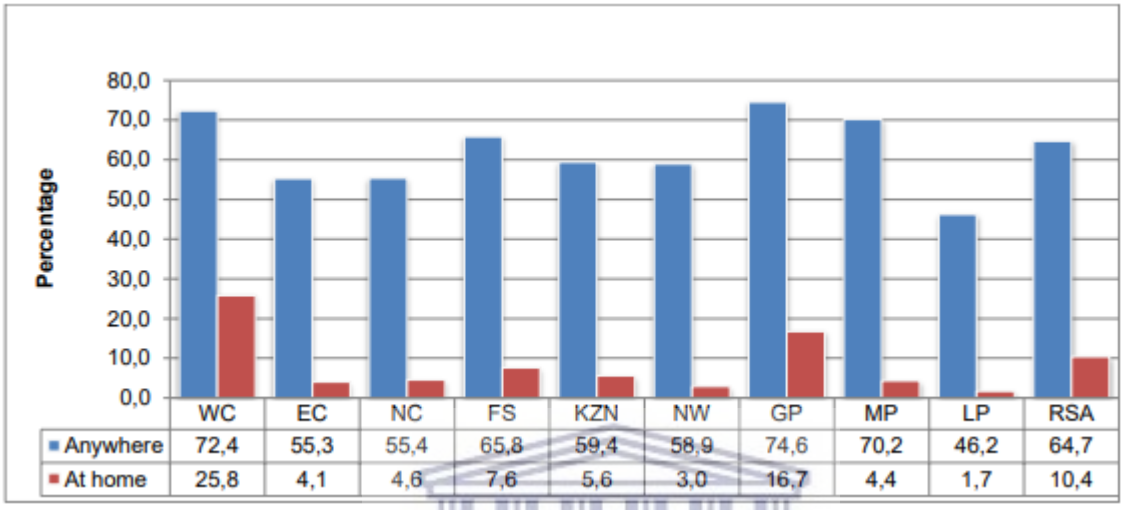
South Africa's social media activity is on par with Nigeria and Mexico, though far below world leaders such as China, which added 100 million new users in 2018 (Global Digital Yearbook Report, 2019). South Africa's social media activity growth in 2019 in comparison with the rest of the world is illustrated below.

Figure 3: South Africa's social media activity growth (year-on-year) in 2019

Source: Global Digital Yearbook Report (2019)

The Global Digital Yearbook 2019 report found that the number of social media users grew by more than 5 million or over 28 per cent in South Africa in 2019.

Figure 4: Percentage of households by province who had access to the Internet at home in 2018

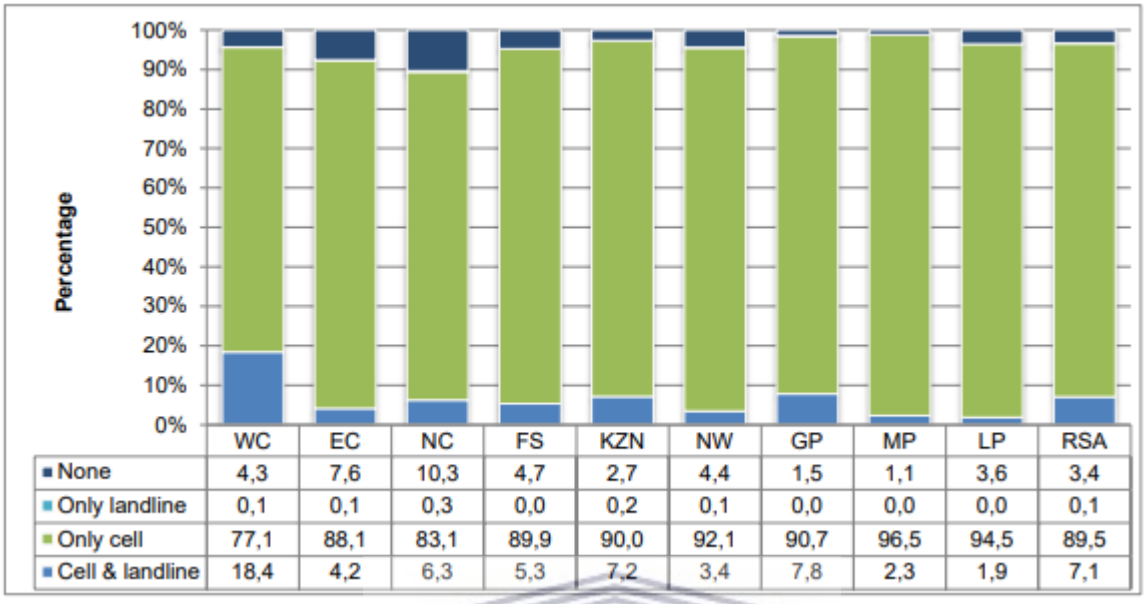


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Anywhere	72,4	55,3	55,4	65,8	59,4	58,9	74,6	70,2	46,2	64,7
At home	25,8	4,1	4,6	7,6	5,6	3,0	16,7	4,4	1,7	10,4

Source: Statistics South Africa (2019)

Figure 4 above shows that 64.7 per cent of South African households had at least one member who had access to, or used the Internet either at home, work, place of study or Internet cafés. Access to the Internet generally was highest in Gauteng at 74.6 per cent followed by the Western Cape at 72.4 per cent. Access to the Internet at home was highest in the Western Cape at 25.8 per cent followed by Gauteng at 16.7 per cent and lowest in Limpopo and the North West at 1.7 per cent and 3.0 per cent respectively.

Figure 5: Percentage of households with a functional landline and cellular telephone in their dwellings by province, 2018



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
None	4,3	7,6	10,3	4,7	2,7	4,4	1,5	1,1	3,6	3,4
Only landline	0,1	0,1	0,3	0,0	0,2	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1
Only cell	77,1	88,1	83,1	89,9	90,0	92,1	90,7	96,5	94,5	89,5
Cell & landline	18,4	4,2	6,3	5,3	7,2	3,4	7,8	2,3	1,9	7,1

Source: Statistics South Africa (2019)

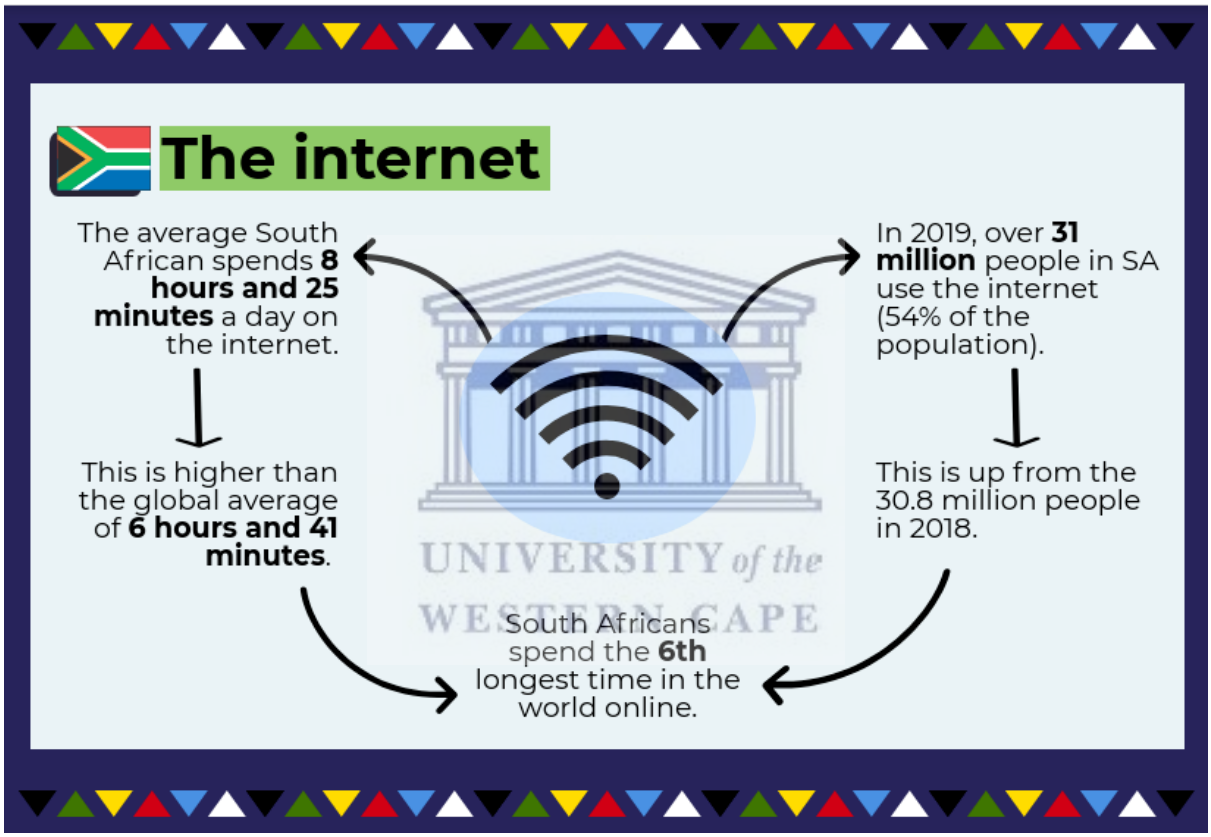
According to Statistics South Africa (2019:68), "Communication plays an important role in the fundamental operation of a society. It links people and businesses, facilitating communication and the flow of ideas and information and coordinating economic activities and development."

Figure 5 above shows that nationally, only 3.4 per cent of households did not have access to either landlines or cellular phones. Most households without access to landlines and cellular phones were from the Northern Cape at 10. 3 per cent and Eastern Cape at 7.6 per cent. Only 0.1 per cent of South African households used only landlines compared to 89.5 per cent who exclusively used cellular phones.

The exclusive use of cellular phones was most common in Mpumalanga at 96.5 per cent followed by Limpopo at 94.5 per cent, North West at 92.1 per cent and Gauteng at 90.7 per cent. Households with higher usage of both cellular phones and landlines were found in the Western Cape and Gauteng at 18.4 per cent and 7.8 per cent respectively. It unclear though from this data whether the cellular devices referred to are "smartphones."

The Global Digital Yearbook Report, (2019) estimates that South Africans are connected for an average of 8 hours and 25 minutes each day on devices such as cellular phones, laptops, and others for various reasons including work, and social reasons. The time spent by South Africans online is far higher than the global average of 6 hours and 41 minutes (Mediaupdate.co.za, 2019). The time spent by South Africans online is illustrated in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Time spent by South Africans online (2019)



Source: Mediaupdate.co.za (2019)

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp are growing in popularity in South Africa (Global Digital Yearbook Report, 2019). The report found that WhatsApp, for example, was not only popular around the world but in South Africa too as illustrated by the figure below.

Figure 7: WhatsApps' popularity worldwide (2019)

Source: Global Digital Yearbook Report (2019)

In a study in 2017, de Lanerolle, Walton and Schoon found that some of the reasons for the popularity of WhatsApp are its relatively low data consumption, and low cost. They also found that this social media platform together with Facebook is zero-rated by some operators for some pre-paid services in South Africa. At the time of the study this was attributed to the Cell C network. The scholars argue that when people choose modes and platforms of communication, they must consider not only their own resources, but also those of the people they needed to connect with.

In the case of South Africa, 1 Gigabyte of mobile data averages about 2.17 per cent of the average monthly income, meaning the country does not meet the affordability standards, according to the A4AI's 2020 Affordability Report. The report highlights that South Africa is ranked 31st in Africa for the price of 1 Gigabyte of mobile data as per the Competition Commission. With that in mind, the target is to ensure the country will be in the top 10 in Africa for the price of 1 Gigabyte data pricing by 2024.

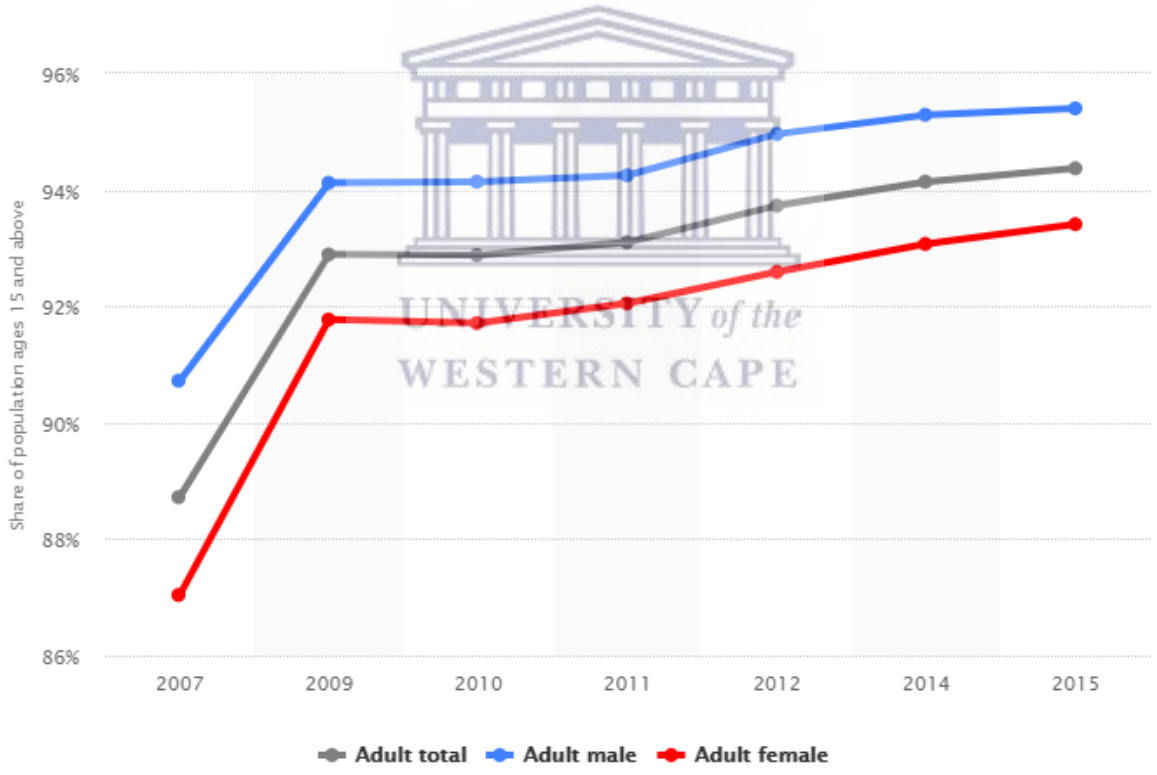
As illustrated in Figure 8 below, in 2015 almost 95 per cent of all South Africans aged 15 and above could read and write (Statista, 2019; Statistics South Africa, 2011) making it possible for them to use the Internet. It is important to note that despite literature arguing that English is an "insurmountable" barrier to Internet and related digital access (De

Lanerolle 2012), the evidence suggests that South Africa's literacy rate has increased and "black Africans speak a much larger variety of languages.

> Nationally, the percentage of literate persons over the age of 20 years *increased* from 91,9% in 2010 to 94,5% in 2018. Provincially, the highest literacy rates were observed in Western Cape (98,2%) and Gauteng (97,7%) while the lowest literacy rates were observed in Northern Cape (90,0%) and Limpopo (90,3%) (Statistics South Africa, GHS, 2019).

Some of the biggest challenges include pupils who are not on par with reading levels for their age group, a lack of reading resources and libraries, and little to no reinforcement of learning at home (Newman, 2019). Rural provinces and blacks still had high illiteracy rates, which counters the aims of citizen participation on social media. Literacy officially is measured as a person has passed grade 7 or primary school.

Figure 8: Literacy levels in South Africa (2007 to 2015) by gender



Source: Statista Global Media Company (2019)

At a national level, the three main political parties, ANC, DA, and EFF have tried to increase their social media presence, which is where many youths spend their time (Mandyoli, 2016; Shava and Chinyamurindi, 2018). The parties are ranked according to their seat allocation in the National Assembly with the ANC having 230 seats, DA

with 84 seats, and the EFF with 44 seats. Shava and Chinyamurindi (2018) argue that youths utilise social media faster than any other population cohort, especially in urban areas, but there's a need for more research in the social sciences on the usage of social media platforms in rural areas. Despite this digital divide, Mackey (2016) argues that most youths have access to social media, especially Facebook, followed by YouTube and Twitter (Goldstuck, 2015).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL PARTIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

South Africa has three major political parties (ANC, DA and EFF). To understand political communication at an urban scale, it is also vital to look at how do the ANC, DA, and EFF use social media to target voters online, including the youth. Some of the parties have multiple accounts. These range from the main national Twitter account to multiple provincial accounts, caucus accounts, and others especially dedicated to their respective youth leagues where applicable. Leaders of the ANC, DA, and EFF also have their own personal Twitter accounts which they hopefully use to further engage their members on governance issues at the national, provincial, and local levels. Table 2 below shows the various social media accounts of the three main political parties.

Table 2: Social media accounts of South Africa's main political parties (as at July 2020)

Party	Social Media Platform	No of Followers	No Following	Date Joined
ANC	Twitter @MYANC	874 000	8000	January 2009
	ANC Youth League @ANCYLhq	219 000	107 000	October 2010
	Facebook MYANC	571 000	N/A	N/A
	ANC Youth League	9 000	N/A	N/A
	WhatsApp	N/A	N/A	N/A
DA	Twitter			

Party	Social Media Platform	No of Followers	No Following	Date Joined
	Our_DA	621 000	26 000	March 2009
	DA Youth @DA_Youth	25.500	253 000	February 2009
	Facebook Democratic Alliance	522 000	N/A	N/A
	DA Alliance Youth	20 000	N/A	N/A
	WhatsApp	N/A	N/A	N/A
EFF	Twitter @EFFSouthAfrica	1,100000	11.600	November 2012
	Facebook Economic Freedom Fighters	574 000	N/A	N/A
	WhatsApp	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Compiled from the various social media accounts of the various political parties

The data is based on their social media activity on Twitter and Facebook as at July 2020. The activity on WhatsApp is not reflected as such data is not available on the social media platform. The social media conversation tracker, Keyhole, defines a Twitter follower-to-following ratio as the number of followers an account has relative to the number of accounts it follows. For purposes of this study, the follower-to-following ratio is calculated by dividing the number of accounts that follow an organisation by the number of accounts it follows. A follow ratio above 1 means that the organisation has more accounts following it, and a follow ratio below 1 means the organisation follows more accounts than it has followers (Keyhole, n.d.).

Table 2 above shows that the Twitter follow/follower ratio for the ANC is 109.25 or (109:1), the DA is 23.88 or (24:1), and the EFF is 94.82 or (93:1). The numbers show that the follow/follower ratios are in favour of the various political parties rather than their supporters. A possible explanation for this is summarised later in Chapter 10 of this study. The Twitter follow ratio is more of a vanity metric rather than a truly useful social media metric like the so-called engagement rate (Keyhole, n.d.). Furthermore, they argue that the follow ratio

gives people a quick idea of how “cool” their account is because popular accounts tend to have far more accounts following them than vice versa. For this study, higher follow/follower ratios mean that they are in favour of the various political parties rather than their supporters.

To prevent spam and manipulation of follow relationships and to ensure site reliability, Twitter has the following rules: there are technical limits regarding how many Twitter accounts you can follow. These limits are based on the rate at which you are following new accounts, as well as how many followers you have (Twitter Help Centre, 2019). Additionally, because follow relationships on Twitter are not mutual by nature, Twitter has also put in place a few rules around follow behaviour to promote authentic experiences for users and these include limiting the pace at which people can follow accounts, allowing every Twitter account to follow up to 400 accounts per day and verified Twitter accounts up to 1,000 accounts per day, effecting follow ratios once a person follows a certain number of accounts (Twitter Help Centre, 2013):

The ANC has several youths league pages on Facebook, and it can be confusing to members in terms of which page to follow. The DA also has many youths league pages on Facebook making it hard to follow the messages posted online. The EFF is the only party with activity on its Facebook page making it easier to follow. The youthful EFF has also performed well compared to other political parties in the National Assembly on Twitter and Facebook, becoming the first South African Political Party to reach 1 million Twitter followers (Mtshali, 2020). As seen in Table 2 above, the ANC and the DA are trailing behind with 874 000 and 621 000 Twitter users respectively.

In explaining the multiple youth leagues pages of these organisations, Walton and Leukes (2013) argue that they are taking advantage of the increasing access to the Internet by members of the public through mobile phones. Furthermore, sites like Facebook updates connect with instant messaging, everyday talk and Google and Facebook rankings thus increasing the footprint of these organisations online (Walton and Leukes, 2013). However, Nyoni and Velempini, 2018) warn that Internet users face numerous threats to their personal data when exposed to too many social media accounts because they are willing to disclose very personal aspects of their lives. They also argue that,

> Social media sites such as Facebook store large amounts of users' personal data which make such sites prime targets for hackers. Research has shown that users have been subjected to privacy attacks in which hacked personal data are sold to online marketers. These incidents have prompted the need to protect users' privacy against data theft by third parties (149-167).

The EFF focuses on capturing the digital space (Mtshali, 2020). Furthermore, Mtshali argues that the ANC has a historical support base of older voters who are not as digitally and tech-savvy.

ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN A DEMOCRACY

South Africa's Local Government Municipal Structures Act of 1998 provides for the establishment of ward committees to enhance citizen participation at the local level. Ward committees have been studied by many scholars who show that they do not work well (De Vries, 2018). Theron and Mchunu (2013) note that instead of creating a bridge between the public, political and administrative structures of municipalities, ward committees are fraught with problems ranging from representation, power play, and party politics. As part of their makeup, ward committees must make provision for the representation of youth affairs in their sectorial groups (Kannermeyer, 2005).

Van Staden (2017) argues that citizen participation in the affairs of government is democracy in action. The South African government receives a general mandate once every five years to govern nationally, provincially, and locally. According to Dalton (2017), voter turnout is generally declining in South Africa, especially among citizens with lower social status and the youth.

At the same time, more people are participating in civil-society activity, contacting government officials, protesting, and using online activism and other creative forms of participation. These non-electoral activities are growing because of more activity by higher-social-status citizens. The democratic principle of the equality of voice, he further argues, is eroding. The *politically* rich are getting richer and the politically needy exercise less voice.

Citizen participation in the metropolitan municipality of Cape Town, for instance, is spearheaded by the Public Engagement Policy of the City of Cape Town of 2009 (Bob, 2018). Citizen participation beyond elections has become a key aspect of developmental planning for service delivery in the South African government and is a recurring theme in several legislative and theoretical documents as demonstrated above (De Villiers, 2001; Miraftab and Wills, 2005; Thompson, 2007; Thompson and Tapscott, 2010). The objective of local government is very clear in Chapter 7 of the Constitution, and it is to provide

democratic and accountable government for local communities, ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner and encourage the involvement of communities and their organisations in matters of local government (Jolobe, 2014). He argues that what is envisaged is a cooperative approach with national and provincial governments, where local structures provide leadership for their communities and local structures enhance opportunities for citizen participation. Commonly, the ideal scenario described by Jolobe is not happening at the local government level in South Africa where the functions of national, provincial, and local government overlap or are unclear to citizens, leading to a rise in service delivery protests around the country.

In a democracy such as South Africa, not all localisms and contestation contribute to the smooth running of local democracy and its delivery institutions. Purcell (2006) warns about the dangers of "worshipping" local government in what he calls the "local trap". Localism has also been linked to parochialism, gentrification (Pieterse, 2012), and exclusionary militant particularism (Harvey, 1996). Localisation can lead to a less democratic and equitable city depending on the agenda of those in power.

ENGAGING CITIZENS OFFLINE AND ONLINE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT

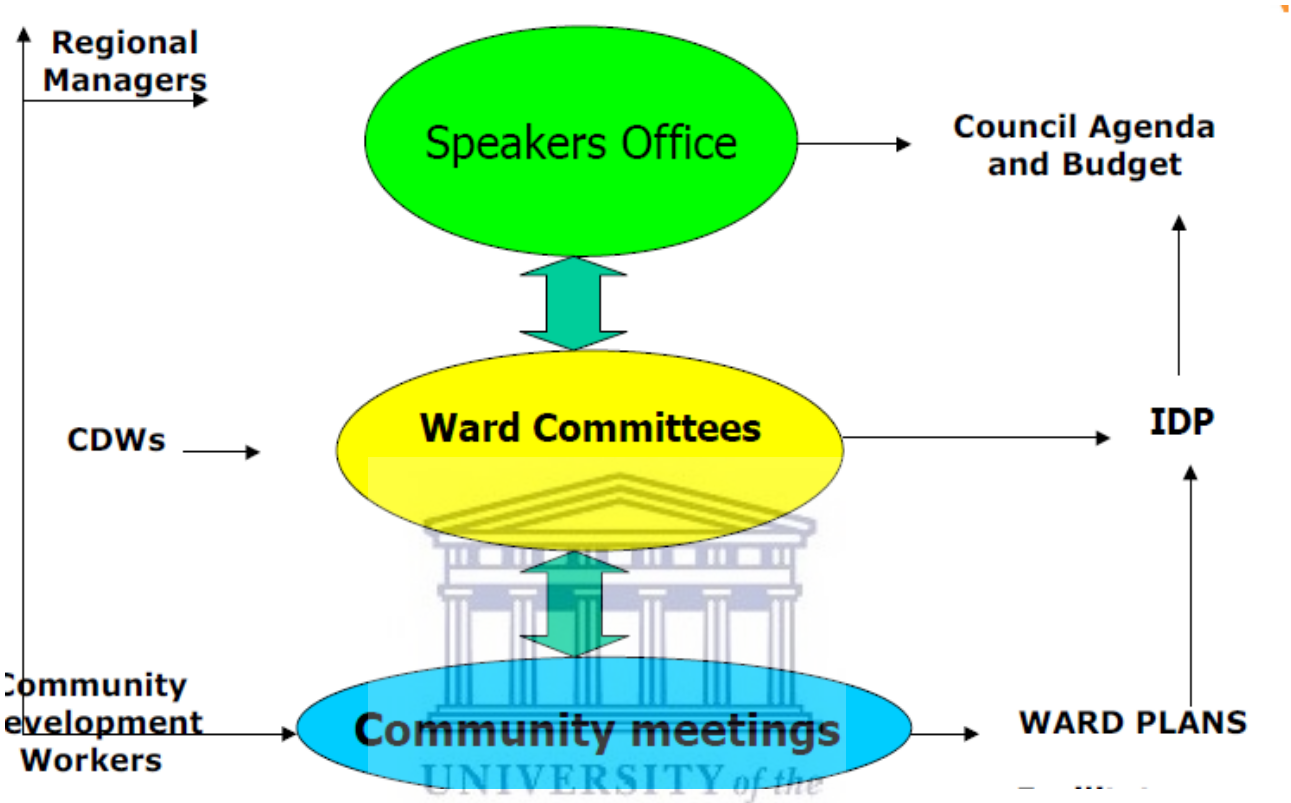
The government basic guidelines published in 2007 suggest,

> It is recommended that the responsibility for coordinating public participation be housed and properly resourced in a ***Public Participation Unit*** overseen by the ***Speaker***. The task of the unit will be to draw up an annual ***Public Participation Plan*** which includes all of the above recommendations and, as far as possible, charts these on a ***Year Planner***, specifying clearly which role-player is responsible for what task, and by what date. Important here is the inclusion of public participation Key Performance Areas, Indicators, and Targets in contracts of officials to secure a basic threshold of participation, and proper budgeting for all aspects of public participation (DPLG, 2007).

Traditional participation is steered via the speaker's office. On the ground community development workers (CDWs) have been used to assist at the ward level. Online citizen participation and offline are not mutually exclusive. It is encouraged and can take place at various stages including planning, co-production, and monitoring stages (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015). It is up to a specific municipality to establish various stakeholder

fora to improve the impact of off and online engagement, but whichever way is chosen must involve citizens and compliment deliberative representative democracy.

Figure 9: Role of ward committees as it relates to council and communities



Source: Sibeko (2005)

The Municipal Structures Act of 1998 also makes it clear that the objective of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. In an address to a public participation conference in Cape Town in 2005, the then Housing MEC in the Western Cape Province Marius Fransman noted that while ward committees were not the only vehicle for public participation in local government, at the time they were the most "broadly applied and accepted model for ensuring participation." Fransman also noted that the ward committee system had no executive power. He argued that one of their key challenges at the time was that some ward committees tended to assume that they had executive powers and, therefore, could hold councillors accountable for the execution of their decisions. The Municipal Systems Act of 2000 requires municipalities to allocate funds for community participation and since it is the function of ward committees to facilitate local community involvement, ward committees may legitimately lay claim to such funds (Fransman, 2005). He cautions that community members are not paid to serve on ward committees. They are

not municipal functionaries, but volunteers who are passionate about their communities. It is municipalities that must budget for the operating expenses of ward committees.

“Offline” citizen participation is mandatory for officials in municipalities before approving IDP. In the planning stage, communities can assist municipal officials to draw up a list of the issues, identify solutions and develop the programmes of action (Bassler et al., 2008). In the co-production stage, citizens are invited to take part in the delivery of services such as managing the implementation of projects. The benefits include skills development in communities, building trust in government, job creation, and citizen involvement (Joshi and Moore, 2004). The monitoring stage involves monitoring and evaluating projects to establish a current level of performance and identify potential areas of improvement (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015).

Scholars have largely been critical of ward-level participation. Ballard (2005) questions whether all citizens of a particular local government area are truly represented at ward-level meetings. He argues some ward-level meetings are not open to everyone and may just include only local organisations and municipal officials. Ballard warns that it is possible, for example, to have several hundred people at a ward meeting representing several organisations, but these organisations only have a membership which amounts to a portion of a ward’s population of tens of thousands of residents. The dynamics of community interactions, therefore, need to be further scrutinised to ensure that all people in a local geographic area are represented through citizen participation. Bob (2018) argues that some citizens in local government are not aware of participation taking place in their communities. It is also not uncommon to find that what is referred to as engagement is just a way for the State to pretend to be democratic when in reality all decisions have already been taken (Bishop, 2009).

Human Sciences Research Council in 2015 found that weak communication between municipalities and citizens on issues appeared to be one of the main challenges to citizen engagement. This in turn affected the agency and capacity of local leaders and ward councillors to support and facilitate the implementation of government projects. The HSRC study also revealed that citizen movements are unstable: the people, they had originally been consulted in a project were not the same as those who were present when the project was to be completed (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015).

In 2014, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs adopted a "back-to-basics" strategy aimed at helping municipalities to improve their effectiveness and efficiency, particularly citizen participation through the ward system. The programme lists key areas, which include:

- Improved participation with the aim of putting people and their needs first.
- Minimum basic services are delivered to citizens without interruptions.
- Municipalities are well-governed and transparent.
- Sound financial management, good accounting practices, and efficient use of resources.

De Vries (2018) argues that little regard is given to how innovations, such as social media, may contribute towards improving or increasing participation. The widespread idea that citizens are apathetic has been questioned. For example, data collected by Google South Africa in March 2019, based on what South Africans have been searching for online ahead of the 2019 national and provincial elections, may indicate that they are looking for ways to create meaningful social change in their local communities. The research organisation Irvine Partners argues that the data shows that South Africans are actively Googling ways to impact local government and legislation. For instance, Figure 10 below shows the top 10 election-related topics that South Africans have been asking Google in March 2019 related to citizen participation in local government.

Figure 10: Top ten questions on elections in South Africa – Elections 2019

1. What are the requirements of participating in local government elections?
2. How can citizens contribute towards the law-making process in South Africa?
3. What is the ANC election manifesto 2019?
4. When is (are) South African elections?
5. Who will win the 2019 elections?
6. Who won Nigeria election 2019?
7. How does a minority party impact the law-making process (in SA)?
8. How many parties registered for 2019 elections?
9. Why are there no ANC election posters?
10. What are by-elections?

Source: Google South Africa (2019)

Considering the ongoing social media and citizen participation debate globally, Boyd (2008) asks a pertinent question: Can social network sites enable political action? The answer to this poignant question remains elusive (Wasserman, 2011; Jebril et al., 2013). Despite continuous research since Wasserman (2011) and Jebril et al. (2013), there still appears to be little agreement on the best way to achieve meaningful citizen participation using social media (South Africa, 2018). One reason might be the pitting of cyber-optimists, cyber-pessimists, and cyber-realists against one another (Mare, 2015). Another may be drawn from international literature which argues that continuously collecting, monitoring, analysing and summarising politically relevant information from social media is difficult to do because of the large numbers of different social media platforms and large amounts of complex information and data (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2012).

The literature analysing citizen participation in South Africa suggests that participatory processes and systems lack transformative qualities. Tshoose (2015) also argues that participatory processes in South Africa are marred by a mixture of neglect, lack of service delivery, corruption, infrequent feedback, limited involvement, and inexperience on the part of planners and officials (Lues, 2014; Tsheola et al., 2014; Mubangizi and Gray, 2011; Booysen, 2009). Access to information, for instance, is inadequate and uneven across municipalities as is the capacity of citizens to understand the technical formats in which information is presented (Houston et al., 2001).

In the South African context, various commentators have questioned the gravity with which citizen participation is being embraced in local government (Baccus and Hicks, 2006). According to Tshoose (2015), in the local sphere, municipal officials tend to act as gatekeepers and controllers rather than as facilitative bodies that enable communities to have a greater voice and control over resources and resource allocation. Furthermore, municipalities have been accused of being unwilling or unable to share the decision-making power with communities concerning project identification. Mechanisms are geared mainly towards seeking input from communities on already formulated policy responses. Sometimes, when community inputs are solicited, the process is often accompanied by poor facilitation of the participatory process (Mathekga, 2006; Friedman, 2006).

It is often argued that the poor in South Africa cannot participate in local government because they are usually disorganised. But many of the poor do not participate because the government does not provide participatory spaces in which they will be free to express

themselves (Friedman, 2006). According to Tshoose (2015), the creation of democratic spaces is meant to enable ordinary masses to engage with the government from an empowered position where they can have their voices heard. Invited spaces of participation also present their own problems in that certain actors use those spaces to silence the voices of others, especially the poor and marginalised (Cornwall, Schattan and Coelho, 2007).

Following the discussions above and differing opinions on the use of social media in citizen participation, the South African government has officially embraced open access to technology and using digital platforms to improve transparency and governance (Luzuka, 2015). South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) launched in 2012 envisions that through Information and Communications Technology (ICT), a more inclusive and informed society can be developed in the country to improve public service delivery and enhance government programmes (National Planning Commission, 2018). In South Africa, the information gap between the rich and poor is characterised by the country's transition post-1994 (Southall, 2003). Southall argues that there's still an uneasy co-existence between "the incoming political elites and the established economic elites". The problem persists in South Africa because, instead of a variety of civic organisations taking their issues into the public sphere for debate and contention, South Africans depend on the party in power (the ANC), which sets the agenda, determines the issues, and even decides which "identities enter the political domain" (Heller, 2009).

THE OPTIMISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Mhlomi and Osukunle (2017), South Africa's democracy is still considered young compared to other countries around the world. Its development will be enhanced if more citizens are encouraged to participate in how they are governed at the local level. They also argue that social media might be one of the ways to include previously disadvantaged groups such as black people, women, and children in local government processes. Furthermore, social media platforms enable users at the local level to produce and create content thus making them drivers of change in their respective communities (Mukhongo and Macharia, 2016). According to Mhlomi and Osukunle (2017), social media also enables users to interact closely with municipal officials and develop a sense of connectivity and community with them (Ridout, 2013). Engagement with officials on social media is also essential in building trust between local government officials, politicians, and communities (Lieker, 2015). In a bid to improve service delivery, the City of Cape Town's

Ombudsman Office, for instance, also launched a short message service (SMS) in 2021 to help residents hold city officials to account. Residents may participate in governance by sending a “Please Call Me” to the number 44781 for assistance. It is hoped this service will assist vulnerable communities to have greater access to information and complaint channels within the city. At the time of launching the service, the Ombud’s office undertook to respond to an SMS query within two working days.

South Africans of all classes seem to have accepted the idea of connectedness through social media with family, friends, the church, societies, and even business (Fourie, 2020). Donner et al., (2011: 575) argue in the optimistic tradition that impoverished South Africans as early as 2010 were keen to use cellphones to access social media. They use important terms such as “appropriation and domestication” to refer to the ways different groups might use technology given different sets of constraints. They also see digital literacy not as a single event but rather as a process. South African researchers and academics (notably Wasserman, 2011; Chiumbu and Ligaga, 2013; Baker, 2012; Bosch, 2017) noted the important role played by social media platforms in the political mobilisation of citizens and how they participate in the country’s democracy. Some suggest “that of social media (is) a tool for anti-poverty activism” (Ngidi et al., 2016: 1).

Of course, South African politicians use social media to attract potential voters in their election campaigns (Baker, 2012; Chadwick and Howard, 2010 and Biswas et al., 2014). At the same time, social media is used by citizens as a tool to access political information and to engage in governance processes (Yang and DeHart, 2016). Social media usage has been a double-edged sword (Conroy-Krutz, 2020). He argues that the South African government has used Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp to reach large numbers of people, quickly and efficiently with information elections, for instance. At the same time, these technologies have also facilitated the spread of misinformation. Barend Lutz and Pierre du Toit in Netwerk24.com (2015: 1) stated that,

> Digital social media, with Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as leading examples, have become major global channels of communication, with ramifications for established democracies and their social bases – some positive, others disruptive.

Although Lutz and Du Toit in BrandSouthAfrica.com (2015) share an optimistic view about the role of social media in enhancing democratic participation, they also warn that a deeper understanding of the “real world” influence of Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp is still needed. Lutz also in BrandSouthAfrica.com (2015: 1) elaborates that,

> Social media has now effectively extended the public sphere into a global electronic platform, far removed from the city squares of the classic Greek democratic city-states. On social media platforms, issues are debated, questions of public import are deliberated on, and people can call a spade a spade, so to speak.

Social media platforms provide many countries, including South Africa, an opportunity to counter negative stereotypes by giving them representational agency (Mkono, 2018). She further argues that as more and more Africans use the Internet, they can create multiple stories about the continent breaking stereotypes of a backward continent characterised by strife and poverty.

The optimistic view on the use of social media in protest and citizen participation is also shared by Institute for Security Studies, Lauren Tracey. She argued in her previous work that social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp emerged as important electoral campaigning tools in South Africa in recent years. Tracey, (2013) adds that political parties who understand the electoral power of social media could influence their followers to vote for them.

In the Western Cape Province, for example, services have been integrated across different departmental websites without citizens necessarily knowing which department they are dealing with. He argues that over 4 000 government facilities are in the province are linked in urban communities and the idea is to build more Cape Access e-Centres and multi-purpose centres in areas that do not have access to computers or cellular phones. Cape e-Centres provide less privileged and rural communities across the Western Cape with access to ICT. Each centre has computers with free Internet and email access amongst others for easier citizen participation in governance. Finally, new studies are showing how social media can be useful in reducing gang violence and even developing new languages in certain networked communities. As comparative work on Côte d'Ivoire/Ivory Coast and one from South Africa shows "social media domain provides a space for users to collectively learn and bond through interactions which create shared (language and other) resources. Tsotsitaal operates socially within the online space and unveils the metapragmatic and ideological stances signalled by interactions in Tsotsitaal" (Kouassi and Hurst-Harosh, 2018: 75).

PESSIMISTS AND REALISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's formal democracy has been in place for more than two decades. Wasserman (2020) argues that the commercial media landscape in South Africa is highly concentrated in the hands of a handful of big conglomerates such as Naspers, with business interests in a wide range of newspapers, magazines, and television subscription services. Chiumbu and Ligaga (2013) acknowledge the positive role of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in expanding and transforming the digital space. However, they also warn that the realities of the digital divide in many South African communities cannot be ignored.

Tristan Harris, a former design ethicist at Google, concluded that social media is mainly designed to influence consumer behaviour. In South Africa, Jess Oosthuizen, a cyberpsychologist argued that social media [3]algorithms trap peoples' attention in a "darkroom." In other words, social media algorithms keep people hooked on Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp as long as possible because more screen time means bigger profits for the owners of these companies. Researchers such as Oosthuizen argue that when social media grabs the attention of citizens, these citizens become addicted to the different apps and stay connected online to feed their addictions. Sometimes this may be done at the expense of their social lives and other healthier ways of living. Founder of "MySociaLife", a Cape Town-based digital life skills programme for students, Dean McCoubrey, argues that,

> Parents want, and society desperately needs, our kids to have an informed and balanced world view, compassion, empathy, and the skills of critical thinking "While the internet exposes us to more and educates us, an algorithm can swim upstream against these values, feeding us more and more information to keep us glued to our screens. Before long, we start believing what we're being fed, instead of contemplating it or challenging it. We become like hamsters on a wheel (News24.com, 2020: 1).

Very little is being investigated in South Africa on the difference in political usage of social media by diverse groups making up the population (Mitchell and Murray, 2012). Furthermore, the youth have used social media platforms to communicate and promote

[3] An algorithm is a sequence of instructions telling a computer what to do. Whether you are aware of it or not, algorithms are becoming a pervasive part of our lives. Everything people see and do on the internet is a product of algorithms. The internet runs on algorithms and all online searching is accomplished through them. Recipes are algorithms, as are math equations. Smartphone apps are nothing but algorithms. The material people see on social media is brought to them by algorithms. Algorithms help devices respond to voice commands, recognise faces, sort photos and build and drive cars. Hacking, cyberattacks and cryptographic code breaking exploit algorithms (Mutizira, 2020).

various activist movements in a bid to create awareness and gather support (Mitchell and Murray, 2012). Research conducted among university students and youth in Soweto showed differences by gender with females reporting higher use of social networking and risk of cellphone addiction (Dietrich et al., 2021). Younger generations are more likely to use social media because they grew up with these digital choices at their fingertips (Budree, Fietkiewicz, and Lins, 2019). Among the many negatives, one of the main factors most people are afraid of is data security and the uncertainty of whether their information is safe online (Hillis, 2016). A major concern is that the use of online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have led to rising depression and even loss of life across the world. Of much concern is the rate of suicide and depression among teenage girls.

The State may also retaliate against citizens who use social media by regulating the field in a bid to censor the Internet (Citizen, 2019; Soriano, 2013), as seen in South Africa in 2017. That same year, the then South African Safety and Security Minister David Mahlobo was heavily criticised by social commentators, civic organisations, and some members of the public for his utterances that "due to issues pertaining to fake news and scams, a regulation of social media was being considered". The country's Citizen newspaper reported that the hashtag "#HandsOffSocialMedia" gained momentum and various civic organisations, media organisations and social commentators took to platforms such as Twitter to criticise the South African government, forcing it to relent on its plans. Well-known South African IT commentator Arthur Goldstuck also publicly warned that a move by the government to "gain control of speech on the online environment" was part of a long thread to control the Internet and impede freedom of speech provided for under the Constitution.

The Social Dilemma highlights how social media serves up different "facts" according to a person's preferences. It tailors the world to suit each person's predilections and prejudices and puts forward that vision of the world as the "truth". This new virtual normal may just be the "end of us" warns Keeton (2020).

According to Mutizira (2020), dominant and largely unregulated social media companies manipulate users by harvesting personal data, while using algorithms to push information and ads that can lead to social media addiction, dangerous anti-social behaviour, and hate crime. Analysts from South Africa's Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business argue that there is a coordinated attempt to manipulate conversations with a xenophobic tone on South African social media

platforms (Mutizira, 2020). She further argues that a South African Twitter account called @uLerato_pillay is an organised project used to drive xenophobic hashtags and inciting statements. The account was linked to a former member of the South African National Defence Force. The uLerato_pillay account has previously spread hashtags such as #PutSouthAfricansFirst, #ForeignersVacateOurJobs, #OpenRefugeeCamps, and #InfluxOfImmigrantsMustStop which many users have found to be distasteful and fuelling violence and xenophobia against foreigners in South Africa. The account has defended its crude xenophobic messages as an expression of patriotism (Mutizira, 2020).

Researchers and academics such as Mutizira and Keeton argue that algorithms may promote content that sparks outrage, hate, and amplifies biases within the data that users feed them. Mutizira (2020) further adds that the algorithm is not designed for the user. It is designed for the aims and goals of the provider. She concludes by saying,

> As social media is deeply intertwined with our daily lives,…we cannot deny that it has some value. We should develop a greater awareness of the aims of these companies and how they achieve them while understanding how our data is being used. This will allow us to make some simple commitments that align our social media usage to our better values. If you want to help change how technology is designed, regulated, and used, take action (Mutizira: 2020: 1).

Other South African experts such as Trefilleti (2020), argue that it is mostly a business for big tech companies that provide value to advertisers. Former Google and Facebook employee Justin Rosenstein, says in "The Social Dilemma" that,

> Social media platforms exploit emotions and pre-cognate needs like belonging, recognition, acceptance, and pleasure that are 'hard wired' into us to secure our survival. Facebook and other social media companies are hiring the smartest engineers, social psychologists, behavioural economists, and artists to hold the attention of users, while interspersing adverts between videos, photos, and status updates. They make money by offering a future that their advertisers will sell you.

Protests have been organised in South Africa long before social media. Social media, however, has been largely responsible for rapidly spreading news, creating news, and perhaps the popular agenda. Moreover, on the African continent, Wasserman, (2014: 1) argues that social media did not cause the social change that drove the Arab Spring. He says, at most, it *amplified* the efforts of opposition movements. Social media, he further cautions, may also amplify inequalities leading to more protests. Much like an amplifier, social media may "turn up the volume of those who already have access to political platforms, shove the marginalised and the poor further into the fringes and alienate young

people from formal politics". Wasserman advocates for researchers to move beyond technological fetish and euphoria.

Furthermore, Wasserman (2014) argues that as seductive as the possibilities posed by social media in citizen participation might be, it cannot be unproblematically transposed from one context to another. Many of South Africa's poor, he adds, rely on prepaid internet services to use their mobile phone and other gadgets. Although they access mobile phones, they are faced with issues of Internet connectivity in their local areas. The responsiveness of the South African government to social media should not be assumed.

Wasserman argues that public officials could easily dismiss criticisms of their policies made via social media. He also argues for the need to move beyond Habermasian notions of rational deliberation in a public sphere. Emotional expressions, whether as angry street protests or personal responses to everyday life via social media or mobile phones, should also not be considered as having political implications (Wasserman, 2014).

Providing a more nuanced but still critical account, de Lanerolle, Walton, and Schoon (2017), show that social networks have enabled communities in sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, to be connected to global telecommunications networks. Furthermore, despite high levels of inequality in South Africa, a lot of these networks are no longer just concentrated in urban areas. They are now reaching more low-income families in rural areas which de Lanerolle, Walton, and Schoon (2017) also refer to as the "less connected." Dalvit and Schoon (2018) argue that more than 70 per cent of the poorest South Africans have mobile phones and use them to access the Internet. However, they also argue that while mobile phones allow users to provide analysis and commentary on social networks, sometimes users tend to react more to sensationalist aspects of the content they are engaging in. Where connections to social networks are restricted, it is normally due to factors such as reduced availability of airtime and data (de Lanerolle, Walton, and Schoon, 2017). They also argue that WhatsApp and Facebook are among the most widely used social networks.

Cyberbullying and cyber violence against women have become a common occurrence in the country. Schoon (2012) in a piece titled "Dragging Young People Down the Drain: The Mobile Phone, Gossip Mobile Website Outoilet and the Creation of a Mobile Ghetto" argues that mobile phones "reinforced the lack of privacy through gossip. Such gossip promoted inward-looking collective sociability; subjects of gossip avoided the streets to escape

collective surveillance. Explicit sexual language was also used to shame adolescents and elderly people alike.

Furthermore, on platforms such as Facebook, many people are engrossed in thoughts on what people think of them online. For instance, some continually change their Facebook profile picture if they do not get enough 'likes'. Craving attention to attain instant fame leads some people to step over the line and post revealing pictures of their nude bodies and genitals with little or no regard to other users (Ephraim, 2013). Lack of privacy and gossip is also a concern in online participation, including loss of electricity commonly known as load shedding (Schoon, 2012; De Lanerolle, Walton and Schoon, 2017). [4]

More recent work by Schoon et al. (2020) shows that hip-hop artists in poor South African townships create their own digital commons using low costs marginal "grey" platforms. Media "circulates online with limited visibility, accessed by other remote hip-hop township communities through Facebook, so creating what she calls a translocal "ghetto internet". The ghetto Internet is limited in its potential for inclusivity or global reach, "but is translocal, in that it communally connects the periphery" (Schoon, 2017).

The practice of cyberbullying has led to fatal or near-fatal consequences in some instances (Ephraim, 2013). In April 2021, a 15-year-old Grade 10 schoolgirl in Limpopo, South Africa committed suicide by overdosing on prescription pills after a video showing her being violently beaten by a fellow pupil went viral on social media (Mlambo, 2021). According to

[4] In South Africa this right to privacy is protected under Section 14 (d) of the Constitution which states that "Everyone has the right to privacy, which includes the right not to have the privacy of the communication infringed." Intense state security surrounding surveillance practices on journalists, academics and civil society has limited the degree of insight into the true nature and extent of communications surveillance in the country (Privacy International, 2019). Research by civil society groups Media Policy and Democracy Project and the Right2Know Campaign has shed some light on this matter amid increasing reports of abuses of state institutions for partisan gain, as well as a general trend towards the surveillance of activists, journalists, and perceived political opponents (Privacy International, 2019). Further, several South African companies such as VASTech and iSolv Technologies are known to provide communications surveillance and interception services or software, though the extent of their operations in the country is unknown.

Various Bills have also been passed in South Africa since 2015 with the aim of bringing South African law in line with international standards and create specific offences for cyber-related crime such as online fraud, forgery, extortion, and terrorism (Privacy International, 2019). In 2015, a Draft Bill on Cybercrimes drew significant opposition from civic groups and the public on the basis that it would infringe on Internet freedom and expand the State's surveillance powers. In 2017, Parliament began deliberations on the Bill. In October 2018, Parliament began deliberations on a significantly revised version of the Bill, now called the Cybercrimes Bill. All provisions relating to cybersecurity have been removed from the Bill, and the provisions around "malicious communications narrowed". The Bill would need to be adopted by both houses of Parliament before it could be signed into law.

Ephraim (2013), the bad side of social media does not end there as cyberbullies may post embarrassing information or pictures on web pages, rendering their victims helpless. Incidents of body shaming, the sharing of personal information on instant messenger, posting embarrassing, threatening, or cruel messages, harassment, or impersonating another person in a demeaning or mean way have also added to the dangers of the improper use of social media (Breguet, 2007; Burton and Mutongwizo, 2009).

According to Schoon et al. (2020), digital infrastructure in Africa is sometimes marked by internet shutdowns to show the power of the state, especially during election periods. While some social networks such as Facebook are being used increasingly, they appear to still benefit the elite and perpetuate a culture of inequality (Nothias, 2020). Schoon et al. (2020) and Markham (2013) have cautioned that while adopting the use of new media in citizen participation, users and scholars must critically examine the limitations and possibilities that each platform can deliver.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed South African perspectives on democracy and citizen participation. The discussion began with a brief history of South Africa's democracy and debates on the quality of democracy especially at the local level since 1994. This chapter also outlined the optimist, pessimist, and realist views on social media, democracy, and local politics in South Africa. Lacking in the literature is a review of internal processes inside a municipality and how it communicates and organises to protect itself and its corporate and political interests. Also absent is a comparative sense of the local contexts and ways in which social media is part of the everyday lives of different classes. Chapter 4 will discuss the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter looks at the specific procedures and techniques used by the researcher to identify, select, process, and analyse information about the topic under study. This study assesses how various classes of people in different local settings in Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in protest and citizen participation using mostly qualitative methods. It is based on interviews with relevant officials from the Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities, which are among the biggest metros in South Africa. Representatives of South African civic organisations such as CBRRA, Seskhona, OUTA, SANCO, and some youth focus groups have also been purposively chosen for this study. This chapter gives a detailed overview of the methodological choices made in this study and the procedures used to answer the research question. It describes in detail, the research design, data collection, sampling methods, data analysis and interpretation, study areas, and the methodological limitations of this study.

Research can be defined as a search for knowledge or a systematic investigation to solve existing problems, prove new ideas, or develop new theories using scientific methods (Aki, 2018). He further argues that the process requires organization, resourcefulness, reflection, synthesis, and time. According to Ragin (1994), "Social research involved the interaction between ideas and evidence. Ideas help social researchers make sense of evidence, and researchers use evidence to extend, revise and test ideas." Social research, therefore, tries to create or validate theories through data collection and data analysis, and its goal is exploration, description, explanation, and prediction (PRIA International Academy, 2013). Furthermore, social research should never lead or be mistaken with philosophy or belief. It aims to find social patterns of regularity in social life and usually deals with social groups. As this one is a comparative study, it looks at two metropolitan cities, Cape Town, and Johannesburg by comparing them. Comparative research is used within most qualitative approaches and provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Miri and Shahrokh, 2019).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a framework that shows how problems that are under investigation will be resolved (Kothari, 2004). It is also an outline or plan used to generate answers to research questions (Orodho, 2003). The research was designed as a *double* comparative study across two major cities in South Africa. It compared the Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities and further compared at least two different social groups and two different youth focus groups within each city. Thus, I compared polar opposites such as Khayelitsha and Camps Bay to get a better sense of the local.

The researcher in this study did not study the entire population of Cape Town and Johannesburg. Instead, he chose a small section of citizens in Khayelitsha and Camps Bay in Cape Town, and Soweto and Sandton in Johannesburg to answer the research question and sub-questions. A total of 48 in-depth and semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews formed the basis for this study. The questions were designed to generate data that would answer the main research question and sub-questions in Chapter 1.

DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study, mostly qualitative methods were used to collect the data. The research questions in this study were sensitive to the local context. This does not mean that quantitative data was not used for this research. The primary research involved 48 in-depth and semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews with municipal officials and civic officials/office bearers within each city under study. They also included similar interviews with youth focus groups in each of the selected sub-councils/regions in each city under study. The semi-structured interviews were administered by way of a questionnaire completed by the researcher or the individual representatives of the organisations or focus group under study. Qualitative in-depth interviews are well suited to a better understanding of a phenomenon, especially when the goal is to obtain coherence, depth, and density in the data (Weiss, 1995). Furthermore, in-depth interviews are also useful for understanding the interviewee's experience, knowledge, and worldviews (Lindlof and Taylor, 2010). According to Patton (2002), the strength of in-depth interviews is that they can uncover the origins, causes, and motivations behind specific observable behaviour, which are important aspects when studying communicative practices.

In addition, the researcher spent time scanning various social media platforms and accounts of the City of Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities. The Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp accounts of both municipalities were observed to see how they deal with feedback from residents in the selected study areas or subcouncils/regions. The researcher also scanned the social media platforms of CBRRA in Camps Bay, Seskhona in Khayelitsha, OUTA in Sandton, and SANCO in Soweto. Further details on the work and history of these organisations are explained in Chapters 8 and 9 below.

Scanning is a reading technique that uses rapid eye movement and keywords to get a general view of the material. The aim of scanning is to get specific information quickly wasting time (University of Tennessee, 2013). Furthermore, they argue that scanning is used in research to answer questions requiring factual support. These are the official registered Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp accounts of both municipalities. They were scanned to see how they deal with feedback from residents in the selected study areas or subcouncils/regions. To prove the authenticity of some of the accounts, especially Twitter and Facebook, the researcher relied on the "Blue Verified Badge" which lets users know that an account of public interest is authentic. Twitter essentially verifies notable and active accounts belonging to the government, companies, brands and non-profit organizations, news organisations and journalists, people in entertainment, sports and activists, organizers, and other influential individuals (Twitter.com, n.d.). The same method was applied in choosing and scanning the social media accounts of CBRRA in Camps Bay, Seskhona in Khayelitsha, OUTA in Sandton, and SANCO in Soweto.

The researcher also used direct observation methods and conversations to assess social media usage from the various youth focus groups understudy in Camps Bay, Khayelitsha, Sandton, and Soweto. This observation method for data collection made it easier for the researcher to make comparisons of the different types of social media activities around citizen participation.

Overall, this study engaged in data triangulation which favours the use of different sources of information to increase the validity of the research. According to Thurmond (2001), the term triangulation in the social sciences describes the use of two or more methods to strengthen the research design to increase the ability to make sense of the results. Furthermore, triangulation is generally seen as a combination of methodologies to

investigate the same subject and produce more richness or a more balanced picture of the data, (Uhsemann, 2015).

This study used mostly qualitative methods to collect data via the telephone and face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The strengths of the qualitative paradigm are that it studies people in terms of their own definitions of the world, gives an insider's perspective, focuses on the subjective experience of individuals, and is sensitive to the contexts in which people interact with one another. Qualitative research also enables researchers to gather descriptive data, peoples' own written or spoken words, and observable behaviour (Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault, 2015).

Telephonic and face-to-face interviews were favoured for this study because the telephone is rapidly increasing in popularity as a method of collecting data and its main advantage is the low cost and high response rate (McBurney and White, 2009). Face-to-face interviews also helped with more accurate screening as the individual being interviewed is less likely to provide false information during screening (Snapsurvey.com, 2019). Furthermore, face-to-face interviews capture verbal and non-verbal cues, including body language, which can indicate a certain level of discomfort with questions. They may also help to maintain the focus of the interviewee and capture an interviewee's emotions and behaviours (Snapsurvey.com, 2019). The researcher is also able to clarify unfamiliar terminology and provide clarification to unfamiliar jargon on the spot in telephone and face-to-face interviews, thus saving time and avoiding the need for follow-ups (Mahajan-Cusack, 2016).

The interview questions were mostly open-ended. McBurney and White (2009) argue that open-ended questions permit the respondents to answer in their own words. The questions also enable respondents to answer more completely and to reveal the reasoning behind their answers. The interviews were administered by way of a questionnaire completed by the researcher or the individual representatives of the organisations or focus group under study. In a bid to gather rich qualitative data, research participants were encouraged to 'talk' about their real-life experiences using a form of "contemporary storytelling" (Gubrium and Holstein, 1998).

The research participants above included nominated municipal officials (political and administrative) who hold a decision-making role relating to social media, protest, or citizen participation. A combination of political and administrative participants was preferred for this study because their roles and responsibilities in a municipality are not the same, even

though they may sometimes overlap (Salga, 2011). For example, political office bearers represent their parties and policies in council, with the majority determining the priority spending areas. They also represent their wards and the people who live in them. However, administrative officials implement policies and programmes designed by political office bearers and may view certain operations differently from their political leaders (Salga, 2011). The research participants also included civic organisations and their office bearers operating in the metropolitan municipalities understudy and youth focus groups within each of the selected communities.

Youth focus groups, moderated by the researcher using semi-structured interviews, were also favoured for this study because, besides being a popular technique for gathering qualitative data, they are used to find out the issues of most concern for a community or group when not much information is available (Morgan, 1996). Focus groups may also be undertaken to discover preliminary issues that are of concern in a group or community (Kandil, 2018). By definition, a semi-structured interview is a verbal interchange when one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking a list of predetermined questions (Longhurst, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were favoured for this study because, besides being among the most often used in the social sciences, the interview is open and allows new ideas to be brought up during the interview because of what the interviewee says (Edwards and Holland, 2013). The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored as demonstrated in the questionnaire of this study (Bjornholt and Farstad, 2012). A list of semi-structured questions which cover broad categories and themes of social media, protest, and citizen participation are presented in this study as Appendix 1, Appendix 2, and Appendix 3. The questions follow a pattern defined by Morgan (1997) as a “funnel” strategy, whereby the researcher starts by asking participants more general questions or topics, allowing free debate and discussions before moving onto more specific questions in line with the research question and aims and objectives of this study.

The breakdown of the interviews and the potential interviewees of this study are explained in detail in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Number and type of research interviews/engagements conducted

Organisation	Interviewees	No of interviews/ engagements
Cape Town Metro	Department officials	4
Johannesburg Metro	Department officials	4
Seskhona	Leaders/Office bearers	2
SANCO	Leaders/Office bearers	2
CBRRA	Leaders/Office bearers	2
OUTA	Leaders/Office bearers	2
Youth Focus Groups	Youths (8 in each subcouncil)	32
		48

There are four focus groups in this study. Youth invited to participate in this study were recruited from each of the four identified subcouncils/regions in Cape Town and Johannesburg. In Cape Town, the researcher conducted the focus groups, but in Johannesburg, a researcher was commissioned to conduct 2 focus groups. In Camps Bay, there was also two white youth. Youth focus groups were drawn from the Camps Bay and Khayelitsha subcouncils respectively and likewise in Johannesburg. Youth were meant to reside in each area under study. Focus groups in the two cities met in an informal setting to talk mostly at restaurants. The process of focus groups aimed to assess how various classes of people in Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in protest and citizen participation. In all the focus groups, there was also a written component where participants recorded their views in writing.

SELECTION METHOD

In all cases, the non-probability purposive/judgement sampling method was chosen. This method, also known as selective, or subjective sampling, allows the researcher to use his/her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in a survey, rather than random selection (Black, 2010). He further argues that it is a less stringent

method and is also carried out by observation. It is used widely by researchers for qualitative research and may result in saving time and money.

The researcher works as a journalist, and this came with certain privileges in the research process such as the right to use confidential information while guaranteeing the anonymity of his sources. In the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality, I approached various municipal officials (political and administrative) who hold a decision-making role in social media, protest, or citizen participation for an interview. For civic organisations such as the Camps Bay and Clifton Rate Payers, I invited participation via email. For Seskhona I directly interviewed a key leadership figure (Loyiso Nkohla).

Initial contact was made by telephone or email with municipal officials and members of civic organisations to determine whether they are interested in taking part in this study. A convenient time for the interview was then arranged and a consent letter was emailed to each participant before the interview. For all participants, a consent letter contained a statement and brief purpose of the research, the degree of confidentiality assured to participants, and information that participants were free at any time to discontinue their participation in this study.

For example, to avoid issues of consent from parents of young people taking part in the study, a group aged 18 to 35-years-old was chosen. The researcher also elected to use the pilot method to test that the research questions flowed well and were easily understood by respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND LIMITATIONS

As with any study, there are a few limitations that must be noted. Not everyone invited to participate in the study eventually took part. Not all research participants answered the questions they were asked fully. The researcher minimised any further risks by simplifying the questions as much as possible for the participants.

Due to time constraints and the availability of research participants, the number of interview questions in this study was scaled down. Therefore, a possible limitation is the unintended exclusion of certain useful information about experiences of implementing social media in protest and citizen participation in local government.

CHAPTER 5: EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS, AND ACCESS IN CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG

This chapter will focus on specific empirical dimensions of social media and technological change in two of South Africa's leading cities that have also experimented with neoliberal governance. It will look at the evolution of social media, and how it ties in with the concept of information, news and protest politics, and the construction of the citizen. I will also provide a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the two major South African cities and their sub-populations. Since South Africa is among the world's most unequal countries, and the racial spatial divide is stark, average statistics are especially misleading and disaggregation is needed as this chapter shows.

The country's NDP launched in 2012 is South Africa's blueprint to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, and it recognises access to, and the application of ICT as critical enablers in the fight against poverty and improving citizen participation. An R1,9 billion allocation by National Treasury for high-speed Internet in 2013 was seen by economists and political analysts as a step forward in the right direction for the country (National Treasury, 2018). This coupled with the national government's policy to deliver Internet access to 90 per cent of the country's population by 2020, and 100 per cent by 2030 has also been widely welcomed (National Treasury, 2018).

Despite the rhetoric, South Africa has slipped lower in e-government global rankings. For example, in 2001, the country was ranked first in Africa for e-government, but in 2018, South Africa followed Mauritius as Africa's leader in Internet and broadband connectivity (See Figure 11 below).

Figure 11: Top ten e-government countries in Africa 2018

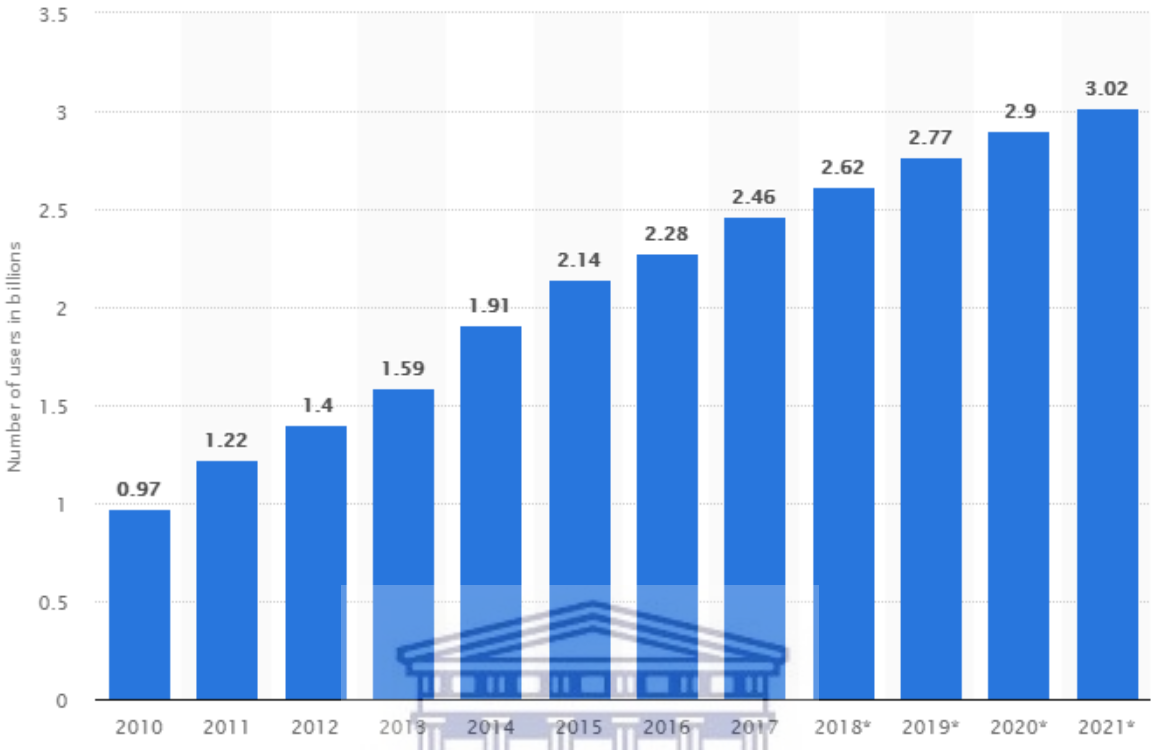
Country	Sub-region	OSI	HCI	TII	EGDI	EGDI Level	2018 Rank
Mauritius	Eastern Africa	0.7292	0.7308	0.5435	0.6678	High	66
South Africa	Southern Africa	0.8333	0.7291	0.4231	0.6618	High	68
Tunisia	Northern Africa	0.8056	0.6640	0.4066	0.6254	High	80
Seychelles	Eastern Africa	0.6181	0.7299	0.5008	0.6163	High	83
Ghana	Western Africa	0.6944	0.5669	0.3558	0.5390	High	101
Morocco	Northern Africa	0.6667	0.5278	0.3697	0.5214	High	110
Cabo Verde	Western Africa	0.4861	0.6152	0.3926	0.4980	Medium	112
Egypt	Northern Africa	0.5347	0.6072	0.3222	0.4880	Medium	114
Rwanda	Eastern Africa	0.7222	0.4815	0.1733	0.4590	Medium	120
Namibia	Southern Africa	0.4514	0.5850	0.3299	0.4554	Medium	121

Source: UN E-Government Survey (2018)

SMART CITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In April 2019, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed a commission of inquiry to "assist government in taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the digital industrial revolution". In his second State of the Nation Address delivered in June 2019, President Ramaphosa also spoke about his dream since the dawn of democracy to build new smart cities "founded on the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution". He emphasized the importance of the "connection" of smart cities with well-functioning skyscrapers, schools, universities, and hospitals and faster internet connections. South Africa, he said should keep up with global trends. Figure 12 below shows the growing number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2016 with projections until 2021.

Figure 12: Number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2021 (in billions)



Source: www.statista.com (2018)

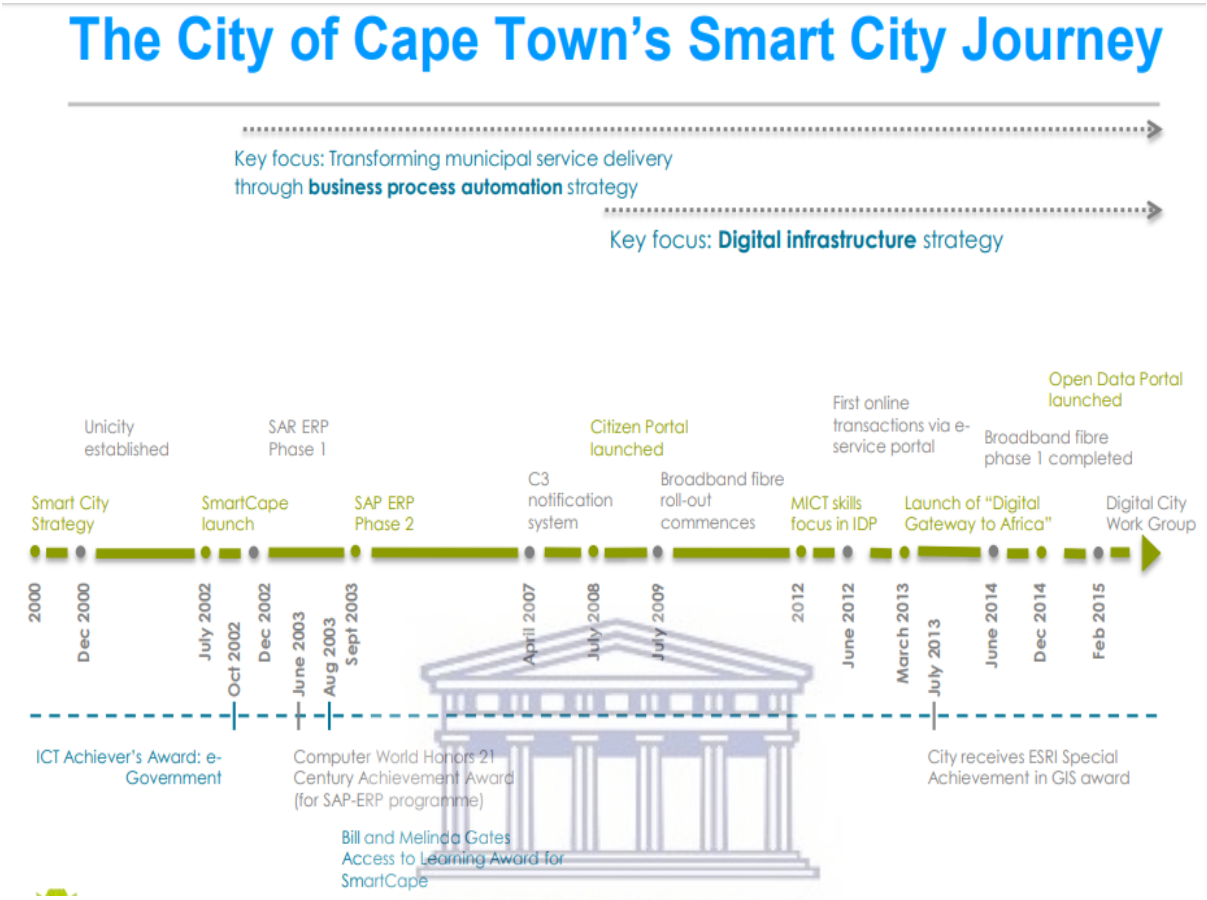
Global market researchers argue that social network penetration worldwide is ever-increasing (Statista.com, 2018). A dramatic rise in mobile phone usage in Africa in the last 20 years could be due to the fact there has been almost zero growth in fixed-line infrastructure, necessitating citizens to look to other sources for their communication requirements (Thinyane et al., 2015).

THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN AS A SMART CITY

Mahajan-Cusack (2016) argues that municipalities are less constrained than the national government in their explorations of new media methods to improve service delivery because they have smaller geographical boundaries. The bigger debate around social media, protest, and citizen participation in South Africa is further fuelled by factors such as lack of access to data for poor communities in cities and rural areas due to “high data costs” (Mahajan-Cusack, 2016). As De Lanerolle (2018) shows, data costs can be 64 times higher for the poor compared to wealthy users who can afford large bundles.

The City of Cape Town first initiated the Smart City Strategy in 2000 (Cape Town Digital Strategy, 2000). At the adoption of the strategy, officials hoped it would help them to meet their goals for job creation and economic growth. They also hoped the strategy would improve the engagement of residents and contribute to the building of high-quality public services that could be accessible to a wide range of citizens, (Cape Town Digital Strategy, 2000). While former Cape Town Mayor Patricia De Lille stated her aspiration for Cape Town as becoming the first truly Digital City in Africa, little is understood what this means, how it will be achieved, and by whom (Musakwa and Mokoena, 2017). South Africa's stubbornly high unemployment rate has persisted, and a jobs summit hosted in 2018 that brought together key stakeholders from government, business, and labour was criticized by some economists for failing to find ways of tackling unemployment because "delegates did not ask the right questions or shied away from difficult debates" (Skae, 2018). Cape Town's growth-oriented model, according to Olver (2021, 250) is based on "intimate relationships between developers and the political elite, exercised centralized control over land rights, which were allocated to entrenched property interests". In 2020, Despite the gloomy economic picture above, the City of Cape Town has forged ahead with its smart city as seen in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: The City of Cape Town's Smart City from 2000



Source: Digital City Strategy - Accelerate Cape Town (2015)

Cape Town's Citizen Portal, as shown in Figure 13, was launched in 2007 as part of plans to enable the constitutional rights of residents to access information held by the City of Cape Town (City of Cape Town, 2016a). The city's digital strategy has four dimensions illustrated in detail in Table 4 below. The dimensions include digital government to harness digital tools to stimulate innovation and drive transparency, improving the level, quality and reach of service deliver, Digital Inclusion to close the digital divide by promoting digital access, improving digital skills and driving digital initiatives that enhance quality of life for all, Digital Economy to build technology enabled enterprises and growth in the digital economy and possibly contribute towards job creation and Digital Infrastructure to make the city the most connected city in Africa with the lowest telecoms service tariff. As discussed by De Lanerolle, data costs are still higher for poor communities despite the implementation of Cape Town's Digital Strategy.

According to Boyle and Staines (2019), local governments must deal with complex demands for services through increased urbanisation and there is pressure on them to come up with innovative ways to deliver on their “complex mandates”. Improved ICT has the potential to advance the management and coordination of cities to contribute to an improved quality of life for citizens (Backhouse, 2015). A study by pro-business PWC South Africa in 2017 found that to meet the needs of changing citizens in a changing world, the City of Cape Town had to introduce personalised services where citizens are treated as customers.

The City of Cape Town employing almost 30,000 people has a reputation for sound urban finance and infrastructure programmes that are consistent service delivery and open governance. Cape Town’s four pillars of the digital strategy are presented in Table 4 below and then further explained in detail.

Table 4. Pillars of the City of Cape Town’s Digital Strategy

Pillar	Aims/Objectives
Digital Government	- Driving transparency - Enhancing service delivery - Promoting citizen engagement through ICT
Digital Inclusion	- Closing the digital divide by promoting digital access - improving digital skills - Promoting digital initiatives that enhance the quality of life
Digital Economy	- Creating an enabling environment for growth of tech-enabled enterprises - Maximizing job creation potential
Digital Infrastructure	- Ensuring ICT infrastructure roll-out - Using digital solutions to enhance the effectiveness of critical city infrastructure

Source: Boyle and Staines (2019)

According to Boyle and Staines (2019), the focus of Digital Government: is around how the city uses technology to improve service delivery and run an efficient administration. The backbone of this pillar is the ERP system that the city introduced in the early 2000s. The system has integrated all the organisation’s business processes into a single digital platform. They note that key principles of this pillar such as open data portals and inclusion

and innovation are not adequately acted upon. For example, the open data portal is up and running but does not have an Application Programme Interface that would allow applications to be developed from city-data. In terms of inclusion, the city aims to ensure that digital technology is employed to enhance access to a broader audience, but this App is still to be developed. They also note that in terms of seeking out and encouraging digital innovation, the city's institutional arrangements make it difficult for innovation to take place. This pillar appears to be much more theoretical than demonstrable. The City of Cape Town began installing water demand meters called smart Water Management Devises across the city in 2018 to amongst others reduce water leaks and accurately capture water-metre readings. However, smart" water meters have not been reliable and have been resisted since they automatically cut off residents in arrears – a digital dictatorship.

To foster digital inclusion, the City of Cape Town has introduced The SmartCape initiative to introduce free Internet access and computers to public libraries, construct optical fibre networks throughout the city (City of Cape Town, 2016b; Odendaal, 2006). The city has also put in place new computerised safety systems linking to police databases and started using mobile, websites and social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube) to communicate and engage with individuals and community organisations. This also includes sending SMS messages to ward forum members and making use of toll-free numbers to make inquiries (Bagui and Bytheway, 2013). They argue that these innovations do not always open efficient channels of public participation in the city. Further, Boyle and Staines (2019) argue that the technological systems put in place have not always succeeded in shrinking the digital divide that exists when one considers factors such as high data costs. Despite ICT, transport congestion continues to be a major failure in the city alongside socio-political failures (McDonald 2012). The city is hostile to robust criticisms and NGOs. The city's focus on the digital economy indicates an emphasis on creating a globally competitive city that attracts investment and talent. Yet many black Africans find the experience of the city to be racialised.

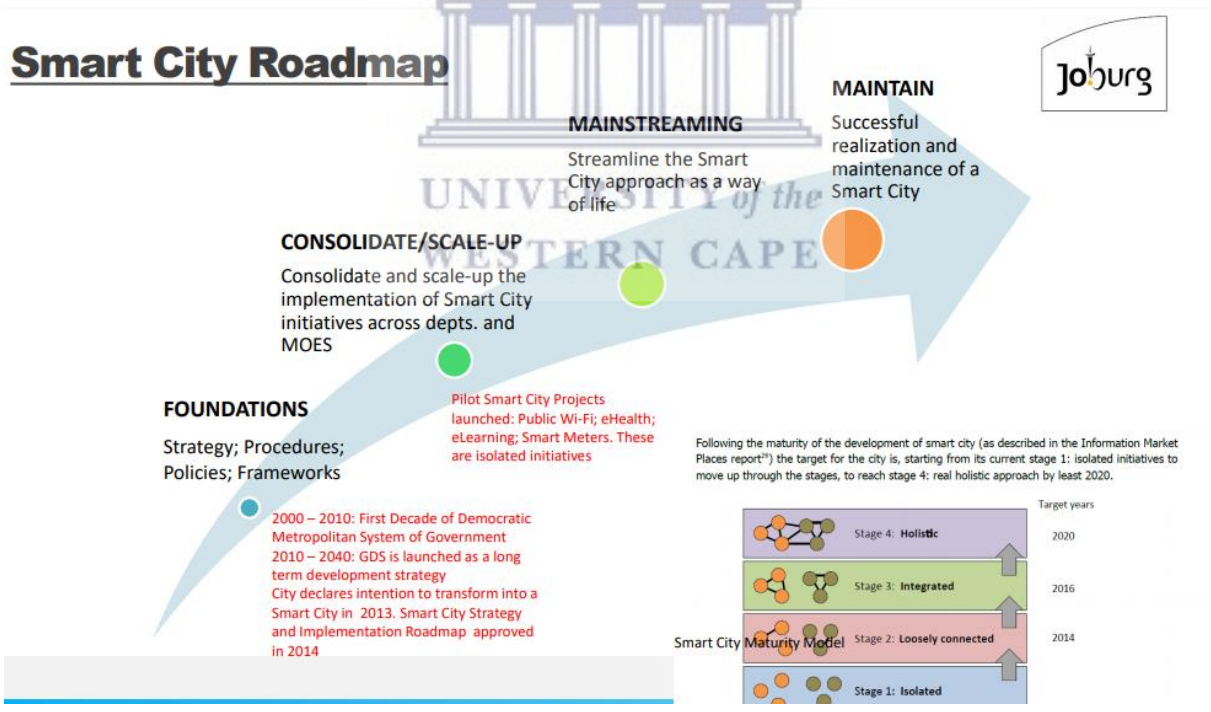
Willis and Aurigi (2018) argue that in its current form, the City of Cape Town's Digital strategy may be seen as promoting a system of technocratic governance where issues are treated like "technical problems" and are given "technical solutions." It may fail to address deep-rooted structural issues and further centralizing power and decision-making, leaving e-citizenry powerless. Furthermore, the absence of key monitoring indicators may suggest

that concepts around “smart” urbanism are yet to be fully adopted and understood by the political leadership of the city and the strategy does not receive the attention that it should.

THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG AS A SMART CITY

Johannesburg in the 1990s was one of the first treasury-driven neoliberal experiments to create a “world-class” city under the leadership of Ketso Gordhan and Roland Hunter (Hall 2000). The City of Johannesburg recently adopted a “Smart City Strategy” to grow its ability to provide services that are people-centric, available to all, and are easy to access and use (Joburg Smart City Strategy 2019/21). Being citizen-centric also means the availability of free WiFi, Broadband 5G to all communities and regions of the city. Figure 14 below is the smart city roadmap for the City of Johannesburg.

Figure 14: Smart City Roadmap for the City of Johannesburg



Source: Joburg Smart City Strategy (2019-2021)

A proposed revision in the city’s smart strategy is that,

> The City of Joburg is digitally transforming to become a citizen-centric, inclusive smart city that makes decisions and governs through technologically enhanced engagement with citizens who have universal access to services and information that enhances pro-poor socio-economic development and efficient service

delivery that makes the city safe, sustainable, liveable and resilient (Joburg Smart City Strategy, 2019-2021: 8)

According to Bwalya (2019), the City of Johannesburg has also stepped-up efforts to rebrand itself as a smart city and a competitive city focused on innovation to improve the life experiences of its residents. He further argues that the direct implication of many smart city interventions and projects in South Africa is that there will be an improved experience of the cities by the citizens and that information will be accessed ubiquitously to make intelligent decisions anywhere and anytime. The City of Johannesburg has six strategic pillars presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Six strategic pillars of the City of Johannesburg's Smart City Strategy

Pillar	Aims/Objectives
Smart Citizen and Citizen Centricity	- To ensure that citizens are at the centre of all initiatives to develop the city into a compelling investment destination, and a place to live, work, and play in. - Ensuring that citizens of the City of Joburg are empowered with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to take advantage of available technologies to make them "smart citizens." - To use the opportunities presented by digital technology to grow as entrepreneurs, and to develop own innovations and start-up businesses.
Connectivity and Universal Access	- Ensuring that the city is fully connected via broadband and other communication infrastructure. -Ensuring that Internet access is made available throughout the city so as to eliminate the digital divide.
Digital/Smart Economy	- Stimulating and extracting the economic benefits of a digital economy. The focus is on citizens learning new skills and adopting new ways of living, working, engaging and operating businesses. - Developing talent to meet the future market demands and attracting investment into the sector.
Smart Governance and Institution	- Building open, democratic, and people centred governance. - Building institutions geared to provide services in the most convenient and efficient manner, aided by technology and efficient business processes.
Smart Services	- Understanding the needs of citizens and providing a 24/7 basket of services that are efficient and responsive.
Green and Sustainable Environment	- Taking advantage of advances in technology, and

	encouraging innovation to facilitate more efficient, convenient, and sustainable access to services, and the protection of the environment.

Source: Joburg Smart City Strategy (2019-2021)

These strategies are cut and paste consultancy documents that are very general and lack details and are often inappropriate given the basic problems facing the city. According to Musakwa and Mokoena (2017), the City of Johannesburg has focused on getting citizens connected to the Internet through partnering with corporate entities. Some of the projects include improving fibre Internet connections to public libraries, use of state-of-the-art video learning in libraries, free Wi-Fi hotspots in the city, training of youths in ICT, smart policing through closed-circuit television surveillance, the digital ambassadors' programmes which train households in digital literacy and the e-health project that was piloted in 15 clinics (Johannesburg, 2016).

The application of ICT in some of the public services in Johannesburg such as public transport has led to improved governance, participation, and better response on problems and service delivery (Musakwa and Mokoena, 2017). For example, complaints can be easily logged online and citizens post complaints on social media. The city also has functional websites that link to others and enabling access to Wi-Fi has improved access to opportunities for citizens, but Johannesburg is still having issues with its billing systems.

According to Musakwa and Mokoena (2017), the issue of crime has been a challenge in rolling out infrastructure in Johannesburg and Cape Town. They further argue that a top-down approach to implementing digital strategies can often undermine a well-meaning digital strategy. This coupled with officials who do not understand the needs of the people. Despite its ambitious ICT projects, the digital divide in Johannesburg cannot be ignored (Odendaal, 2003) but neither can incompetency and corruption. The bungling of the upgrade of the revenue collection software led to massive backlogs in operations of the revenue department and frustrations for thousands of residents (Randburg Sun, 2017).

Some scholars also argue that smart city initiatives can further entrench inequality and introduce new forms of social surveillance and state management. Gillian Hart for example refers to the Metros' invasive water service delivery which entails the "bar-coding" of citizens (Hart 2010). Johannesburg just like Cape Town is a world of two cities with affluent areas

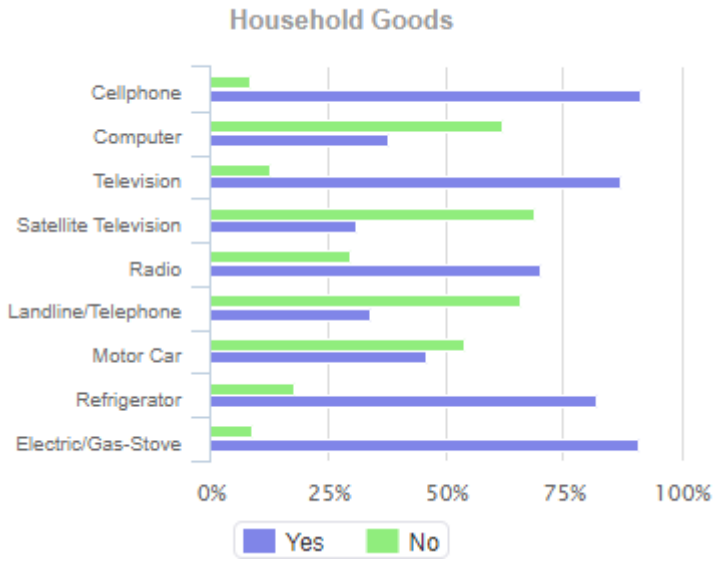
trying to keep the poor out of their areas (Pieterse, 2002; Musakwa and Mokoena, 2017). They argue that it is difficult for the City of Johannesburg to address the social divide linked to the digital divide. “Do the residents want ICT (Wi-Fi hot spots etc.) or reliable basic services such as water, electricity, and housing? Or do they need both? They make the argument that perhaps Johannesburg and Cape Town should not be prioritising grand designs for potential investors that do not benefit citizens and rather tailor their ICT projects to suit their citizens.

PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN CAPE TOWN

The City of Cape Town consisted of 1 234 317 households in 2018 (COGTA, 2020). Government says the city is experiencing a rapid increase in the number of households being formed and the rate of new household formation outpaces that of population growth. For instance, the population increased by 7,1 per cent from 2011–2016 but the number of households increased by 18,4 percent. Further, the city is the second largest contributor to national employment after Johannesburg, contributing 9,9 per cent in 2018. In 2019, there were 2 016 021 or 45.9 per cent million people (mostly Black) living in poverty and the number was expected to grow even further due to a rising unemployment rate (COGTA, 2020). In 2016, the number of households without electricity in the municipality stood at 1,3 per cent or 51 653. Access to electricity is crucial for lighting and charging mobile devices for citizen participation online. Understanding the dynamics and characteristics of households in the municipality is critical in assessing how citizens can be expected to participate online in protest and governance issues.

Figure 15 below shows a breakdown of household goods ownership, including cellular phones and computers in Cape Town, Internet access, and levels of education in the metropolitan municipality. The data reflects various periods based on the availability the relevant statistics.

Figure 15: Household goods ownership in the City of Cape Town



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 15 above shows that 91.3 per cent of households in Cape Town own a cellphone and 37.9 per cent own a computer. A high percentage of cellular phones are not on contract and hence users face steep costs of out-of-bundle data. In addition to exorbitant transport costs in Cape Town, more and more administrative processes happen online such as applying for school or registering a business, forcing the poor to buy data. The Vodacom out-of-bundle data rate from 2017 was R990 per gigabyte of data (News24.com, 2018).

Since 2017, Cape Town has implemented a strategy for the R10 million WiFi rollout (Chatsworth Rising Sun, 2017). Cape Town deployed 206 WiFi hotspots at a budgeted cost of R7 million for the 2016/2017 financial year. The system allows for 100MB free data allocation at 30Mbps connection speed per user. The city has 608 000 unique users registered and the system allows users to buy additional WiFi vouchers once their data allocation has expired. (Chatsworth Rising Sun, 2017). Figure 16 below shows a breakdown of public WiFi hotspots during the study period in 2017. In 2021, government expanded its offerings of free Public Wi-Fi hotspots with increased data allocation and at faster speeds in a project worth R3 billion (Westerncape.gov.za, 2021). The provincial government argues that the rollout of the free WiFi is important for communities, including young people, and creates opportunities for them.

Figure 16: Public WiFi hotspots in Cape Town in 2017

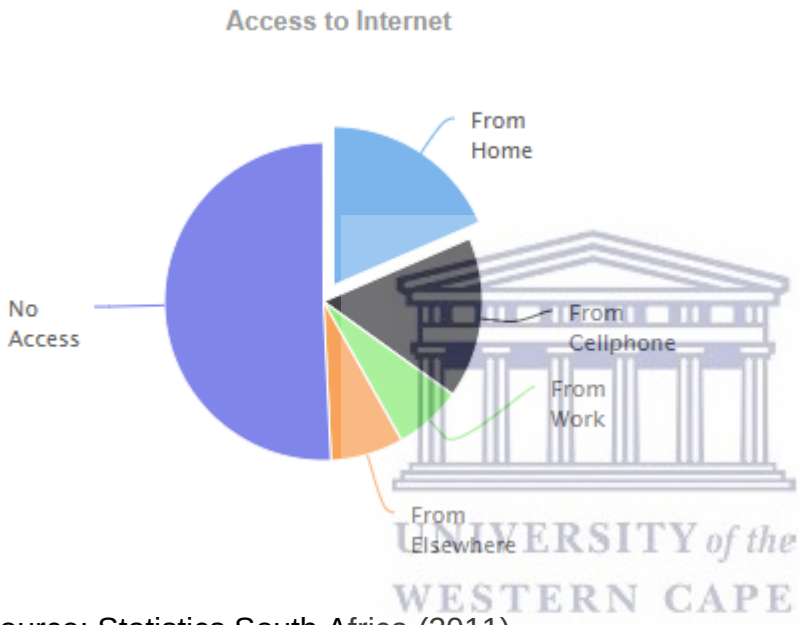
Source: Tech-Thursday (2017)

Despite the well-meaning intentions of the Western Cape provincial government and the City of Cape Town, Figure 14 shows the rollout of the free WiFi hotspots are concentrated in older areas in the metro, excluding Khayelitsha, -- the biggest and poorest township in the metro with a population of 391 749 and 118 809 households (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The distribution of the service seems to be uneven and in favour of white affluent areas such as Camps Bay. In comparison, the population in Khayelitsha was predominantly Black African (99 per cent) in 2011 with a 38.02 per cent unemployment rate, whereas Camps Bay had a population of 4 982 and the number of households was 1 947 (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The total unemployment rate in Camps Bay was 3.29 per cent according to the same census.

The unequal distribution of WiFi technology in Cape Town can be explained in terms of the politics of infrastructure. Rubin et al. (2020: 164) argue “that central to our understanding of infrastructure is the underlying idea that, despite instincts to the contrary, decision-making regarding technology and its provision and maintenance are highly politicised processes

that cannot be divorced from questions of identity, privilege and contestation." They also argue that infrastructures of inequality are in themselves sites of contestation, controversy and conflict and communities who want more equitable distributions of resources also want to be recognized as equal citizens with the same "humanness" as others. "….Infrastructures are never simply technical or material, nor are they merely social. They are always also political" (Rubin et al., 2020: 165).

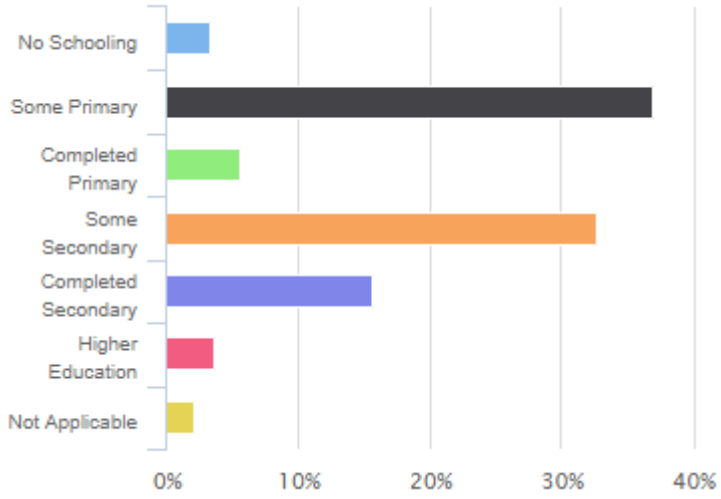
Figure 17: Internet access in the City of Cape Town



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 17 above shows that 50.7 per cent of households in Cape Town have no Internet access, 18.5 per cent access the Internet from the home, 16. 4 per cent access the Internet from their cellphone, 6.9 per cent access it from work, and 7.4 per cent from elsewhere. Whites make up 16 per cent of the almost 4 million population in the city. By 2016, 21 per cent of households had home internet (StatsSA Community Survey 2016). The breakdown of literacy levels in Cape Town as they apply are shown in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18: Levels of education in Cape Town



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

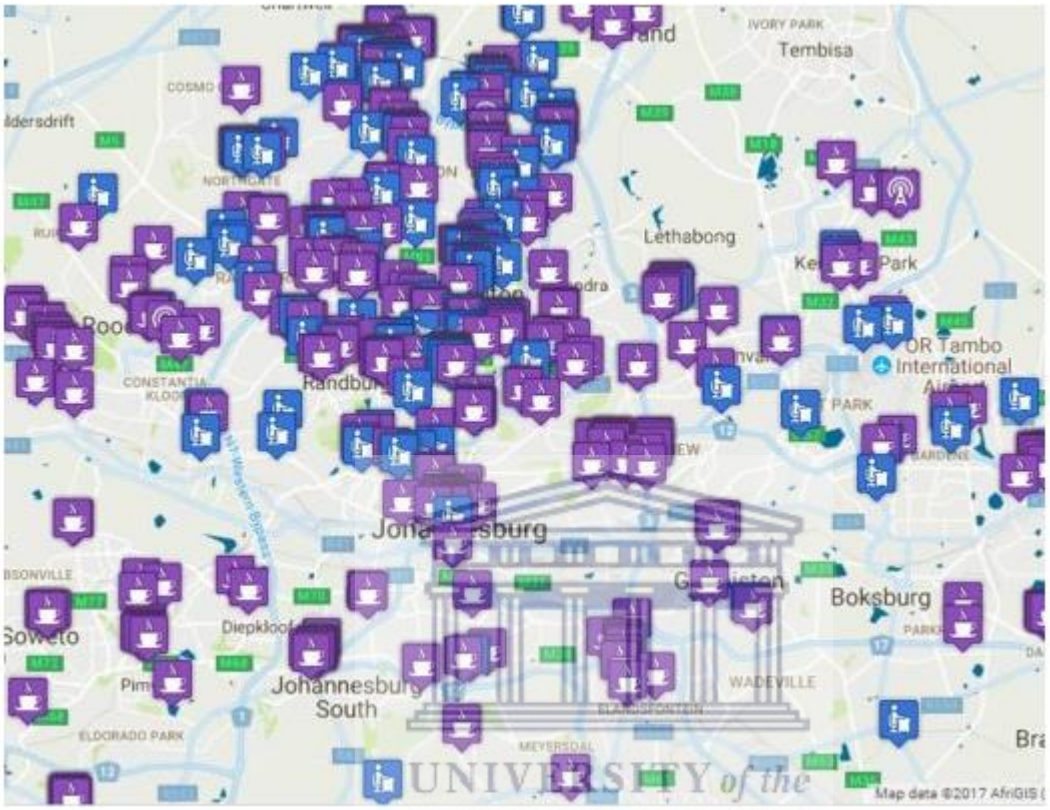
Figure 18 above shows that 37.0 per cent have some primary school education, 5. 6 per cent completed primary education, 32.7 per cent have some secondary education, 15.6 per cent completed secondary education, 3.7 per cent have a higher education. However, a 2016 Community Survey showed that 48 per cent of Cape Town residents had completed matric, which is 10 per cent higher than the national average (COGTA, 2019). Only 6 per cent had an undergraduate degree and 5 percent a post graduate qualification, with about 2 per cent of Cape Town residents having no education (COGTA, 2019). The figures represent an improvement in education levels over 10-year period.

PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN JOHANNESBURG

Municipalities in the Gauteng province have also relied on partnerships with non-governmental organisations such as Jozi Digital Ambassadors for their rollout of free public WiFi (Tech-Thursday, 2017). Johannesburg has 1 000 WiFi hotspots rolled out across public areas in January 2017. Further, the city announced that the so-called Jozi Free WiFi App could be downloaded through the iPhone App Store and Android's Google Play (Chatsworth Rising Sun, 2017). Free public WiFi has been rolled out at more than 80 libraries, 30 clinics, swimming pools, Rea Vaya bus stations, and more hotspots. As this is a comparative study, the same arguments made for Cape Town above are made for

Johannesburg. Figure 19 below shows a breakdown of the free public WiFi hotspots in Johannesburg during the 2017 study period.

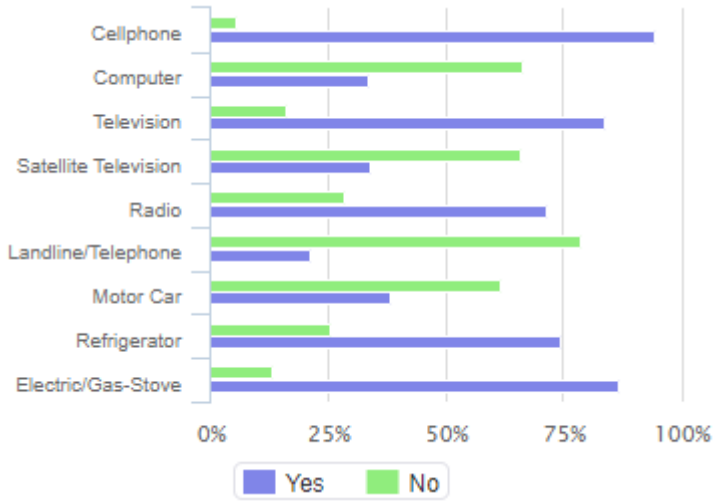
Figure 19: Public WiFi hotpots in Johannesburg in 2017



Source: Tech-Thursday (2017)

Johannesburg is the largest city in South Africa (Census, 2011). Also known as Jozi, Joburg, or Egoli, the city is in the wealthiest province in South Africa. There are 1 434 856 households in the municipality with an average household size of 2.8 persons per household. By presenting the same argument made for Cape Town earlier to help the reader better understand the key focus areas of this comparative study, Figures 20 to 22 below offer a breakdown of the ownership of household goods (including cellphones and computers), Internet access, and levels of education in the metropolitan municipality during the study period in 2011. The data was chosen and presented based on the availability the relevant statistics.

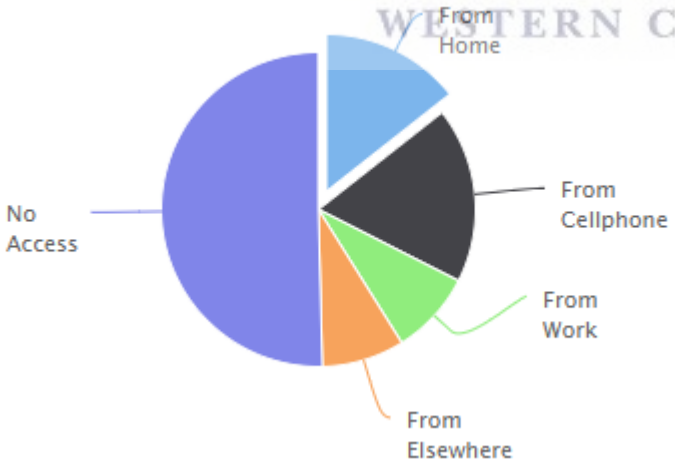
Figure 20: Household goods ownership in the City of Johannesburg



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 20 above shows that 94.4 per cent of households in Johannesburg own a cellphone and 33.6 per cent own a computer. These gadgets are being singled out because of their role in facilitating online participation as discussed in this study.

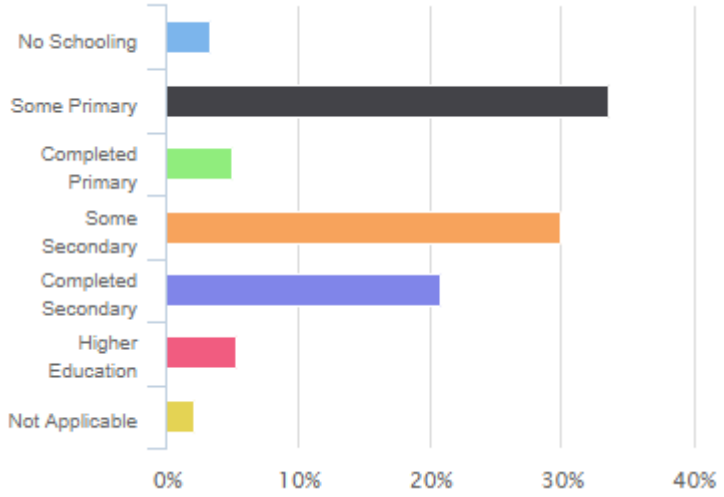
Figure 21: Internet access in Johannesburg



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 21 above shows that in 2011, 50. 4 per cent of households in Johannesburg have no Internet access, 14.4 per cent access the Internet from the home, 18. 1 per cent access the Internet from their cellphone, 8.6 per cent access it from work, and 8.5 per cent from elsewhere.

Figure 22: Education levels in Johannesburg

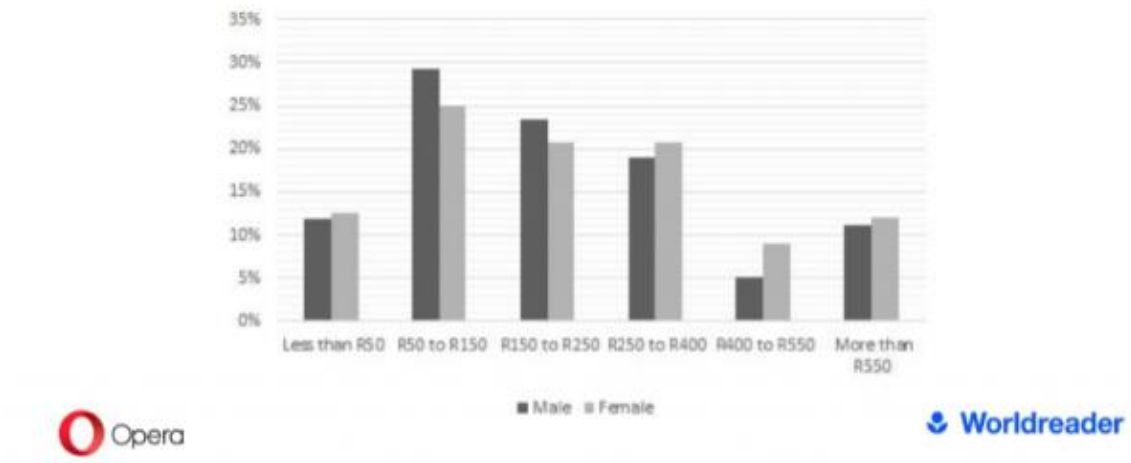


Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 22 above shows that 3.3 per cent of households in Johannesburg do not have an education, 33.6 per cent have some primary school education, 5. 0 per cent completed primary education, 30.0 per cent have some secondary education, 20.8 per cent completed secondary education, 5.3 per cent have a higher education and 2.1 per cent are listed as not applicable. However, according to COGTA (2019), the number of people without any schooling in Gauteng decreased from 2008 to 2018 by an average annual rate of -1.97 per cent, while the number of people within the "matric only" category, increased from 848,000 to 1.28 million. They argue that overall improvement in the level of education is visible in Johannesburg.

Figure 23 below also shows the large amounts of money that South Africans spend per month on mobile data considering their disposable income. This is critical to understanding the digital divider and the costs associated with going online for the average citizen.

Figure 23: Money spent on mobile data package per month in South Africa (2017)



Source: BusinessTech (2017)

On average people spend between R50 and R400 a month on data to get to the Internet (this might exclude SMS and calls). Males seem to spend more.

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the evolution of social media platforms and investments in ICT as part of the growth of "smart city" and urban "digital strategies". These cities are still in the roll-out stages of the promised "smart" cities to connect skyscrapers, schools, universities, and hospitals to faster internet hubs. While the number of Internet users is high, the digital divide is glaring as only a small percentage of South Africans in these cities can still access the Internet from their homes. Most people who access the Internet do so using their cellular phones. While both Cape Town and Johannesburg embrace the idea of being "smart cities", the project is not moving fast enough and remains uneven. In fact, in Cape Town, the rollout still favours more affluent communities. Residents in both cities spend considerable portion of income a month on data to access thereby excluding most from digital citizenship.

CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, YOUTH, MEDIA, STATE RESPONSES, AND PROTEST POLITICS

> Virtually no day goes by in South Africa without protest action. A fresh discourse must begin around service delivery, and it should be based on respect for citizens' rights in terms of the Constitution, while fostering responsibility within communities. Local government is meant to be about partnerships, after all (February, 2018: 1)
>
> By now it should be glaringly obvious to national government that the electorate is outraged at the poor performance of local government. The fact that this appears to have surprised President Jacob Zuma is indisputable evidence that his regime has lost touch with local concerns, and that, in turn, constitutes a tectonic crack in the notion of democracy itself (Patel, 2011:1)

This chapter examines social movements, the empirical dimensions of protests, and the potential and actual uses of social media in politics in South Africa. We assess the role of youth in protests and state responses. This chapter serves to introduce themes to be explored in more depth in later chapters.

SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, PARTICIPATION, AND PROTEST

In assessing the use of social media in citizen participation by various classes and communities in Cape Town and Johannesburg, it is important for this study to look at the history and role played by social movements/civic organisations in South Africa. Throughout the 1980s, struggle movements (from civics to youth and UDF aligned advice offices and churches) produced their own media (Grassroots, MoloSongolo, Community Arts Project for example) and culture to spread the message. They mainly used leaflets, newsletters, posters, murals, street art and graffiti (Van Kessel, 2000).

After the 1990s, during South Africa's transition from apartheid rule to a democratic government, much of the ANC rhetoric stressed the need for an independent civil society (Greenstein, 2003) and "governance" with partners. However, many UDF-linked civil society organisations found it was not easy to maintain a balance between political support for the ANC and their own critical independence and many closed down. Leonard (2017) argues that while anti-apartheid social movements fought as a collective against an oppressive regime and social injustices, post-apartheid civil society is fragmented in its fight against issues such as poor service delivery, crime, and environmental pollution. He further argues

that research in the field of social movements has not explored the underlying elements contributing to this problem (Leonard, 2014).

After the 1994 general election, at first in South Africa's main urban centres and then later in rural communities, a collection of leftist social movements arose to challenge the privatisation of services and a lack of the delivery of services, such as water, electricity, and housing (McKinley, 2004; Hlatshwayo, 2007). Desai (2002) argues that what distinguishes these social movements from political parties and other non-governmental organisations is their mass mobilisation as the prime source of social sanction. Many of the social movements, such as the Landless People's Movement, had an increasingly militant opposition to the policies of the ANC post-1994 and this soon led to a "rupture" between those organisations/movements opposed to the ANC and those supporting the ANC, such as the South African National Civic Organisation, Congress of South African Trade Unions (McKinley, 2004).

Social movements cover a wide range of issues: some may be based mainly on the poor while others on the middle class. The latter are mainly defensive and based on property ownership and typically "short-sighted" in their orientation (Pieterse, 2009). Meanwhile, bourgeois social movements also grew around high-security residential and gated estates, also protecting the rights of residents to choose private health and education. Although social movements must hold the government to account, some seek to block the government from making changes (the idea of a wealth tax; the move to a National Health Insurance). The more middle-class social movements have relied on litigation to get their voices heard rather than mass mobilisation or violent protest (Leonard, 2014).

Leaders of social movements operate at the grassroots/neighbourhood level and claim to represent collective local interests (Bénit-Gbaffou et al., 2013). Munro (2008) argues that leaders of social movements must fight for their legitimacy. They sometimes have an unclear mandate, unlike elected representatives and this sometimes puts them on a collision course with the communities they represent and may affect their ability to mobilise (Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura 2012). Social movements on the left in South Africa are also fragmented and have a hard time engaging with the grassroots as extensively as they purport.

Willems suggests that conventional "broadcasting and print media often delegitimized the new social movements and framed their actions in terms of ''conflict'', 'troublemakers'', or

the ‘‘ultra-left’’ (2010, 492). Mainstream media focus on violence and spectacle and are less interested in the causes and underlying events leading to protests. An Anti-Evictions Campaign leaders noted,

> The media do not tell our side of our story, they focus on trying to make the municipality of the City of Cape Town seem as though it’s providing good services. The media take videos of our Councillors and politicians pretending to speak on our behalf…these politicians make use of the media to silence us…(AEC Gugulethu, Cape Town, 2 October 2010, cited in Chiumbu, 2015: 5).

Citizens also need specific skills to organise, and act upon information in their areas. They need to understand the roles of public institutions, political parties, and bureaucratic processes. These skills are often found among the educated professional classes. Treatment Action Campaign as Wasserman (2007) showed uses the Internet to reach out to local, continental, and global networks and “audience-building”. The website is also used to solicit messages of solidarity and mobilise financial resources and develop a network of elite support. Bank details on the website mean supporters (mostly non-members) can donate money to the movements.

Bénit-Gbaffou et al. (2013) further argue that if community leaders are seen by their communities as being too close to government officials, (SANCO for example) this can jeopardise their legitimacy within the community, as “sell-outs”. In the South African local government context, the use of position for personal gain or advancement by some leaders of social movements is sometimes seen as a problem. Furthermore, in public discourses, community activists have been demonised and criminalised by the State (Bénit-Gbaffou et al., 2013).

There have been some criticisms of the use of the term “citizen participation” as it assumes a more western, rational form of discourse. Quick and Bryson (2016) have argued that “citizen participation” once used with “public participation” is now falling out of favour. For instance, they argue that “citizen participation” excludes many participants who do not have formal residential status. Trust is also implicit in citizen participation, especially when the process involves people with diverse interests and levels of power (Huxman and Vangen, 2005). Ansell and Gash (2007) argue that researchers need to remember that although citizen participation is mandated by the Constitution, the process is still voluntary.

McKinley (2004) and Hlatswayo (2007) further argue that the ANC’s response at the time and around 2001/2002 was to embark on a political propaganda campaign that sought to

portray social movements that did not agree with its policies as “criminals” and “anarchists”. When this seemed to have little effect on the growth of social movements wanting justice for the people, ANC leaders chose to launch a coordinated “law and order crackdown”, which culminated in physical assaults, arrests, and imprisonment of hundreds of social movement activists across the country. Such high-level attacks on news social movements have continued to widen the political and class fault lines that now clearly divide South Africa society (McKinley, 2004).

Civil society movements in South Africa use the Internet for various reasons in the field of political participation, with many having websites (Muteeri, 2015). These include providing education, enhancing the rights and responsibilities of citizens, lobbying and advocacy, fund raising, and developing a more informed citizenry. However, restrictions such as high data costs discussed in previous chapters are hindering citizen participation using the Internet such that the potential of social media in the process is not being fully realised. Many social movements have moved their work to the online world to take advantage of the convenience and easy access to their members. According to Muteeri (2015), the Internet provides many opportunities for social movements such as a mass email facility to communicate with members and get timely feedback and the ability to send messages to a large audience at lower costs. The Internet “through its combination of greater speed, lesser expense, further geographical reach, and relatively unlimited content capacity compared to older forms of print and electronic media could help level the playing field between social movements and the more resource-rich … government” (Stein, 2009: 3).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROTEST

A study conducted by SALGA in 2009 to gain insight into municipalities’ perception of underlying causes of service delivery protests found that municipalities had delivered basic services to their communities. The study instead attributed protests to inequality and perceived *relative* deprivation, pressures of urbanisation and migration, electioneering and political contests, unemployment, ineffective communication, and tender irregularities (Salga, 2014).

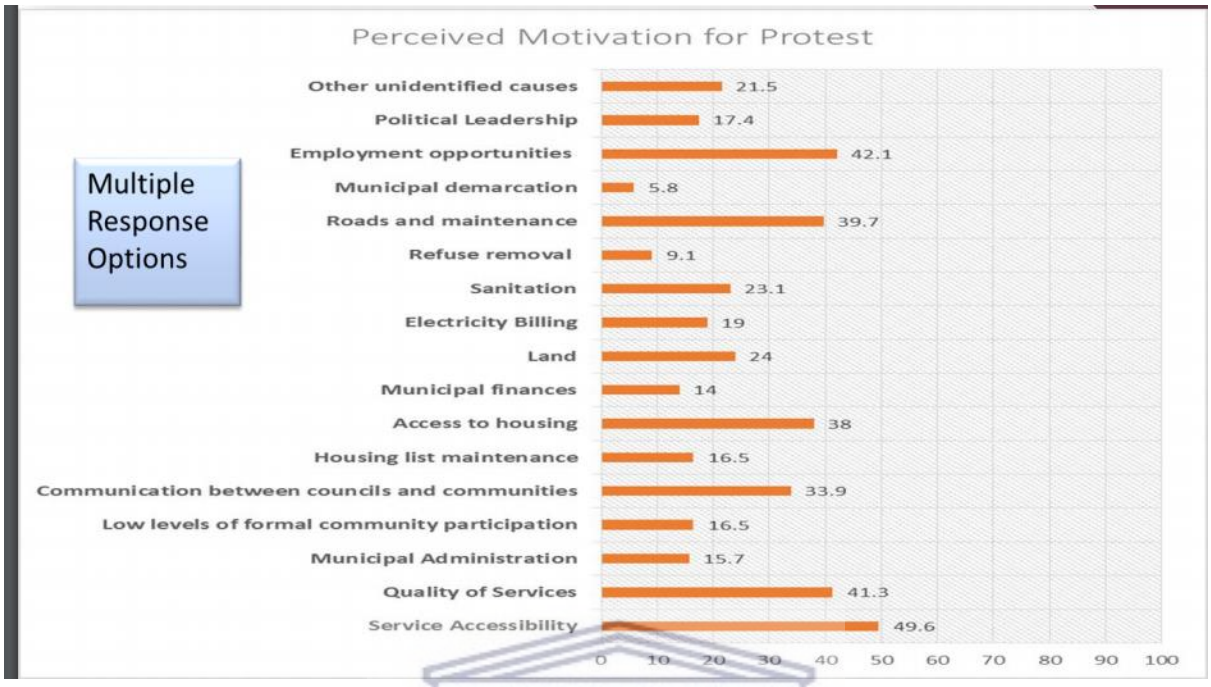
According to De Vries (2018), despite interventions on an ongoing basis to improve the function of local government in South Africa, particularly ward committees, social unrest

remains a daily occurrence. Usually, if citizens want the attention of politicians, burning follows protests (February, 2018). To illustrate the scale of the problem, February (2018) argues that President Cyril Ramaphosa once cut short a visit to London in the same year to deal with the crisis in Mahikeng in the North West Province where 32 people had been arrested for public violence. Further, she warns that violence seems to be continuing with even more destruction. According to Municipal IQ (2019), violent service delivery protests increased from 75 per cent between 2014 and 2016 to 86 per cent in 2016 with Gauteng, Western Cape, and Eastern Cape among the most affected provinces. Ngcamu (2019) and Davis (2018) have questioned some of the data published in South Africa on service delivery protests at the municipal level. According to Ngcamu (2019), some studies are not reliable as they are based on mainly untested, unreliable, and invalidated perceptions. He further argues that some study findings are informed by popular media rather than theories emanating from the empirical data. Davis (2018:1) also highlighted her concerns in an opinion piece to the respected Daily Maverick online publication where she stated that "the process of counting and defining violent protest action is not a simple matter". She seems to question definitions of what constitutes a protest and a violent protest.

In addition to protests, rapid population inflows and informal settlements affect municipalities. In its mid-year population estimates released on 9 July 2020, Statistics South Africa noted for the period 2016–2021, Gauteng and Western Cape were estimated to experience the largest inflow of migrants - approximately 1 553 162 and 468 568 respectively. This meant additional pressures on municipalities, especially in informal settlements in the metropolitan areas, to provide services such as water and sanitation, education, electricity, and housing (Allan and Heese, 2011).

According to Jolobe (2014), protests take many forms: mass meetings, the drafting of memoranda, petitions, toyi-toying, stay-aways, election boycotts, the blockading of roads, construction of barricade, burning of tyres, lootings of shops, destruction of buildings, confrontations with police and the chasing of unpopular individuals out of townships. In his 2016 study, Steyn used the various figures below to illustrate the levels and motivations of protests in South Africa.

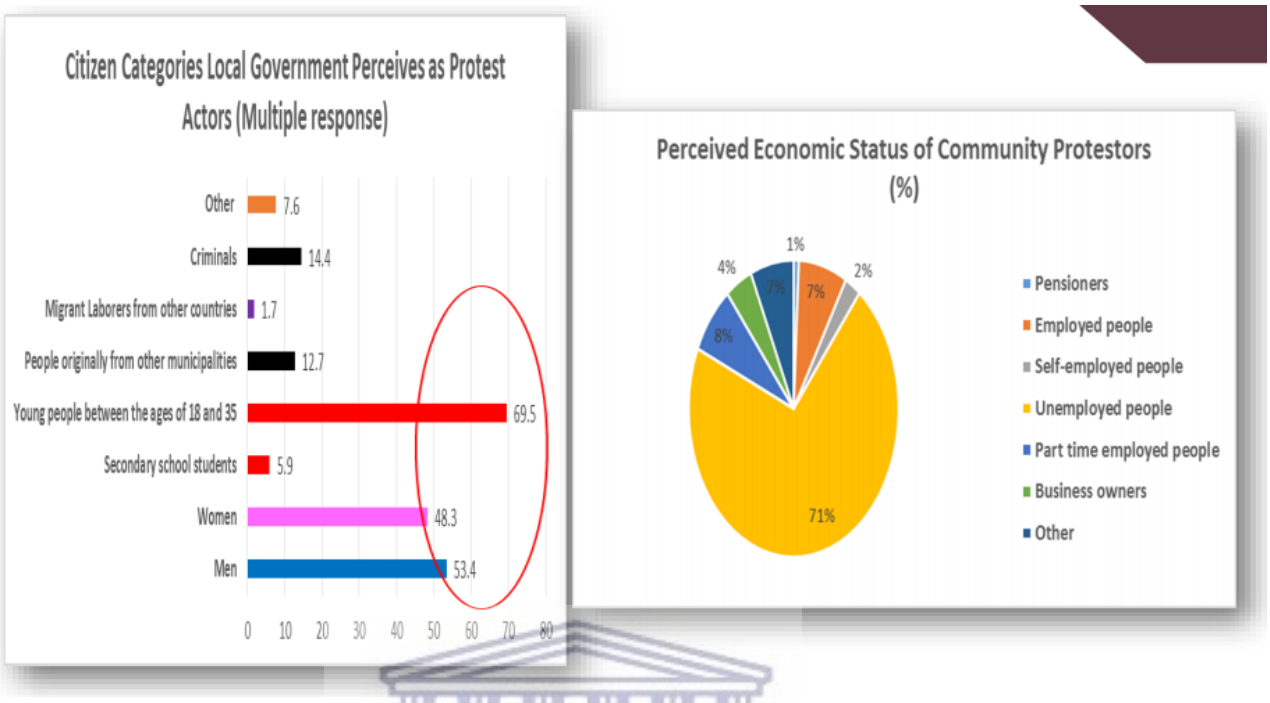
Figure 24: Motivations for protests in South Africa



Source: Steyn (2016)

Steyn, (2016) also highlights how local government describes protestors. Figure 25 below shows that 69.5 per cent of young people between the ages of 18 and 35 are perceived as protest actors in local government. Both Cape Town and Johannesburg DA leaders have tended to blame certain segments of the population as "troublemakers". The City of Cape (from De Lille to Plato to Zille) often labels protests as politically inspired by ANC-linked "troublemakers" and at times the Eastern Cape is blamed for the influx of "refugees" (Zille's terminology). In Johannesburg, Mayor Herman Mashaba tended to focus on "illegal" immigrants as the scapegoats.

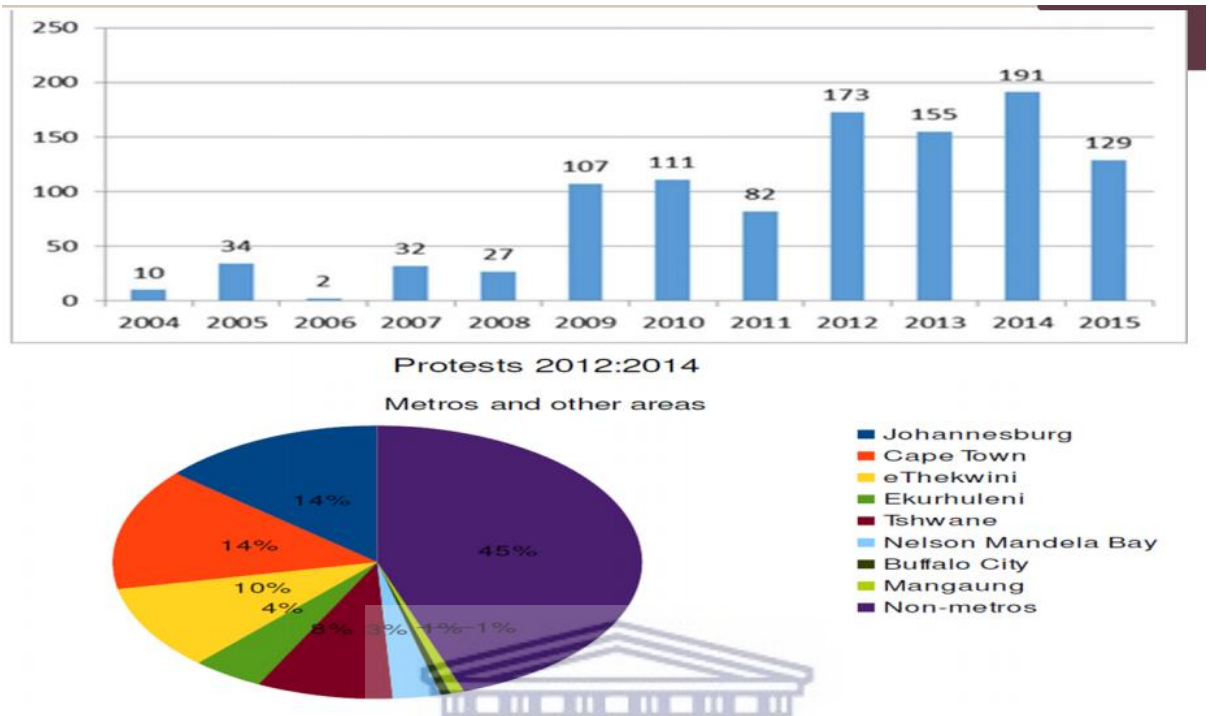
Figure 25: How local government describes protestors



Source: Steyn (2016)

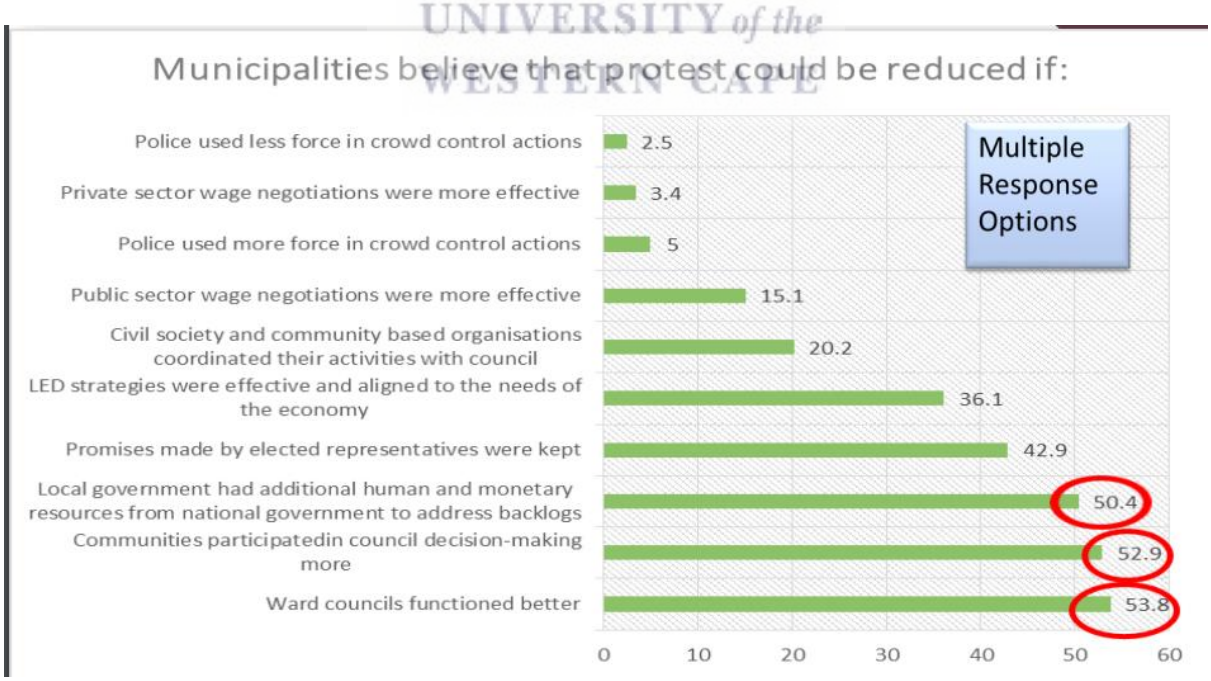
Figures 26 to 29 below have been used to show the number of protests in South African cities up to 2015, how municipalities think these protests can be addressed, how local government can work with other spheres of government (national and provincial) to bring about a more harmonious situation and what is required to address protests in local government in general in South Africa.

Figure 26: Total number of protests per year in South Africa (2004-2015)



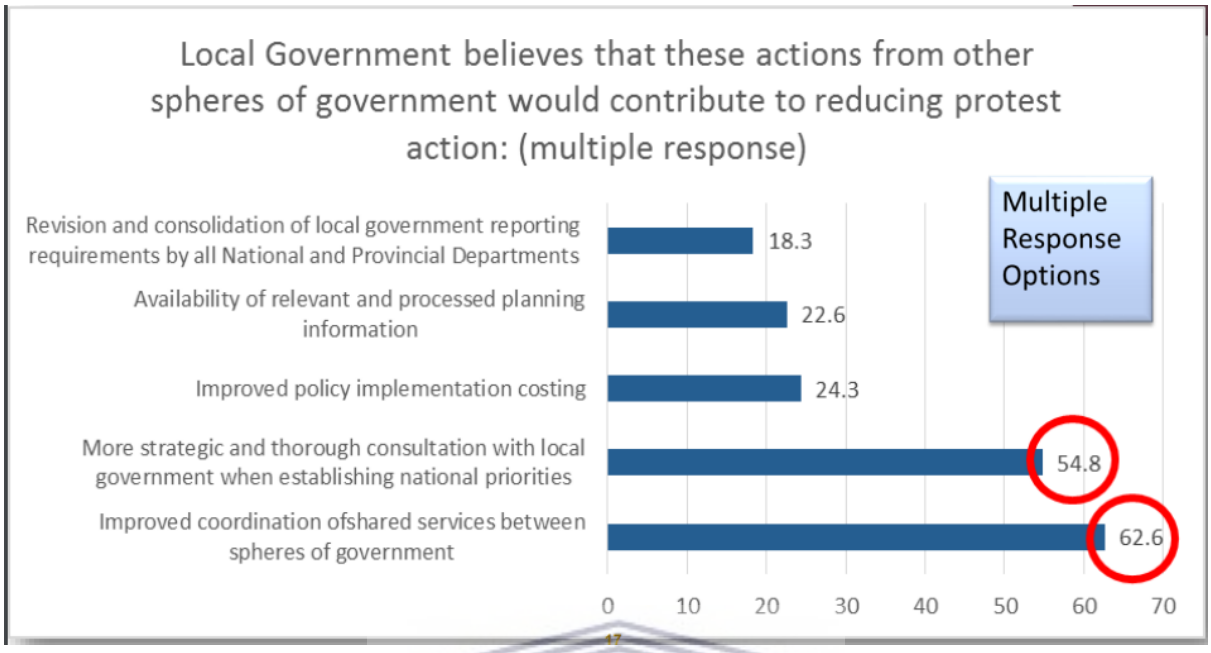
Source: Steyn (2016)

Figure 27: Reducing community protests in local government



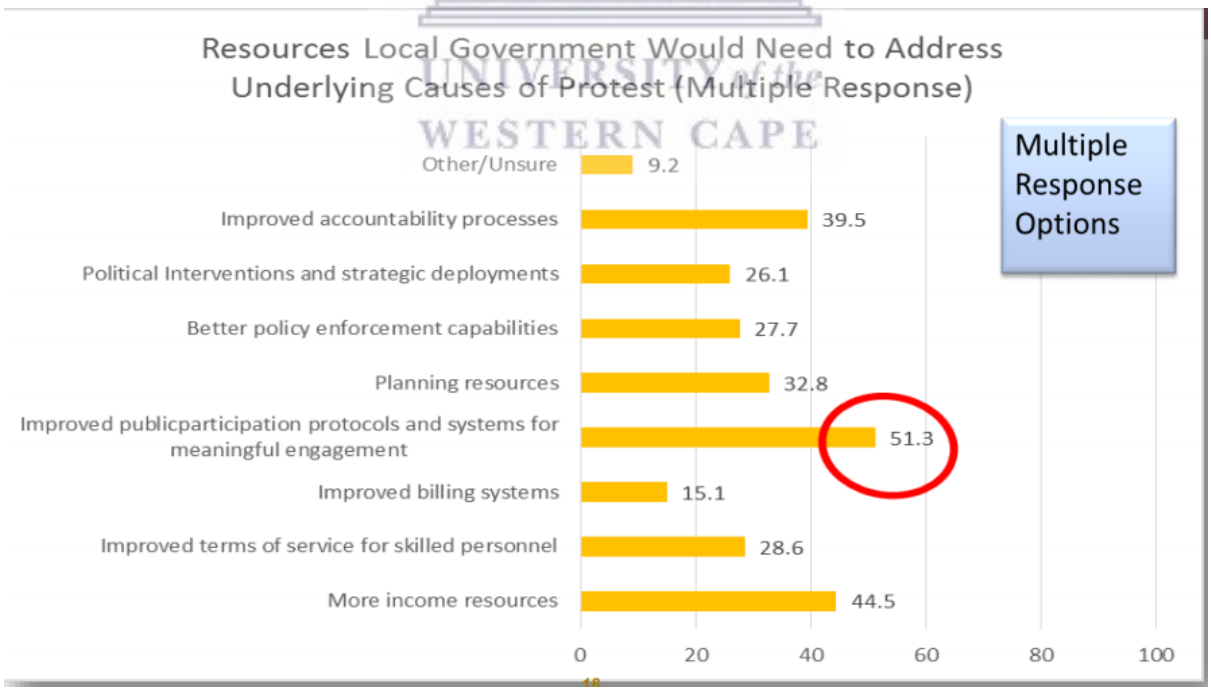
Source: Steyn (2016)

Figure 28: Role of other spheres of government in protests



Source: Steyn, 2016

Figure 29: Resources required for addressing protests in local government



Source: Steyn (2016)

POO PROTESTS IN CAPE TOWN AND THE BILLING CRISIS IN JOHANNESBURG

Cape Town has had many activist non-profit organisations (NPOs) and movements. These range from the Treatment Action Campaign, Social Justice Coalition, Equal Education, Anti-evictions campaign to Seskhona (one of the NPOs under study in Khayelitsha). In former white areas, ratepayers' associations such as the CBRRA and policing forums have sprung up. The CBRRA is the subject of the research in Camps Bay.

The toilet scandal exploded in February 2011 in the run-up to elections of May that year (IOL, 2011). The sanitation issue was first brought to the public domain by various social movements, such as the Social Justice Coalition and Abahlali baseMjondolo (Robins, 2011). In 2013, nine members of the Seskhona Peoples' Movement were convicted for throwing faeces at Cape Town International Airport in protest against poor sanitation services in Cape Town townships. The protestors had also previously flung faeces at the then Premier Helen Zille's convoy on the N2 highway in Cape Town, on the steps of the Western Cape Legislature and the Bellville Civic Centre in a bid to attract attention to their cause (Robins, 2013). The choice of targets was strategic and significant since the protests went outside the township to middle-class areas and CBD.

Activists blamed the toilet issue on special legacies of apartheid urban planning which did not allow citizens in townships to participate in local government (Robins, 2013). Further, before 2011, toilets and sanitation were not considered "proper political" issues. While service delivery protests were indeed a concern for local government, media and political analysts did not directly associate these protests with toilets and sanitation. Instead, they focused on grievances about local government corruption, poor service delivery of water, housing, and electricity (Robins, 2011).

In Johannesburg, the middle class became highly organised with the long-standing billing crisis in Johannesburg began when sixteen independent councils amalgamated to form the City of Johannesburg around 2000," (Finance Member of the Mayoral Committee Dr. Rabelani Dagada 2017). At the time, the city which was led by an ANC government sent inflated and inaccurate municipal accounts for rates and services. Dagada blamed the problem on the bungling of the upgrade of the revenue collection software to streamline operations. Technological glitches led to massive backlogs in operations of the revenue department and frustrations for thousands of customers (Randburg Sun, 2017).

When the DA took over the municipality in 2016 it promised to sort out the matter quickly, but this has not happened (IOL, 2017). The then Mayor Herman Mashaba halted disconnections of services until meter readings were sorted out by a new company appointed to clean up records.

In Johannesburg, a non-profit civil rights organisation called OUTA emerged to mobilise and fight for the rights of residents amid the ongoing billing crisis. As part of its objectives, OUTA emphasizes that citizens want to have a say in how South African municipalities are run and managed. OUTA is involved in various public campaigns on its official website to get residents to put pressure on the City of Johannesburg to resolve the billing crisis as soon as possible. As explained in Chapter 1, this organisation operates nationally and deals with issues such as maladministration in all the three spheres of government.

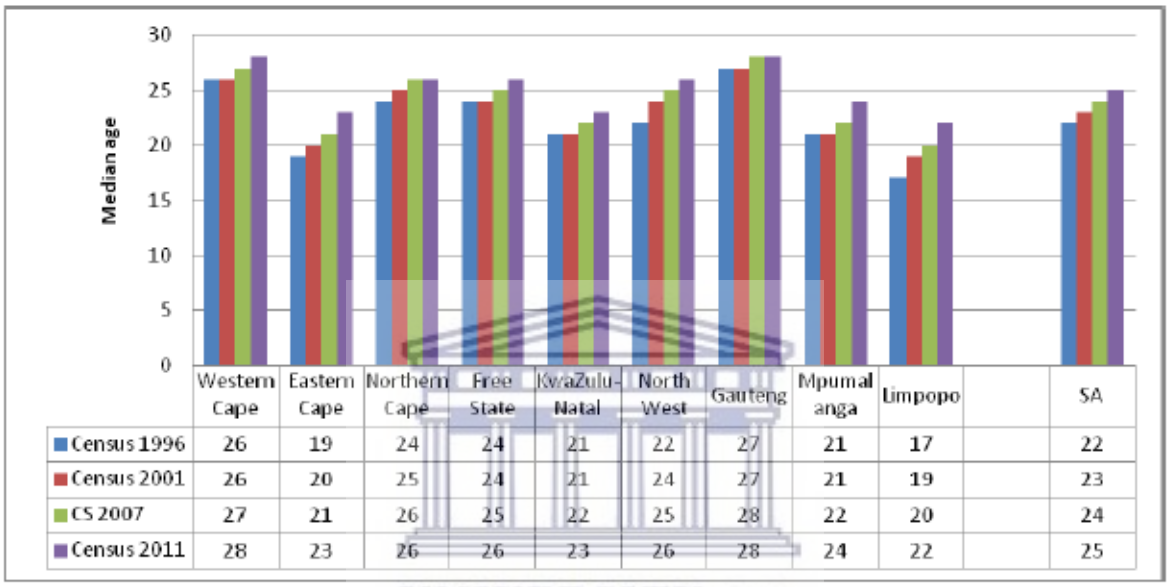
YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

The youth in South Africa is defined from the ages 14 to 35 years old (National Youth Commission Act, 1996). However, this study will consider the youth as citizens aged between 18 and 35-years-old as they do not legally need consent from their parents to take part in focus groups making up this study. The need to focus on youth is crucial in media citizenship debates since many scholars see youth as being in the vanguard of alternative models of citizenship (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2017: Zuckerman, 2014). Approximately 8.2 million or 40.1 per cent of South Africa's 20.4 million young people aged 15 to 34 years were still unemployed and not in education or training based on the Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the last quarter of 2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

The 1976 demonstrations proved to be a watershed in the fight against apartheid by bringing South African youth to the forefront of the liberation struggle. Mattes and Richmond (2015) argue that since then, South Africans have held "contradictory" beliefs about the nature of young people's role in politics: "On one hand, many people see youth as the primary catalyst of activism and political change at the local level. On the other hand, a wide range of commentators routinely experience "moral panic" about the apparent "'crisis" of youth apathy and its corrosive effect on the country's political culture" (Mattes and Richmond, 2015).

Young people in South Africa aged 15-34 years constituted 37 per cent of the population in 2010, numbering 19.1 million individuals (Statistics South Africa, 2010). By the first quarter of 2020, that figure had grown to 20.4 million. Young people accounted for 63.3 per cent of the total number of unemployed persons (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Like many other developing countries, South Africa's population is quite young as shown in Figure 30 below.

Figure 30: Median Age in South Africa by province



	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo		SA
Census 1996	26	19	24	24	21	22	27	21	17		22
Census 2001	26	20	25	24	21	24	27	21	19		23
CS 2007	27	21	26	25	22	25	28	22	20		24
Census 2011	28	23	26	26	23	26	28	24	22		25

Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

The overall median age in South Africa was 22 years in 1996, 23 years in 2001, 24 years in 2007, and 25 years in 2011 respectively. In its mid-year population estimates released on 9 July 2020, Statistics South Africa also said one in three South Africans is 18 years or younger. In 2011, the Western Cape's median age was 28 and so was Gauteng's.

South Africa has a National Youth Policy (2015-2020) that focuses on a range of matters: unemployment/joblessness, skills development, poor health, high HIV/AIDS prevalence, violence, and substance abuse, lack of access to sporting and cultural abuse, lack of social cohesion and volunteerism, disability and exclusion and other policy priorities. This policy, however, only mentions fostering "active citizenry" in passing, and only in the context of developing "a next generation of leaders" to steer the country forward economically.

Abdulrauf et al. (2015), Seongyi and Woo-Young (2011), and Whiteley (2011) argue that South Africa does not find itself in a unique position as political participation in general

among youths in the developing world is declining. Reasons for this decline and voter apathy range from lack of political party membership, high levels of cynicism about politics, disinterest in electoral policies, and low levels of “conventional political engagement and participation” Tshuma and Zvaita, 2019). These observations, however, need to be questioned because they may be making wrong assumptions about citizenship (see Kliger-Vilenchik, 2017).

It is argued that Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have provided new avenues for political engagement and the youth can take advantage of the opportunities presented by these platforms to strengthen democracy in a country such as South Africa (Citizenlab, 2020). These studies have also not answered the critical question which is: how big is the democratic potential of social media in South Africa? (Wasserman, 2014; Chun, 2012). The conflicting results indicate that there are two paradigms (participation and non-participation) to the engagement of the youth in politics and affairs of local government. To address the problem described above, Bae (2014) and Kligler-Vilenchik, 2017) advocate for a new youth-centered approach in theorising research on social media and online political participation in general, and the youth particularly.

According to Malila (2016), the 2014 general election was particularly important in South Africa as it represented the first national election in which the “born-frees” were expected to participate. However, low voter turnout compared to previous elections painted a picture of concern for the country. South Africa’s 2013 population estimates indicated 10.9 million eligible voters between the ages of 18 to 29 years, comprising 34 per cent of the voting-age population. Yet only 6.4 million young people registered to vote (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014). In the 2014 national elections, registration levels for 18- and 19-year-olds was only 33 per cent – well below the 73 per cent average. According to Tshuma and Zvaita (2019), emerging research on political and civic participation among the youth shows that young people still find formal political spaces frustrating and alienating and unlikely to give them the results that they want. Furthermore, young people feel disempowered by their political parties and other officials in leadership positions in their communities and municipalities.

The role of youth might be highlighted in the South African 2016 Local Government Elections were arguably the most anticipated since 1994 due to several reasons. Mandyoli (2016) argues that one of them is the formation of the EFF in 2013 led by young political leader Julius Malema, then 32-years-old. He argues that Malema’s involvement in the

election promised to heighten levels of competition in the country's political landscape and was also widely seen as appealing to many young voters given the popularity of the EFF leader. Malema, who held the position of ANC Youth League President, had been expelled from the party in 2012 which also issued a statement that said, "it was unlikely that Malema could be rehabilitated" (Mail and Guardian, 2012).

The declining participation of all people but especially young people in governance issues precipitated campaigns by the country's IEC to encourage registration and voting. In an address in Cape Town ahead of the elections, IEC Chief Electoral Officer in the Western Cape Province Courtney Smith highlighted some concerns of the organisation about "youth negativity" towards the elections and participating in governance processes in general. He said the concerns included lack of trust by the youth in political parties in all three spheres of government (national, provincial, and local), "older politicians" in the governing ANC who were not willing to make way for "new blood" and who were not open to new ideas about how to engage citizens. South African Politician Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi also tried to encourage the youth to vote in his election campaigns. He warned that young people risked having other people elect leaders on their behalf if they did not take part in governance processes.

Shava and Chinyamurindi (2018) argue that youths utilise social media faster than any other population cohort, especially in urban areas, but there's a need for more research on the usage of social media platforms. Mackey (2016) argues that most youths have access to social media, especially Facebook, followed by YouTube and Twitter (Goldstuck, 2015).

SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY POSITIONS ON THE YOUTH

South Africa's youth have an immense opportunity to influence the country's political landscape, however, that realisation is still not being fully utilised at present (Institute for Security Studies, 2014). To further illustrate how or why South Africa's youth feels about online citizen participation at local government, this study has borrowed the example of the 2016 Local Government Elections. The local government elections were contested by 205 political parties (Municipal Elections Handbook, 2016). The three biggest political parties were the ANC, DA, and EFF Mandyoli (2016). Below is an example of how each of these parties interacted with the youth in the 2016 Local Government Election.

The ruling ANC's position on issues affecting the youth has been a dominant feature of the party over many years (Mandyoli, 2016) due, in part, to the historical record of charismatic leaders in the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) such as the late Peter Mokaba, Fikile Mbalula, Malusi Gigaba, Julius Malema and others. However, the ANCYL has faced serious organisational challenges since the disbandment and expulsion of Malema as its leader in 2012. According to Mandyoli (2016), the new leadership under Collen Maine did not occupy the same traditional and new media (social media) space and influence as Malema. Given the proximity of the ANC to the effectiveness of the youth league, a decline in youth presence in the party's 2016 election campaign and the overall message was noted.

The ANC was also projected to lose the youth vote based on steadily dropping confidence in then-President Jacob Zuma (Mandyoli, 2016). The disillusionment of the youth was attributed to a lack of transparency, accountability, trust, and perceived corruption in the Zuma administration (Dailymaverick, 2019b). A look at the ANC's 2016 local elections manifesto did not mention the youth or dedicate a chapter dealing with issues faced by the youth. Mandyoli (2016) argues that this could have well been indicative of the party's insensitivity to young people's concerns on issues such as job creation.

President Cyril Ramaphosa replaced Jacob Zuma as ANC President in December 2017. It is hoped by some in the ANC that Rampahosa's pledge to boost a sluggish economy and address high youth unemployment and poor service delivery may work in the ruling party's favour and attract more young people to vote for the ANC. Ramaphosa has also taken a tough stance on corruption by overseeing the establishment of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State in 2018, and pledging to have members of his cabinet sign a performance management contract that would be monitored over five years (2019-2023). His commitment to a policy to expropriate land without compensation may also rule in the ANC's favour by restoring the confidence of young people in the ruling party. As he announced his new cabinet following the 2019 national and provincial elections, President Ramaphosa also announced several young people in key positions as part of his "New Dawn" programme to address a public outcry that most of the politicians, particularly in the National Assembly were "too old".

The DA is South Africa's biggest opposition party. According to Mandyoli (2016), the party has recorded consistent growth in every election since its inception, but suffered its biggest

losses in Cape Town, where support fell by 6 per cent in the 2019 national election (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 2019). Further, the DA obtained a two-thirds majority in the city in the 2016 local government election with 67 per cent of the vote, but this dropped to 56 per cent in 2019. The ANC also suffered in Cape Town in the 2019 national election (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 2019). In Johannesburg, support for the DA dropped by 4 per cent in the 2019 national elections. (Mandyoli, 2016).

According to Mandyoli (2016), the presence of the DA is being felt in the National Assembly and the Western Cape Province where the party governs. Mandyoli argues that, unlike the ANC, the DA presented a clear position on the youth in 2016 and its manifesto focused on promoting responsible life choices, reducing substance abuse, and creating alternatives for anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, the party's then-leader Mmusi Maimane was still young and could have attracted some of the young votes due to this trait. The DA's takeover of some metros in 2016, such as Tshwane, the City of Johannesburg, and Nelson Mandela Bay, which were previously in ANC hands, was lauded as a step in the right direction for the party in terms of attracting youth support (Mandyoli, 2016). To keep the momentum, the DA promised in 2019 and beyond to provide access to a national civilian-service programme that would allow young school leavers to receive industry training in the fields of their choice (Businesstech, 2019b).

As for the EFF, according to Mandyoli (2016), its radical policy positions and notable ability to mobilise young people have worked in its favour to attract young voters in 2016. The EFF, like the DA, has a young leader in Julius Malema. More so, the EFF's entire leadership consisted of young people who seemed to be relatable to the youth of South Africa. The party's performance in the 2016 local government elections showed that it failed to make an impact in municipalities such as Cape Town and eThekwini (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 2016). It might be that the youth had been uncertain about the EFF's long-term intentions and reliability as a new party (Mandyoli, 2016). Furthermore, the party's election manifesto did not specifically deal with the youth, although it mentioned the general issue of education.

Although studies still show that young South Africans are turning their backs on electoral politics, the EFF is said to have energised young people to participate in politics (Businesstech, 2019). Some of the reasons for this unhappiness in 2019 may still be like those of 2016, including a string of corruption scandals of top government officials and high

youth unemployment (Businesstech, 2019). To attract more support of the youth in the 2019 national and provincial election, the EFF promised to make it compulsory for women and youth to control half the board and management of companies with insurance licences. The EFF also said Black people enrolled in doctoral-study programmes would receive R1 million each.

At a national level, the three main political parties, ANC, DA, and EFF have tried to increase their social media presence, which is where many youths spend their time (Mandyoli, 2016; Shava and Chinyamurindi, 2018). To help the reader better understand how the ANC, DA, and EFF may be using social media to target voters online, including the youth, it has been necessary to reflect on the social media accounts of these three main parties. An analysis of their Twitter pages, for instance, shows that some of the parties have multiple accounts. These range from the main national Twitter account to multiple provincial accounts, caucus accounts, and others especially dedicated to their respective youth leagues where applicable. Leaders of the ANC, DA, and EFF also have their own personal Twitter accounts which they use hopefully to further engage their members on governance issues at the national, provincial, and local levels.

The country's three main political parties, the ANC, DA, and EFF are all active on social media with the ANC having 970 000 followers on Twitter at the time of writing this study in early 2021, the DA with 651 000 followers but the EFF has 1,4 million followers. Their followings on Facebook were 539 000 for the ANC, 552 000 for the DA, and 671 000 for the EFF. The EFF has proportionately and in absolute terms much more of a social media presence than the DA and ANC.

The success of the EFF in getting the most followers on social media may be due to its focus on youth whereas Mtshali argues that the ANC has a historical support base that is older and who are not as digitally and tech-savvy. Wasserman (2014) argues that the youth have been central to service delivery protests in local government as well as other issues such a Fees must fall. Wasserman (2014) also argues that protests by young people are an articulation of a more deep-seated disillusionment such as continued frustrations with high levels of inequality, a revolt against a local government that is seen by the youth as uncaring and not listening to its people, and a cry for the recognition of basic human dignity. Wasserman (2014) further argues that trust in official media in general in South Africa and around the world is at an all-time low. As the country moves towards a better understanding

of the involvement of the youth in citizen participation through social media, Wasserman (2014) says critical questions must be asked about what could be preventing young people from participating online more substantially. These include questions around data costs, access to mobile phones, and the Internet in general which have been discussed as part of the evolution of social media.

Wasserman (2014), quoting a research project into media and citizenship at Rhodes University, argues that it is dangerous to assume that access to social media means youth are more willing to engage in formal politics. Rather, Wasserman (2014) argues that the youth use social media to get by and find whatever information they need to cope with their daily struggles. He also argues that some South African researchers found that young people are disillusioned with politics and pessimistic about their chances in the post-apartheid South African economy. Unemployment has a major impact on the self-esteem of those that want to participate in local government (Wasserman 2014). The view presented by Wasserman is pessimistic about the use of social media on citizen participation by young people. His view is that voting, and participation seem futile as they do make a difference in their everyday lives and while social media provides some connectivity, the idea that the youth could use it to enact citizenship has not registered with them.

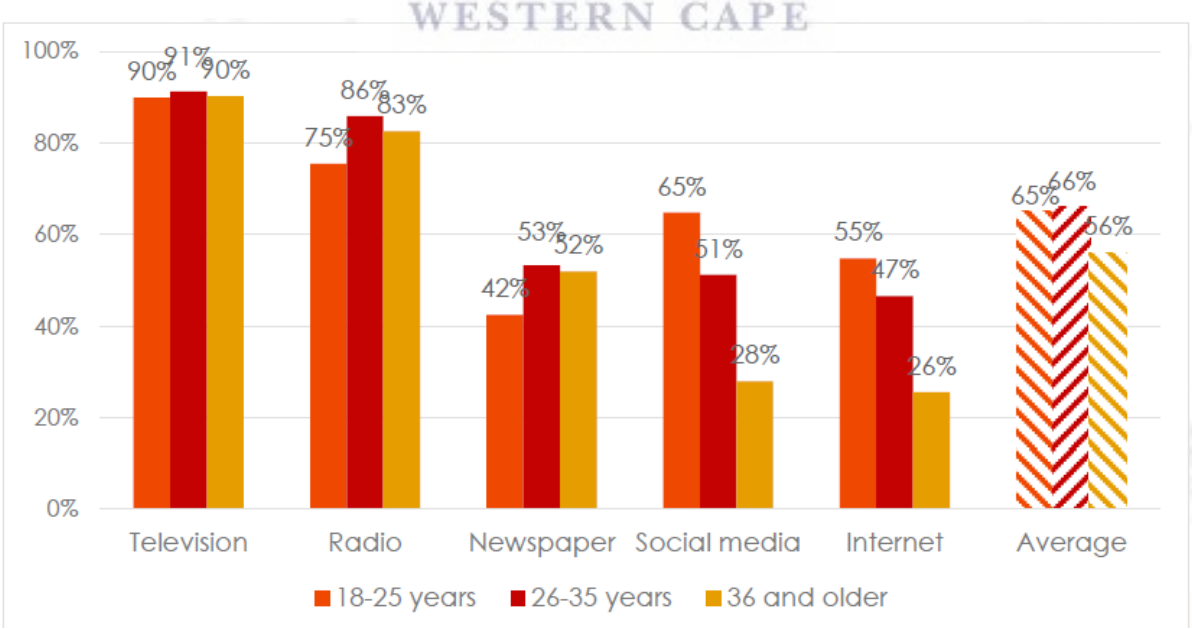
Youth political engagement once again came into focus during ongoing nationwide “fallist” protests in 2015 led by university students demanding major changes in South African higher education institutions. The protests had their hashtag on social media and became widely known as the #FeesMustFall Protests. In January 2016, the then Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Blade Nzimande, met with student representatives to present progress toward eight demands, including addressing financial barriers to higher education, inadequate housing, and exclusionary language policies (Ministry of Higher Education, 2016). In their study on “youth apathy” in South Africa, Tshuma and Zvaita (2019) also found that the participation of young people in social movements and universities was vibrant, including on alternative platforms such as social media. They found that young people were active in mobilising for service delivery protests, anti-outsourcing protests, community demonstrations, and protests on university campuses.

HOW THE YOUTH USE MEDIA TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS

It is important to illustrate how South African youth use traditional and new media to determine how they could be participating in local government processes. In 2016, for example, 6 in 10 South Africans or 62 per cent accessed news from television, radio, social media, the Internet, or newspapers daily or "a few times a week." (Nkomo and Wafula, 2016). On average, news consumption was highest via television at 90 per cent and radio at 81 per cent, while fewer than half of citizens regularly accessed news via newspapers at 49 per cent, social media at 48 per cent, and the Internet at 42 per cent. These levels in South Africa are well above the average for 36 countries surveyed by independent research network Afrobarometer in 2014/2015.

Analysis of the usage of media by age showed that, on average, young citizens were significantly more likely to access news across the five media sources regularly than those aged over 35 years (66 per cent vs. 56 per cent). In Figure 31 below, radio listenership and newspaper readership increased after the age of 25, while citizens aged 18-25 years were significantly more likely than their elders to access news via social media and the Internet. Watching television news regularly is equally common among citizens of all age groups.

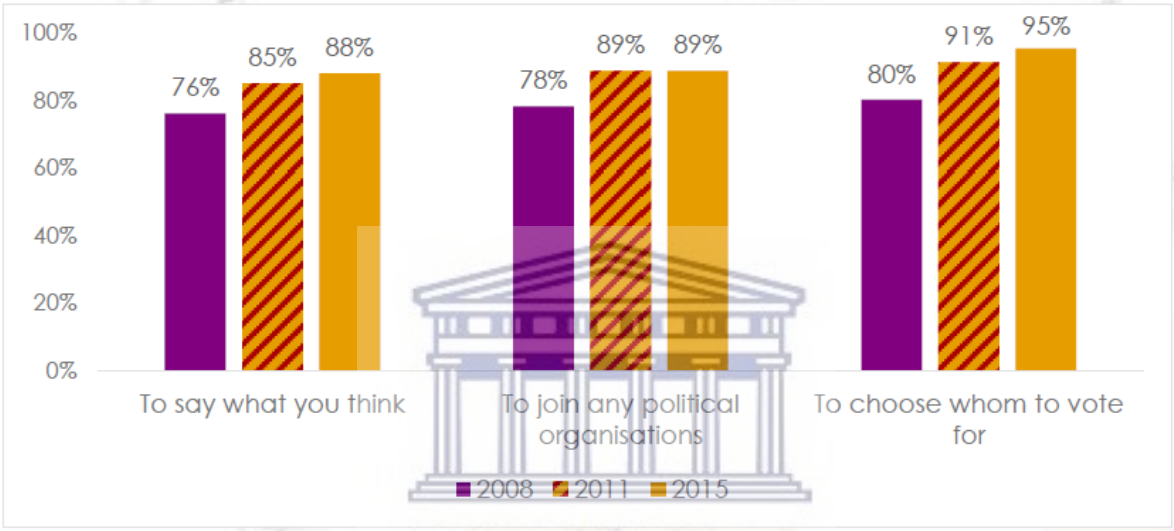
Figure 31: Regular news consumption by age in South Africa in 2015



Source: Nkomo and Wafula (2016)

According to Lekalake (2016), young people between the ages of 18-35 years display higher levels of political freedoms where they can participate freely in the country's political process. Such freedoms can be attributed to renewed youth activism from events like the 2015 #Feesmustfall protests led by university students demanding change in South Africa's higher education institutions (Lekalake, 2016). These political freedoms are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 32: Political freedoms for 18-35-year-olds in South Africa: 2008-2015

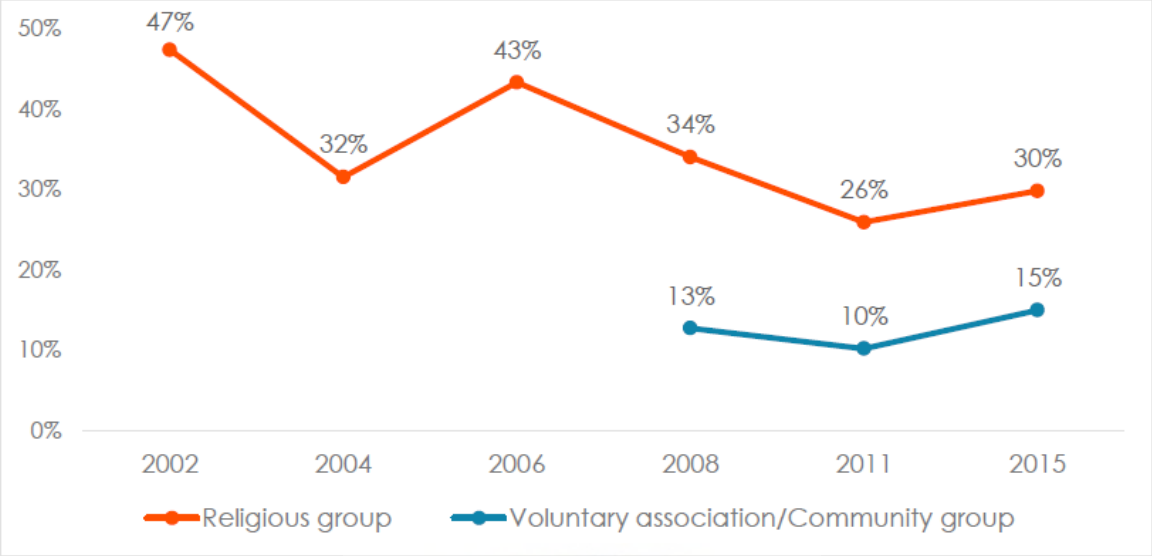


Source: Lekalake (2016)

Figure 32 above illustrates the thinking of the 18–35-year-old age group around what constitutes their political freedoms. Mattes and Richmond (2015) found that South Africans aged 18-25 years shared similar views of the role of citizens in a democracy as their elders but were less likely to engage in the political process via conventional forms of non-electoral participation, such as involvement in civic organisations and contact with elected leaders. Lekalake (2016) seems to suggest that young people still appear to see the country's leadership as being relatively inaccessible, hence their attitude towards conventional methods of participation.

South African youth, reports Lekalake are more than *twice* as likely to join religious groups as they are to join voluntary associations or community groups. Civic involvement also forms a large part of the assessment of citizen participation in this study. Figure 31 below illustrates the levels of active membership of South African youth between 2002 and 2015.

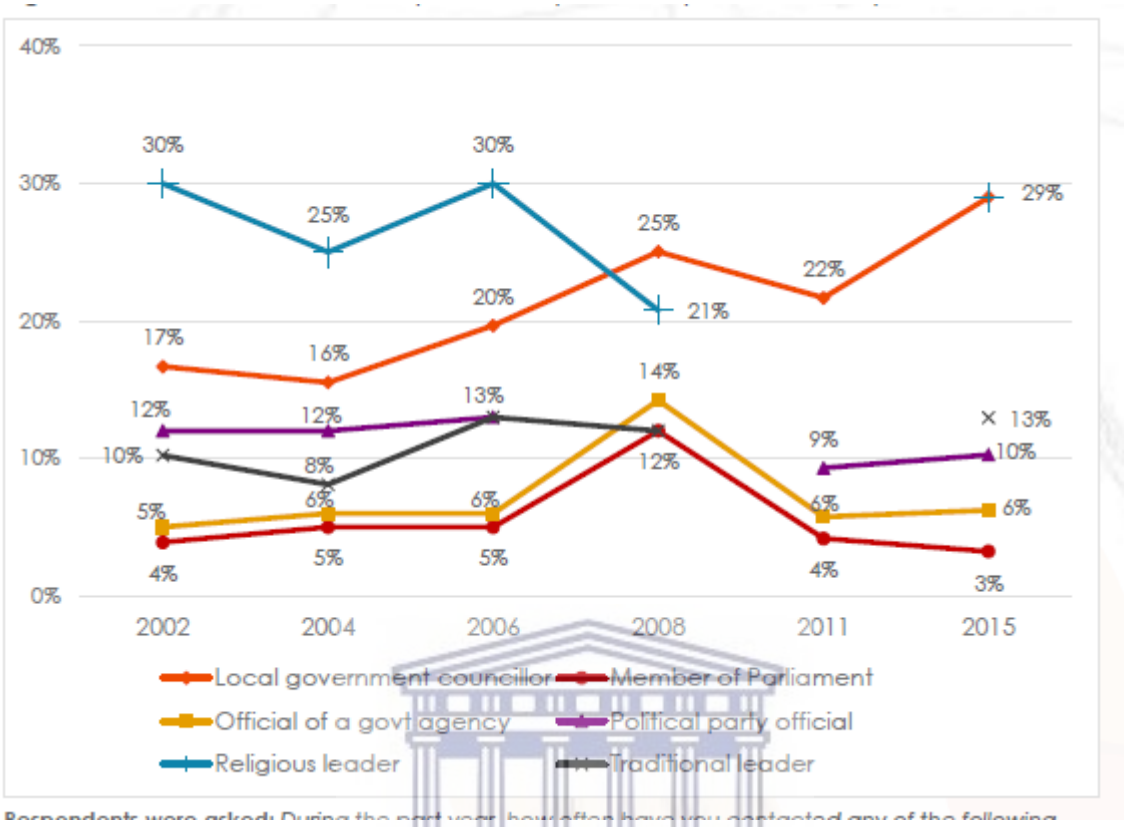
Figure 33: Active membership in civic organisations | 18- to 35-year-olds | South Africa | 2002-2015



Source: Lekalake (2016)

Data from Figure 33 shows that only minorities of South African youth have had contact with political or community leaders. On average since 2002, contact has been highest with religious leaders at 24 per cent and lowest with members of Parliament at 6 per cent. Levels of contact with local government councillors were 29 per cent. Many young people reported contacting their leaders as a group to discuss community problems. The data shows that the youth are keen on participating in governance issues, but the remaining question is how to improve this level of participation at the local level, leaving a gap for social media to influence participation levels. The contact of young people with their local government leaders is illustrated in Figure 34 below.

Figure 34: Contact with leaders | 18- to 35-year-olds | South Africa | 2002-2015

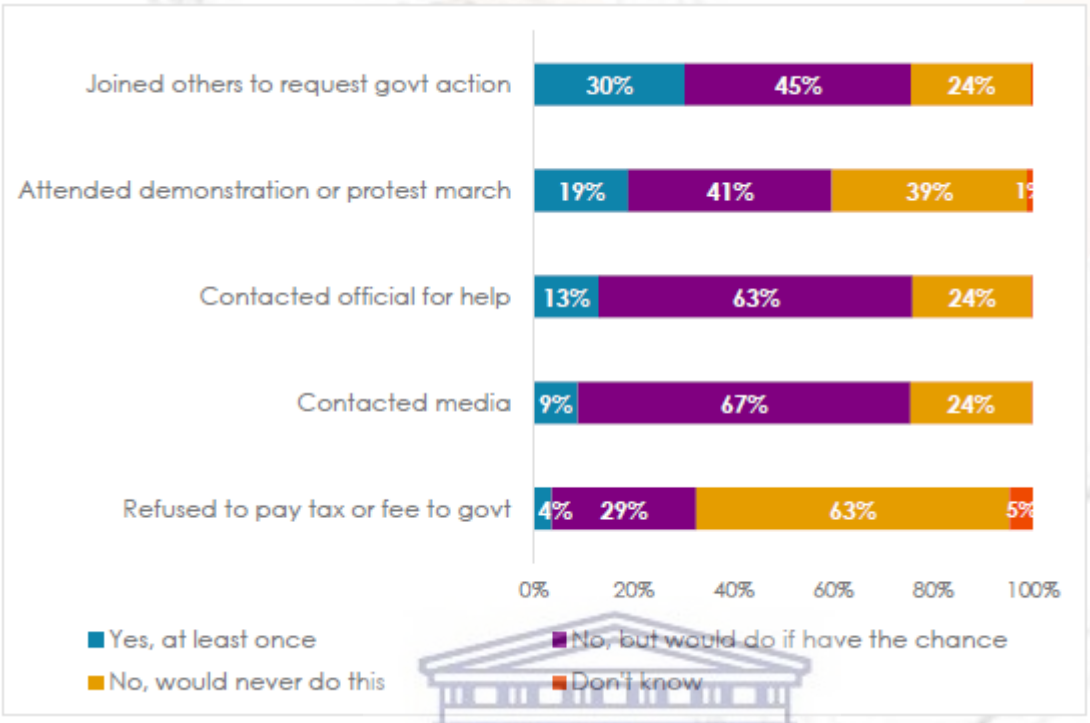


Source: Lekalake (2016)

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PROTEST ACTION

Analysis of youth protest activity over time shows that around one-quarter of survey respondents reported participating in demonstrations or protest marches between 2002 and 2006, after which the proportion declined to just 11 per cent in 2011 before rising again to 19 per cent, perhaps reflecting involvement in the student protests of 2015 in South Africa. See Figure 35 below for this analysis.

Figure 35: Participation in protest action | 18- to 35-year-olds | South Africa | 2015



Source: Lekalake (2016)

On-going protests on South African university campuses have renewed public debate about social media and "moral panic" regarding certain forms of youth activism. Bosch (2017: 221) argues,

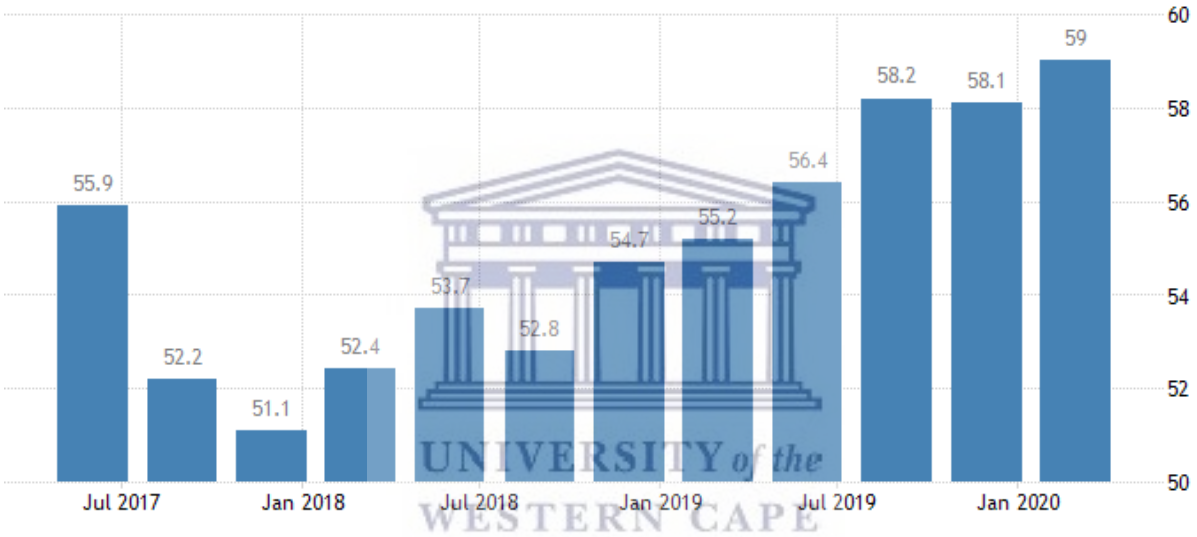
> that despite the digital divide in South Africa, and limited access to the internet by the majority of citizens, Twitter was central to youth participation during the RMF campaign, … social media discussions … can set mainstream news agendas. youth are increasingly using social networking sites to develop a new biography of citizenship… Twitter affords youth an opportunity to participate in political discussions, as well as discussions of broader socio-political issues of relevance in contemporary South African society.

Analysis of youth political engagement in South Africa, in general, suggests that the Rhodes-Must-Fall/ Fees-Must-fall student demonstrations might not reflect young citizens' political behaviour in general, especially the working-class unemployed youth caught up in gangs and drugs for example. Moreover, we need a gender analysis of youth and student activism since many young black women emerged as key leaders in the "fallist" movement but later were eclipsed by more macho forms of leadership.

SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUTH AND UNEMPLOYMENT

High youth unemployment in South Africa coupled with a workforce lacking in crucial digital technology skills remains a challenge, especially amongst township youth (Nkuna 2019 and Datatec Foundation, 2019). The country's youth unemployment affects many young people including young graduates aged 15-24 years being the most vulnerable in the country's labour market (Statistics South Africa, 2019). South Africa's worsening unemployment rate is illustrated in Figure 36 below.

Figure 36: South Africa's youth unemployment rate from 2013 to 2020



Source: Tradingeconomics (2020)

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discussed social media in the context of different kinds of social movements, political alignments, and state responses to them. Scholars argue that social movements are a critical component of inclusive democratic societies and the protection of human rights but often fail to differentiate between those that favour more social equality and those that seek to protect the status quo. Although citizen participation is mandated by the Constitution, the process is still voluntary and wealthy citizens who are unhappy with the local state, still prefer to approach the courts to force municipalities to bend to their will. While poorer social movements and residents think that social media can be used to amplify

and publicise their issues particularly to sympathetic global audience, it remains the case that the state largely ignored the social movements of the poor. Frustration with the local state has inevitably spilled over into violence.

South Africa has a young population, a mass of unemployed youth and youth in the country play a crucial part in protests and social movements. They use social media for self-promotion, visibility, and conducting business. Youth interviewed are sceptical about taking part in “invited spaces” of governance as they do not seem to trust the government. They suggest that municipalities could do more to improve social media platforms to make them youth-friendly and have youth offices in local government and ward committees. High youth unemployment remains a big challenge for township youth, but youth by and large can access social media via their phones and have been quite creative at ensuring digital access.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS FROM MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG

This chapter presents the findings of the views and role of municipal officials in Cape Town and Johannesburg in social media, protest, and citizen participation. The findings are presented in four sections for easy comparison, starting with the results and discussions from the Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality followed by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. The list of questions to the municipal officials is presented in **Appendix 1** at the end of this study.

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS IN CAPE TOWN

The objective of the interviews with municipal officials in the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality was to determine how the city and its leaders use the feedback obtained from social media platforms, particularly given the city's standing as one of the best-run metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. The responses are based on the views of four senior officials who were interviewed.

The first city official (CT 1) was quite passionate and frank about the problems in the municipality, especially as they relate to the Public Participation Unit (PPU) and its operations. He said the PPU falls under the Urban Management Department responsible for planning and facilitating public participation, but the actual content for public participation comes from the various line departments themselves. The city has 38 departments according to its official website (Capetown.gov.za, 2021). CT 1 said social media functions were not properly coordinated partly because the city's media office and not the PPU was responsible for this function. From this response, the city can greatly benefit by improving coordination of its media functions between departments that collect information from the public and those that eventually give feedback to communities.

CT 1 also lamented that the PPU is "understaffed and demoralised" and must sometimes resort to "ticking boxes" in its operations. The official said a small number of staff from the

PPU (did not specify the exact number) is expected to help coordinate the citizen participation process in 24 sub-councils in the municipality. He said the volume of work is overwhelming considering that each sub-council has 4 to 5 wards.

The notion of “ticking boxes” during some municipal operations/processes, and the other concerns raised by CT 1 above in the work of the PPU can also be analysed through Tapscott’s observation in 2022 of the local government IDP process. He argues that a lack of effective coordination between national and provincial government and a lack of funding to meet IPD targets often lead to these 5-year development plans being approved without following the correct municipal processes. Furthermore, Tapscott argues that frustration and distrust in the public participation is also due to reasons such as fewer people (usually those with vested interests) making input into the IDP process, plans being published mainly in English on-line or in a public library, ineffective ward committees and stakeholder forums and low budgets for ward councillors to fulfil their commitments (Tapscott, 2022).

In Chapter 1 of this study, cyber-optimistic scholars such as Shirky (2008); Soriano (2013) and Diamond also argued that when public participation is reduced to a tick-box exercise by government it renders the entire participation programme shallow. The debate, therefore, in South Africa’s public sphere as articulated by Garman (2020) in Chapter 1 remains one of whether the powerful in local government are really listening as they should to the concerns of the poor or merely using public participation as a smokescreen for their own selfish gains.

The official remarked that,

> The city uses social media in its communication with residents, but this is not a straightforward process. Using social media such as WhatsApp for public participation is difficult as some people in the metro do not have or cannot afford to buy data. Twitter and Facebook are used to inform the public about the city’s programmes and raise awareness about issues. The city has various WhatsApp groups to disseminate information to the media.

The issue of high data costs raised by CT 1 has been explained by Mahajan-Cusack (2016), De Lanerolle (2018) and (Staines, 2019) in Chapter 5 of this study. It is interesting that some officials seem to attribute lack of access to social media for citizens purely on lack of data yet scholars such as De Lanerolle clearly mention other factors like lack of education, poor leadership in communities, communities feeling isolated, disinterest and a general lack of awareness about participation and governance issues. The official said that “some people are left behind in the public participation process and have not joined the so-called 4th

industrial revolution." Further discussions on challenges of the continued digital divide in the South African context were also provided in Chapter 3.

CT 1 also said,

> Traditional forms of communicating with communities are still preferred such as radio, print, SMS, and email. Indabas (ministerial meetings) and workshops are not being used a lot and ward committees and public hearings are also popular. The city still relies heavily on public meetings held in libraries, schools etc.

The official also argued that mass media was preferred in public participation because some officials in the city did not understand nor trust the use of personal details and information on social media platforms. He did, however, concede that although budgets were tight and there was no money allocated for public participation specifically, it was still expensive to conduct the public participation process using mass media platforms, especially radio. Citizen participation using Indabas is not being used often, while ward committees and public meetings in shopping malls, clinics, libraries, schools (especially during the IDP process) are favoured.

He also argued that,

> The city does not have a separate budget for public participation. A limited budget means officials must prioritise the allocation of resources. The public participation unit is not adequately staffed to deal with envisaged high levels of responses from the public or civic organisations on social media. Huge inequality gaps mean that bread and butter issues are the focus of many people, especially in poor communities.

Although the first official complained about limited resources, it seems service delivery in the municipality still comes first to him, as it should. His reference to "envisaged high levels of responses" on social media can be attributed to increased levels of social media usage in South Africa explained in detail by Netgate (2014) and others in Chapter 3. Furthermore, one must consider evidence presented in Chapter 3 that continuously collecting, monitoring, analysing and summarising politically relevant information from social media is difficult to do because of the large numbers of different social media platforms and large amounts of complex information and data. Systematic tracking and analysis of social media data in local authorities is still lacking.

The official said the use of social media in public participation is an "artificial idea right now." The researcher took this statement to mean that the use of social media in public participation may be seen as indulgent or a fantasy because low budgets and understaffing

mean officials do not have the time to complete all the processes and steps required of them in the public participation process.

The second interviewee (CT 2) took an approach that can best be described through the term “blame-shifting”. He argued that,

> Not all citizens are fully aware of what they should do in order to participate due to various reasons. Lack of education and reading skills, isolation, disinterest, and ward councillors not doing their jobs are some of the reasons. Lack of understanding of government processes. People view all municipalities as government and want them to address all their issues regardless of whether those issues are outside the scope of those municipalities. Some communities burn municipal pamphlets and then claim that information on public participation was not given. Some communities simply have no idea who and how the municipality is run.

The issue of lack of education raised by CT is being disputed as Figure 8 of this study shows that in 2015 almost 95 per cent of all South Africans aged 15 and above could read and write. The groups of people interviewed for this study fall into the same category of people shown in Figure 8. These people can, therefore, use the Internet. In general, interviews from this study also show that people in townships have found other creative ways and benefits of using their social media other than just communicating with municipal officials. Figure 18 also shows a very small percentage of residents in Cape Town (less than 10 per cent) do not have access to any form of schooling.

The third informant (CT 3) argued that,

> Issues are not the same for all communities in the city. The city considers this when doing public participation on all its platforms. One community may be more interested in gang issues, service delivery, rates and taxes, safety, etc. If and when social media is used, it is dependent on the issues raised and the community being targeted. Public participation is not an academic activity and needs officials to roll up their sleeves and work with communities.

CT 3 said service delivery issues from communities are not all the same and this is considered when deciding which social media platform to use for public participation. For example, he said one community may be more interested in resolving gang issues, safety, and service delivery, while another may be interested in rates and taxes, safety, etc. When social media is used, it depends on the issues raised and the community being targeted.

He said, “public participation is not like the democratic process of voting,” and is instead “interest-based”. Therefore, people use their level of interest in a particular issue to determine whether they will participate, how they will participate and on which platforms (using traditional and social media communication). He also said added that previous

engagements with universities and academics on public participation did not work as some in academia did not understand the “spadework” that needed to be done in communities.

The official said the city does not have a dedicated public participation document posing at least two serious challenges. One of them is resultant random and uncoordinated engagements with communities and other second is the lack of integration in the work of the PPU and the line departments of the city. CT 3 also said lack of coordination in functions means, “it is difficult to track details (questions) of residents on social media” with the aim of determining who they are and whether they have been assisted within the allocated timeframes not specified. Moreso, he said social media usage in public participation could lead to the “censorship” of officials in the city as communication with the public is limited to certain individuals such as the media heads and political appointees. Censorship as Sharma (2013) pointed out in Chapter 2 could be seen to preserve state secrecy and works against the communication principles of transparency and accountability. The official added that the lack of coherent messaging across departments in the city is also a concern.

Judging from the interviews above, the idea that some city officials fear being antagonised/trolled by residents online or doxed during protests is palpable. This researcher has concluded that this is perhaps one of the reasons why municipal officials prefer using mass media than social media for public participation.

Also significant, is that officials of the city I interviewed all stated that many residents do not understand the workings of the different spheres of government (national, provincial, and local) and how municipalities are run. They say residents view the municipality as representing government and therefore, demand all types of services even the ones entrusted to the national and provincial government. In some cases, communities burn municipal pamphlets and then claim that information on public participation was not given to them. This is particularly true for poorer communities.

Regarding languages used, CT 4 said the city tries as much as possible to be inclusive in terms of language in its communities, but this is not always possible. This is due to the absence of “critical platforms” such as a newspaper in the dominant isiXhosa language in Cape Town townships to disseminate information to residents. The other issue around language is that most of the posts on social media are done in English. This automatically excludes most Xhosa and Afrikaans people in communities that are not comfortable with English. He also highlighted the use of bureaucratic jargon during the public participation

process as being problematic. CT 4 said there is an assumption by some colleagues in the PPU and other political appointees that because they are “experts in the field”, therefore think that everybody taking part in the public participation process (whether through social media or using traditional methods) understands their language. It is important to speak to people in their language so they can come prepared to make meaningful contributions online and in face-to-face meetings. CT 4 also said links to documents online, especially some by-laws, are also full of “legal speak” that people may not understand and, therefore, this impacts their level of participation.

It also became clear that the City of Cape Town uses social media more as a tool to disseminate information to the public rather than a tool to encourage feedback from residents in line with the aims of citizen participation.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN CAPE TOWN MUNICIPALITY

The City of Cape Town has several social media accounts on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram as illustrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6: City of Cape Town social media accounts as at May 2020

Social Media Page	Date account Established	No of followers	No of people followed by the page	No of likes on page
Twitter @CityofCT	April 2010	369 000	1 483	not available (n/a)
@CityofCTAlerts	July 2014	188 000	6	n/a
Facebook (City of Cape Town)	September 2010	210 000	n/a	203 000
WhatsApp	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Instagram @CityofCT	July 2014	17 000	34	n/a

Source: Compiled from city’s social media accounts

Information posted on the social media platforms shown in Table 6 above is related to the city's various operations, press alerts, programmes, and budgets. The city also has a LinkedIn account. At the time of writing this thesis, the main Twitter account, @CityofCT had 369 000 followers (about one third of Joburgs' numbers). The account is followed by a mixture of so-called influencers, private individuals, organisations, city officials, journalists, and politicians. The activity on the city's main Twitter account showed that it was 10 years old at the time of writing this thesis.

It is also interesting to note that in a city of more than 4 million residents, the city's main Twitter account only has a following of 369 000 while it actively followed only 1 483 accounts. The Twitter follow/follower ratio for the City of Cape Town is 249 or (249:1). This represents a very small proportion of followers, with the follow/follower ratio showing in favour of the municipality. An explanation of how the follow/follower ratio was calculated has been made in Chapter 3, while Chapter 10 summarises a possible explanation for this kind of situation in Cape Town. A preference for multi-directional communication should ideally translate into a higher proportion of active followers.

For its social media operations, the City of Cape Town says its officials are online from 09:00 am to 06:00 pm (Monday to Friday) and from 10:00 am to 02:00 pm (Weekends and Public Holidays). Outside of these times, residents and other visitors are being directed to the city's official websites (Retrieved from https://www.capetown.gov.za/General/Terms-of-use, accessed 20 March 2021). While this information provided by the city seems to point to a dedicated workforce aimed at communicating with the public online, this researcher disputes this finding based on his own observation as a resident of the city. City officials do not respond to some comments posted online and when they do, it appears the response is generic and once-off. De Paula et al., (2018) argue that the social media responsiveness of local governments is related to the degree to which they respond to online comments and questions of citizens. They say such an approach shows a willingness to facilitate two-way communication with their citizenry. This is not happening quickly and as often.

The Facebook account was ten years old at the time of writing this thesis. The number of likes on the page at the time of writing this thesis was 210 000. The Facebook page is used to post news about the city, events, and information about the city and its programmes and budgets. Both the city's Twitter and Facebook pages are constantly updated. By skimming

through these pages, I found that a lot of information posted seems to be about what the city is offering to residents, not so much how residents can participate in those programmes.

The City of Cape Town often uses WhatsApp in its interaction with “customers” and the media. This researcher because of his work as a journalist belongs to several groups such as the urban management media group and safety and security group. These are used to communicate in real-time with relevant departments about various issues. Journalists can join these groups by sending a separate WhatsApp message, ordinary text, or email to one of the group administrators. Unfortunately, to protect various role players, the ethics code of this study prohibits this researcher from sharing some of the posts on these groups. Permission from the officials to share their personal information has also not been sought.

What started off as a two-way communication platform between journalists and city WhatsApp administrators led to the blocking of journalists in June/July 2020 from sending messages to both the urban management and safety and security media groups. There had been an exchange between some journalists and administrators which led to this decision on the part of the city. This researcher is concerned that such an attitude might be adopted again by the city in all its social media platforms whenever there is a disagreement with users (members of the public). City officials must encourage dialogue and freedom of speech at all times as part of promoting political freedoms. Blocking journalists from posting on official WhatsApp groups makes it harder for them to engage with city officials on crucial information. Some journalists even resorted to calling on city officials to shut down their WhatsApp groups because of the top-down approach of communicating with the media.

City officials gave some additional information about the general operations of the PPU during the interviews which has been captured in the paragraphs below. They said it becomes challenging when the city must rely on email, SMS, and small community databases in sub-councils to reach people. People are invited to add their details on these databases once a year, but this is not happening. When details are entered, they are often wrong, and it becomes difficult to reach those people outside of social media” (Interviews, 2019).

Officials also said they are not entirely sure about what happens to data that has been submitted online by residents, and whether it is processed on time by line departments due to a lack of monitoring processes in the citizen participation process. As far as the functioning of the PPU is concerned, a lot of inquiries on participation are referred to the

relevant line units for action and consideration. The PPU, however, does not receive feedback and responses on time from line departments on important matters (Interviews). Officials in the PPU say they are sometimes given excuses by line departments that certain individuals are off duty/unavailable or off sick. This frustrates and delays the feedback process. Officials in the PPU have also indicated that some officials in the line departments do not follow the directive set by the city manager to respond to emails within 7 working days. In some cases, telephones are not always manned, and many calls go unanswered. There was an acknowledgment by officials that while the city has tried to put management systems in place to improve the flow of information internally and externally, some officials from line departments do not seem to be dedicated to their jobs. There are significant problems with internal communications within the local state machinery exacerbated by the trend to outsource to external parties and consultants (Interviews, 2019).

City officials said a previous decision by management to centralise newspaper, radio, television, and online communication via the media office is also hampering online decentralised engagement with communities in Cape Town. City officials in the PPU said they must deal with bureaucratic hurdles before they can give answers to the public. They did, however, express their understanding of the rationale for communication with the public being controlled to protect the city's public reputation. The problem is that meaningful engagement on social media requires detailed responses and not automated general responses (Bagui and Bytheway, 2015) (Interviews, 2019).

Furthermore, some line departments assign junior officials to handle queries and they may not always have enough experience to provide adequate information. Thus, given these problems, social media by the city in citizen participation ends up being a publicity tool to about events instead of encouraging dialogue, gathering suggestions, and input on issues affecting the municipality (Interviews, 2019)

The City of Cape Town uses the services of community development and engagement officers to help in the public participation process, but this too comes with its challenges. Their training and understanding of the issues in the communities they serve may be inadequate and just like career officials in the PPU, their work and dealings with communities may be heavily influenced by personal stress, lack of understanding of how social media operates, work conditions, low pay and remuneration, and general job satisfaction. Although public participation in the city operates on values of accountability

and accessibility, it is difficult to monitor and measure the commitment of officials. One official said it is “off-putting that sometimes the comments made on their Facebook page are counterproductive” (Interviews, 2019).

The use of social media in citizen participation is sometimes impacted by changes in administration in the city. Officials in the public participation said each administration brings its plans rooted in the ideologies of a specific political party. Sometimes changes happen within different mayors of the same party. Every new administration wants to do business improvement and with that comes restructuring. Officials in the PPU said reporting to different politically aligned managers sometimes brings instability to the unit and the municipality. They say the situation has been stable from 2018 to 2019 although the incumbent mayor Dan Plato introduced some changes in the planning process when he took over from outgoing mayor Patricia de Lille in 2018 (Interviews, 2019).

Municipal officials in the PPU observed that officials do not seem keen to create interest in issues they post about. That has been left to communities to figure out for themselves. The PPU is trying to implement a system where officials report to the mayor about issues every 3 months to be proactive, but officials say this is an ambitious process given their staff shortages and other work pressures. Line departments are then left to deal with complaints and queries, and the feedback process often takes longer contributing to prolonged customer dissatisfaction. It is also important to note that regarding Twitter, 140 characters may not be enough to properly frame the story behind the protests. It is important for city officials to properly investigate why residents are protesting and what their real issues are. Some interest groups in communities may be motivated by narrow interests (Leonard, 2014) (Interviews, 2019).

An internal memorandum in the City of Cape Town dated 2016/09/07 also highlighted several issues with citizen participation. The city had commissioned a study from the HSRC to assess public participation and community engagement. The HSRC study found that while engagement practices were generally compliant, public participation in the city was a perceived “tick-box exercise” with a top-down approach and was often done too quickly. This study found that the same problem still exists currently and is worsened by staff shortages in the PPU. The HSRC also found that public engagement was not a key pillar driven by senior management at the corporate level.

One of the key findings of the HSRC study in 2016 was that the city's communication methods used in citizen participation were out of date, inefficient, and ineffective. Another HSRC study made a similar finding in 2015, suggesting that the problems were not only internal but also extended to municipal wards (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015). This study also found that there is recognition of new methods of communication including social media, but the usage of social media and its benefits is limited. In Chapter 2 of this study, Born (2018) and Evans-Cowley (2010) also argue that the nature of the impact of social media on protest and citizen participation in local government is still unclear, partly due to these platforms sharing little data about how their technologies are affecting society. Another internal memorandum dated 28 August 2015 also lists faxing, SMS, email, and written submissions as the preferred methods of getting comments and inputs from the public. Twitter is also highlighted through the city's official Twitter account but Facebook while also listed, has been noticeably scratched off several times.

Awareness of online citizen participation is failing in the city because of a lack of a coherent strategy or policy framework that guides public engagement in the organisation (HSRC, 2016). Line departments seem to be guided by different strategies compared to the PPU and while standard operating procedures and guidelines developed by the unit may be useful for compliance, they do not provide sufficient clarity on what needs to be done. According to the public participation guidelines approved by the city council on 28 August 2013 and amended on 28 October 2015, line departments have been given a set number of days to turn around each stage of public participation and provide the necessary information to the public participation unit, but these deadlines are not being met. Officials in the PPU have expressed frustration at the failure of line departments to stick to the guidelines as this affects their ability to advertise projects that need public comment on time.

Given these problems, it is not surprising that despite all the investment in ICT, politics of various kinds get in the way and traditional methods of citizen participation are still preferred over social media even though there is no corporate budget for participation. Assessing the use of social media in citizen participation by various classes and communities in Cape Town is challenging because the city does not have a dedicated public participation document to guide the process. This also means that officials in the PPU can skip certain crucial steps in online participation such as monitoring and evaluation. The findings show that problems of online participation are sometimes compounded by the fact that sometimes some communities do not understand how the three tiers of government operate, how a

municipality is run, or which service is the responsibility of the national government, versus provincial government and national government.

Assessing the use of social media in protests by various classes and communities in Cape Town, the study found that the number of service delivery protests has come down recently (2017 to 2019) and certain areas tend to protest and march more than others to demand service delivery. Officials say this is particularly true in areas affected by general crime, gangsterism, etc. The study found that basic service delivery issues (water and energy) are not the only reasons for protests. There are other issues such as land invasions, street people, animal rights, politics, gangsterism that attract interest from different social classes. The city has said it is committed to its middle-class "ratepayers" who contribute to its fiscal base. Yet if anything, the list of issues has become longer to include factors such as rapid urbanisation, high data costs, lack of education, poor leadership in communities, communities feeling isolated and not being listened to, a general lack of awareness about participation and governance issues and general disinterest in governance processes.

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS IN JOHANNESBURG

The objective of the interviews with municipal officials in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality was to determine how the city and its leaders engage citizens and use social media platforms such as Twitter. The responses are based on the views of three of the four senior officials who participated in the interviews. The fourth official did not respond to a request to be interviewed.

An informant from Joburg Metro (JHB 1) said the municipality frequently uses social media in its operations. He said,

> Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are used to communicate different messages to residents/customers. The municipality matches the choice of social media usage to the target audience. It also uses platforms such as ward-committees, public hearings, Imbizos (public meetings) provided for by various legislation.

The response of this official is like another response provided by a municipal official in Cape Town in the sections above. The official said the city did not deal with issues and problems in the same way. He said communities, based on issues raised in their areas, often decided for themselves how they would communicate with municipal officials. The researcher

concluded that it is the communities who decide how to deal with officials and officials simply go with the flow to appease communities.

JHB 1 also noted,

> The municipality has a website, call centre, walk-in centre where members of the public can communicate with their ward councillors. The city refers to residents as customers to dispel notion that government institutions are boring and too serious, it was decided to use social media to give the municipality some character and personality. The municipality had to move with the times and capitalise on new online media platforms available to improve communication with residents and customers about service delivery and the work/programmes of the municipality.

From the above, it is possible to see a blurring of propaganda/advertising to "customers" and information for citizens to make informed decisions and affect democratic outcomes. Moreover, in line with the metro's neoliberal orientation, officials insist that the city refers to residents as customers (Interview JHB 1, 2019). Social media it was suggested would give the municipality "some "character and personality" as a brand. Officials agreed that it was appropriate to use social media to promote public participation or the attendance of municipal events, processes, and meetings. They said the municipality had to "move with the times and capitalise on new online media platforms" available to improve communication with residents, and customers about service delivery and the work/programmes of the municipality.

The second interviewee (JHB 2) said,

> It is not always possible to resolve everyone's queries and complaints on social media. Officials dealing with complaints do not always know all the products of the city, and the relevant departments to pass on complaints to.

JHB 2's observation is backed by the same argument presented by Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2012) in Chapter 3 that collecting, monitoring, analysing and summarising politically relevant information from social media is difficult. Municipalities in South Africa lack systematic tracking and analysis of social media data due to factors such as small budgets. JHB 2 said there is also a danger of passing on incorrect information to "customers/residents" due to the lack of relevant skills to process huge data from social media in the municipality. The process of engaging "customers" needs to be properly managed. Details of how the city protects itself against reputational damage using social media tracking tools have not been provided.

However, another official JHB 3 also said in an interview that the municipality keeps statistical data of its social media activity and statistics are gathered daily and analysed monthly to help with their application. The data is broken down for analysis by looking at the reach, impressions, and sentiments shared by residents. The official said all comments made on social media are treated in the same way. For example, no one is censored based on location within the municipality. It is unclear how far this analysis of data takes place.

JHB 3 also said “Although some issues appeal more to certain groups, it does not matter in the municipality whether an issue is raised in a suburb or township”.

Additionally, Johannesburg municipal officials also said the appropriate social media platform was applied to different “communities” as, one of them put it, “A Facebook audience is different from a Twitter audience and Twitter engages more with comments.” (Interview JHB 2, 2019). This is in line with seeing “customers” are segmented into different “markets” and split between those who want to pay, and those who won’t pay, and those who can’t pay (the so-called indigents (Ruiters, 2018).

Officials also said they use social media to post content daily and it includes service delivery messages, events, and campaigns, visuals, graphics, memes, and videos to hopefully increase the impact of messages. The municipality encourages the use of trending topics to also increase the impact of content on residents. One of the most popular topics was found under the #MondayMotivation. The use of hashtags is also popular for events such as the State of City Address, Budget, IDP, Cleanup Campaigns, Savewater, SaveEnergy, BuildingNewJozi, and JobseekersSA.

The officials did not indicate the city’s public participation budget when asked. However, they said the municipality does have a public participation strategy which includes participation in the IDP and other budgetary processes.

The municipality has also tried to reach their target audiences by using language that is understood by communities and phrases that are “cool and trendy” to target the youth, as one official suggested (Interview JHB 3, 2019). Efforts were being made at the time of conducting this research to tag relevant departments to social media posts and create a database of key contacts internally so people can read up on important information. Efforts were also being made to retract incorrect information on social media posts and apologise to residents/customers if the need arises. Official (JHB 1, 2019) said he believed that if

people know that they are responsible for the efficiency of democracy, then they would participate in governance. The officials all said citizen participation cannot work if citizens feel their views are not being taken seriously and they have no say in how they are governed. One of the officials also noted that "citizen participation and democracy were co-dependent and the one needed the other in order to succeed." Social media, officials agreed, has allowed the city to be proactive in many instances thus benefiting democracy.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN JOHANNESBURG MUNICIPALITY

The City of Johannesburg, just like Cape Town, also has several social media accounts on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram (see Table 7 below). The city also has a LinkedIn account just like in Cape Town. The Twitter accounts are separated according to various functions and services provided by the city just like in Cape Town.

Table 7: City of Johannesburg social media accounts as at May 2020

Social media page	Date account Established	No of followers	No of people Followed by the Page	No of likes on page (Thousands -K)
Twitter @CityofJoburgZA	March 2012	990 000	62 000	n/a
@CleanerJoburg Pikitup	September 2011	40 200	885	n/a
@CityPowerJhb CityPowerJhb	July 2011	928 000	2515	n/a
@JhBWater Johannesburg Water	January 2011	452 000	1517	n/a
@MyJRA Joburg Roads Agency	April 2012	189 000	9399	n/a
@CoJTransport City of Joburg Transpor	May 2018	3441	162	n/a
@CityofJoburgEMS City of Joburg EMS	March 2012	32 000	1972	n/a
Facebook City of Johannesburg	n/a	n/a	n/a	129 000
WhatsApp	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Instagram @CityofJoburg	April 2013	26 000	7433	n/a

Source: Compiled from city's social media accounts

At the time of researching for this thesis in 2020, the main Twitter account @CityofJoburgZA had 990 000 followers and was just 8-years old. This is closely followed by the city's electricity Twitter account @CityPowerJhb with 928 000 followers. The account was 8-years old at the time. A possible reason to explain this high number of followers can be found in Chapter 6 of this study related to the Joburg Billing Crisis.

Table 7 also shows that the Twitter follow/follower ratio for the main Twitter account is 15.96 or (16:1). Similarly, to Cape Town, the number shows that the follow/follower ratio in Johannesburg is in favour of the municipality rather than residents although Joburg follows significantly more people than Cape Town. The follow/follower ratio at City Power given all the significant billing challenges and others explained earlier in this study is also significantly low at 368.9 or (369:1). A possible explanation for this is summarised later in Chapter 10 of this study.

Joburg occasionally does "snap" polls on Twitter. Joburg also uses Twitter to make announcements/alerts and to provide what may be interpreted as tourist-like information of the "did-you-know" variety. For example,

> Jozi, did you know that there are 19 heritage buildings in JHB CDB? And that there are about 150 heritage sites in the metropolitan area? Happy Heritage Day Jozi! (@CityofJoburgZA)

In over four months, only 23 people viewed a YouTube video on Joburg's Zoo and only 1 000 people had subscribed. The video seems to provide evidence of the lack of citizen engagement with the municipality on some matters.

Regarding the usage of social media, the three officials interviewed said the municipality used social media in its operations. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn were used to communicate different messages to residents/customers. JHB 3 said, "The municipality matches the choice of social media usage to the target audience." The municipality also uses platforms such as ward committees, public hearings, Imbizos (public meetings) provided for in law and the Constitution. The municipality also has a website, call centre, walk-in centre where members of the public can communicate with their ward councillors.

CONCLUSION

The City of Cape Town run by the majority DA uses social media as an advertising platform to disseminate information rather than a tool to encourage feedback from residents in line

with the aims of citizen participation. It has allocated limited resources for multi-directional engagement through social media, but also weak internal coordination of engagements and messaging to citizens. The city remains divided along racial lines in the participation process and the governing DA is not popular in black areas.

The city uses WhatsApp groups to disseminate information to the media but often journalists cannot even comment or ask questions on those platforms. Officials interviewed for this study say they are concerned that many residents do not understand the differences between national, provincial, and local governments. This has complicated the relationship the city has with poorer communities that need more services. I argue that it is, however, the responsibility of the PPU to facilitate public participation in these communities by creating awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizens and educating them about the role of local government. The blame cannot be shifted on the citizens when the city admits that understaffing is a major factor affecting its work.

Changes in administration in Cape Town have results in confusion amongst officials in the PPU as they find themselves reporting to different politically aligned managers. Officials interviewed are concerned about the instability to the unit and the municipality. Sometimes officials are forced to exclude the running of public participation awareness campaigns in their policy and service delivery planning stages because budgets and time do not allow them to implement those processes. This renders public participation a “tick-box exercise.”

Meanwhile, the City of Johannesburg is also a divided city with glaring disparities between the geographically split north and the South which is poor. Just like in Cape Town, social media platforms are used to communicate different messages to residents/customers. Referring to residents as “customers” in Johannesburg is, however, problematic as it leads to the possible blurring of propaganda promoted by the city. The idea promotes the notion that the relationship between the city and its residents is consumerists rather than politically defined by socio-political rights.

Officials interviewed in Johannesburg did not indicate the city’s public participation budget, however, the city has a public participation strategy. In contrast, the City of Cape Town has a limited budget for social media and communication. Significantly, officials of the city I interviewed also believe that many residents do not understand the workings of the different spheres of government (national, provincial, and local) and how municipalities are run. They say residents demand all types of services even the ones entrusted to the national and

provincial government. They also agreed that issues of governance are not understood in the same way in all the communities. The new spaces of participation created by the City of Johannesburg do not seem to be yielding the desired effects of delivering quality services as evidenced by the Johannesburg billing crisis discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 8: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND YOUTH IN CAPE TOWN

This chapter explores the voices of civic/social movements and the youth in Cape Town. Interviews were conducted with two officials in each of the contrasting civic organisations under study in Cape Town (CBRRA and Seskhona). The findings are presented in four sections for easy comparison, starting with CBRRA followed by the youth in Camps Bay, and then Seskhona followed by the youth in Khayelitsha. Drawing from the methodology chapter of this study, the questions posed to the officials from CBRRA and Seskhona are recorded in **Appendix 2** at the end of this study. I also explore the views of young citizens in these two areas. The questions for the youth focus groups are in **Appendix 3**.

The DA is the dominant political party in the Cape Metro where social and geographical racial hierarchies persist. Cape Town was part of the "Coloured Labour Preference" area which meant Africans remained a minority. There are numerous non-governmental organisations, political organisations, churches, and ratepayers' associations which operate in Cape Town adding to a rich and diverse political climate.

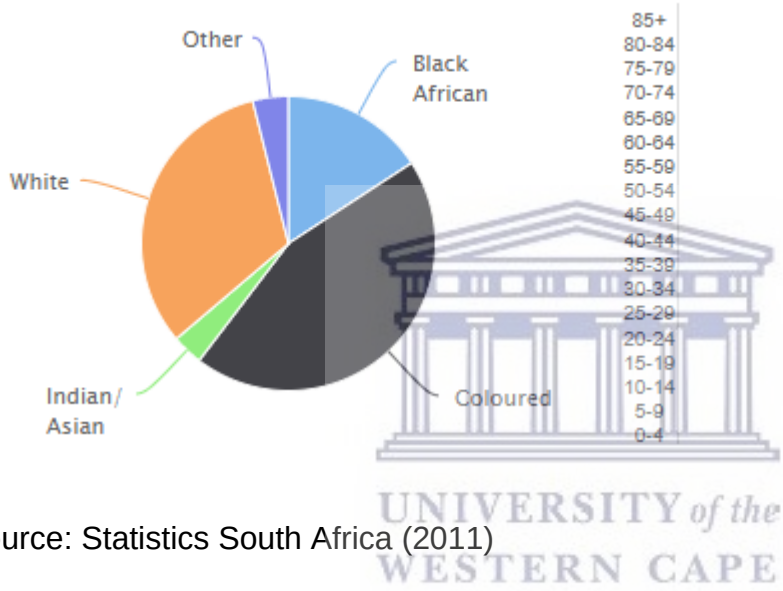
CAMPS BAY AND SUBCOUNCIL 16 (CAPE TOWN)

Subcouncil 16 which includes Camps Bay consists of five wards. It covers areas such as the Cape Town Central Business District, Sea Point, Camps Bay, Waterfront, Woodstock, Observatory, and Mowbray (Polack, 2011). The area was a whites-only zone during the apartheid era and is still trying to manage the inherited stigma of the forced removals of 1966 in District Six under the Group Areas Act of 1950 (Bagul and Bytheway, 2013). Interestingly there seems to be very little academic writing on wealthy areas like Camps Bay compared to impoverished places like Manenberg. A fair number of property owners do not live in the area and lease/let out their homes to holidaymakers mostly via Airbnb. The average property price for a stand-alone 4-roomed house is R15 million. Some 22 per cent of residents are foreigners (Census 2011). According to a property expert, "it is the country's top holiday spot, ranking the highest in Airbnb searches, and is the most Instagrammed neighbourhood and about 20 per cent of all sales were to foreign buyers.

Long-term rentals that can run into the upper thousands per month, easily as much as R80 000 per month" (Property24, 2017).

Figure 37 below shows a breakdown of the population by race in subcouncil 16 in Cape Town based on the last full population census in 2011. Internet access, ownership of household goods (including cellphone and laptops), and levels of education are also shown in Figure 38, Figure 39, and Figure 40 respectively.

Figure 37: Population groups in subcouncil 16, including Camps Bay

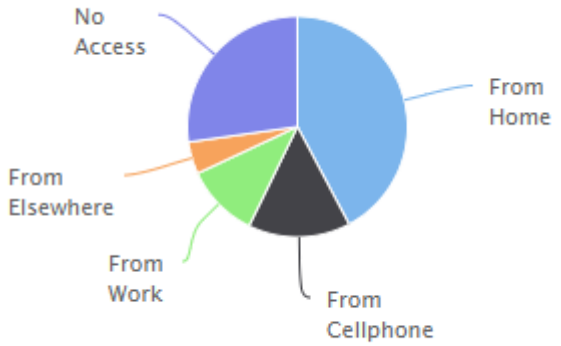


Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 37 above shows that the population of subcouncil 16 in Cape Town is made up of 32.3 per cent White, 44.6 per cent Coloured, 15.8 per cent Black, 3.4 per cent Indian/Asian, and 3.9 per cent Other.

The racial makeup of the Camps Bay area is 78.3 per cent White (almost six times higher than for the Cape Town metro) 13.5 per cent African, 5.1 per cent Coloured, 1.7 per cent Indian/Asian, and 1.4 per cent Other (Republic of South Africa, 2011). Contemporary Camps Bay reflects inequality in South African society with millionaire dwellings, hundreds of domestic workers, the homeless, and street children sharing the same space. It is for the super-rich leisure class with property prices and foreign ownership amongst the highest in South Africa.

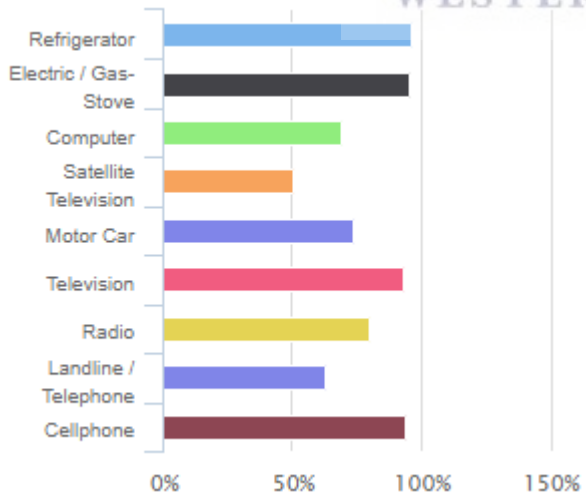
Figure 38: Internet Access in subcouncil 16, including Camps Bay



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 38 above shows that 42.2 per cent of households access the Internet at home in subcouncil 16, while 15.0 per cent access it from their cellphone, 10.8 per cent from work, 4.7 per cent from elsewhere and 27.2 per cent do not have access to the Internet. In Khayelitsha by contrast only 2.4 per cent of households have convenient access to the Internet from home (as discussed later).

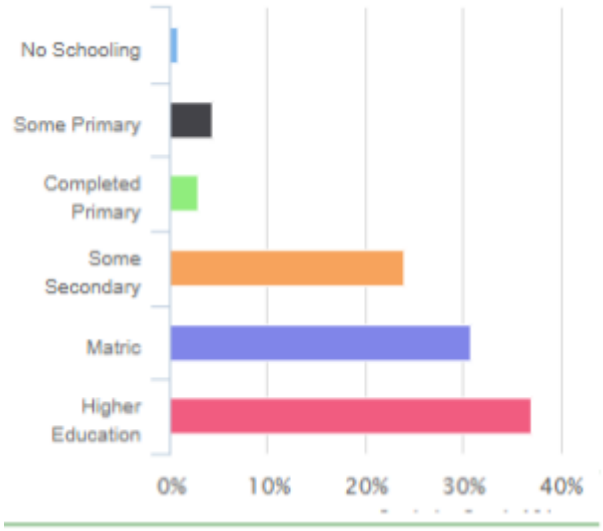
Figure 39: Household goods ownership in subcouncil 16, including Camps Bay



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 39 above shows that 68.8 per cent of households have computers and 94.2 have cellphones in subcouncil 16. These gadgets are critical to online participation as this study has explained.

Figure 40: Education levels in subcouncil 16, including Camps Bay



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 40 above shows that 0.8 per cent of households have no schooling, 4.3 per cent have some primary schooling, 3.0 per cent completed primary education, 24.1 per cent have some secondary education, 30.8 per cent have matric and 37.0 per cent have a higher education.

Camps Bay falls in ward 54, which in 2016 local government election voted overwhelmingly for the DA: 94 per cent for the DA and 4 per cent for the ANC (Municipal Elections, 2016). The ward is 72 per cent white. It has a very low density of 631 persons per km squared with an average income nine times that of the Western Cape average (Statistics South Africa, 2011). On the other hand, the density of ward 94 in Khayelitsha is 9300 people per km squared (this is 14 times more than Camps Bay) and 79 per cent of voters in Khayelitsha voted for the ANC (Municipal Elections, 2016).

CBRRA IN CAMPS BAY

A full definition of CBRRA has been provided in Chapter 1. Two senior leadership figures in the CBRRA were interviewed for this research. Additional information came from secondary literature on social media platforms like Facebook and where possible verified online searches. CBRRA says it aims to,

> foster interaction amongst ratepayers and residents and increase understanding through membership; acquire rights of property and adopt a separate legal persona in planning matters; promote, enforce and safeguard the interests and rights of ratepayers and residents; conserve the environment, beauty, character, and heritage of the membership area; monitor municipal policies and affairs, evaluate them according to good local governance; positively influence Cape Town City Council to adopt policies and decisions acceptable to members (CBRRA, n.d.).

The organisation has been classified as a civic/social movement for purposes of this study and an explanation for this classification is provided below. Pieterse and Oldfield (2002) argue that an obvious explanation set in history is that social movements are locally based and mobilise around issues such as lack of safety, evictions, and poor services at a "neighbourhood scale." However, they also argue that in a more modern South Africa, community development forums are made up of far-reaching grassroots groups such as churches, sports clubs and a host of other groups including ratepayers associations which are perfect platforms to raise concerns of communities so they can be addressed by municipal officials.

One of the key slogans on the CBRRA's Facebook site is "Working together to retain the unique character of Camps Bay". This could be read as a conservative message and could be viewed as a wealthy community focused on conserving existing spatial arrangements and protecting property prices instead of embracing social change. The CBRRA Executive or Manco is made up of the following members: Chris Willemse (Chair) - Ward Committee and Planning; Richard Bendel (Vice-Chair) - Membership and Finance; Brenda Herbert - Planning and CPF; Johan van Papendorp – Planning & Environmental; Alma Horn - Membership and PR; Helet Merkling – Clifton; Byron Herbert - Beach, Coastline & Events; Michael Smorenberg – PR; Jess Curnock-Cook – *Social media*; Bianca Krafft – Plastics; Theresa Massaglia – Homeless; Kim Mobey – Homeless (CBRRA AGM, 2019 Minutes).

Figure 41: Annual General Meeting of CBRRA in Camps Bay – November 2020

Source: https://twitter.com/CBRRA/status/1331547980017627137/photo/2.

The picture of the Annual General Meeting of the CBRRA in November 2020 above was shared on Twitter. It shows what one can assume to be members of the CBRRA having a relaxed red and white wine "experience" while interacting with one another. Evidence presented in Figure 37 shows that the racial makeup of the Camps Bay area is 78.3 per cent White, 13.5 per cent African, 5.1 per cent Coloured, 1.7 per cent Indian/Asian, and 1.4 per cent Other. The average property price for a stand-alone 4-roomed house is R15 million.

Some 22 per cent of residents are foreigners. Long-term rentals in the area can run into the upper thousands per month, easily as much as R80 000 per month.

Interestingly, there is an entire portfolio for social media in addition to two exco members who do PR and two exco members dealing with the “homeless” – an obsessive theme with wealthy property owners and the City of Cape Town.

The CBRRA Manco has welcomed new (female) members to its ranks,

> Jess Curnock-Cook, who will be spearheading our journey into an effective social media presence, which will give the ratepayers of Camps Bay a constant update of happenings in the area and allow for proper interaction. Theresa Massaglia, who will be dealing with the various City and civic groupings who are tasked with addressing the many issues regarding *homeless people* in Camps Bay. Theresa addressed our meeting of last year on this topic. Kim Mobey, a local artist, who will also be dealing with the homeless and *street kids*. A warm welcome to them all.

The organisation says it made a “profit” (sic) of R99 000 in 2019 when legal fees were reversed. The CBRRA has a Twitter page, Facebook, and a blog. However, the chairperson of CBRRA, Chris Willemse said the use of these platforms by the organisation is “minimal” and restricted to distributing information, minutes, and making announcements to residents in the area. They suggest that the use of social media is not popular with the organisation although its leaders are optimistic about its benefits. They believe that, when used correctly, it can help to improve participation, transparency, and accountability, all of which are important in a healthy democracy. CBRRA’s blog lists its recent achievement as follows:

- “Worked together in a successful communal effort with several other Camps Bay civic organisations in December 2009 to get illegal ‘changing rooms’ removed from the grass verges.
- Assisted in obtaining large rates repayments for CBRRA members from excessive rate assessments.
- Removed unsightly and illegal signs continuously.
- Assisted with the clean-up of The Glen, The Little Glen, and public spaces in Camps Bay.
- Ran survey amongst community members regarding their views on Dogwalking, the result of which is to be proposed at the next Ward meeting for inclusion in the new by-law.

- Ongoing servitudes prepared to enable fair and amicable legally enforceable agreements between neighbours, builders, and developers, thereby encouraging positive and sympathetic redevelopment.
- Founder member of the Greater Cape Town Civic Alliance (GCTCA) which brings problems within the City Council Planning and Rates departments to the attention of politicians and City Council officialdom and assists ratepayers' associations in their dealings with Municipal, Provincial, and National governmental affairs.
- Alerted the City Parks to cut verges later, enabling the 'fynbos' to bloom and reseed.
- Assisted Auctioneers and the Heritage Committee to ensure the protection of the Stone Cottages in Geneva Drive, icons of Camps Bay heritage, when they were put up for auction and threatened with unsuitable redevelopment.
- Ensured that events proposed for Camps Bay, especially during seasonal holidays along the beachfront, would not prevent residents from the peaceful enjoyment of their properties while still encouraging the lively and friendly ambiance of Camps Bay as a holiday destination.
- Prompted the City Council to finally offer free trees and shrubs for planting in Camps Bay's public spaces.
- Assisted Camps Bay Schools campus in their ongoing attempts to obtain new leases of a suitable length for their playing fields.
- Supported the CB Community Medics, including cash donations.
- Representation on the CB Community Police Forum and Liquor Licensing Committee.
- CBRRA registered as a Non-Profit Organisation.

Some of CBCRRA's previous achievements are,

- Enforced the previous government to allow Camps Bay to be a mixed-race beach – the first in South Africa in the 1980s – within two years all beaches in the country were mixed.
- Persuaded the city council to,

- Limit buildings to not exceed 10 metres high above ground level after the erection of Sonnekus Flats in the 1970s.
- Demolish the civic centre in the 1980s.
- Expropriate the Rotunda Hotel and Ballroom and to preserve the latter.
- Compile the proposal calling for a new village centre and hotel and assisted in the adjudication and monitor the construction.

- Initiated the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and created the master design for the redevelopment of Camps Bay main beach in 2001. Continue to incentivise the city council to carry out the uncompleted redevelopment plan of the beachfront.
- Monitoring the EIA process and controlling the development of the Roundhouse site together with Friends of the Glen.
- Initiated the construction by the city council of amenities buildings at Maidens Cove beach.
- Arranged for city council to convert one east / west soccer field to two north/south fields at the sports club.
- Resisted multiple applications for shopping centres, parking basements, cinemas, and other development under the soccer field.
- Won four court cases against the city council resulting in amendments to the zoning scheme.
- Assisted in the responses to the proposed new Integrated Zoning Scheme since 2001. (Camps Bay Ratepayers, 2019).
- As the list shows, the organisation commands considerable legal and professional expertise since it represents the richest suburb in South Africa. It can win legal battles, control zoning and development planning and ensure lower rates charges for residents as well as force exclusions of amenities such as shopping centres and activities on beaches.

As part of "modernising" its communication strategy, again CBRRA chairperson Chris Willemse said efforts were being made to make it "more social media-based." At the time of conducting this study, emails and face-to-face meetings were still preferred. Mostly discussed are issues of city planning, rates, water and sanitation, protection of public open spaces, street children, homeless people, security, and environmental issues. Minutes of meetings and AGM are posted on the blog. At the 2019 AGM, the ward councillor noted that,

> The homeless is one of the key concerns of the residents in the community and we are committed to *dealing positively* with the issue. There is no miracle cure for this but rather a continued drive for successes. A workshop was held in June with the car guards and homeless in the area. This was extremely successful with about 25 - 30 attendees over the 2 days. From that process 8 went to the City Safe Space and are still there and progressing very positively. It is through these social development interventions that we will be able to see results that will have a positive long-term effect.

Political uses of social media have thus not disrupted the intimacy of direct access to the councillor, power relations, a high value attached to privacy, polite racism (Dealing positively with the homeless sic) and legal power. The councillor reported to a well-attended AGM that "I have instituted across the ward "service delivery walks". We have done this on the Camps Bay Promenade with *numerous city officials* such as parks, recreation, roads, and stormwater, etc. We have noted issues that need to be fixed and/or addressed and are tackling these" (Camps Bay Ratepayers, 2010).

Table 8: Use of social media by the CBRRA: May 2020

Social Media Page	**Date Established**	**followers**	**People followed by the page**	**No of likes on page**
Twitter @CBRRA	February 2010	157	277	Not available
Facebook	March 2010	122	n/a	106

Source: Compiled from various CBRRA social media platforms

Table 8 above shows that the Twitter follow/follower ratio for CBRRA is 0.57 or (1:2). The number shows that the follow/follower ratio is in favour of the supporters of the organisation more than the organisation itself. A possible explanation for this is summarised later in Chapter 10 of this study.

In 2020, the main Twitter account of the organisation, @CBRRA, had only 157 followers and the Facebook page had only 122 followers. The organisation's social media following and the number of followers is very small (see Table 8).

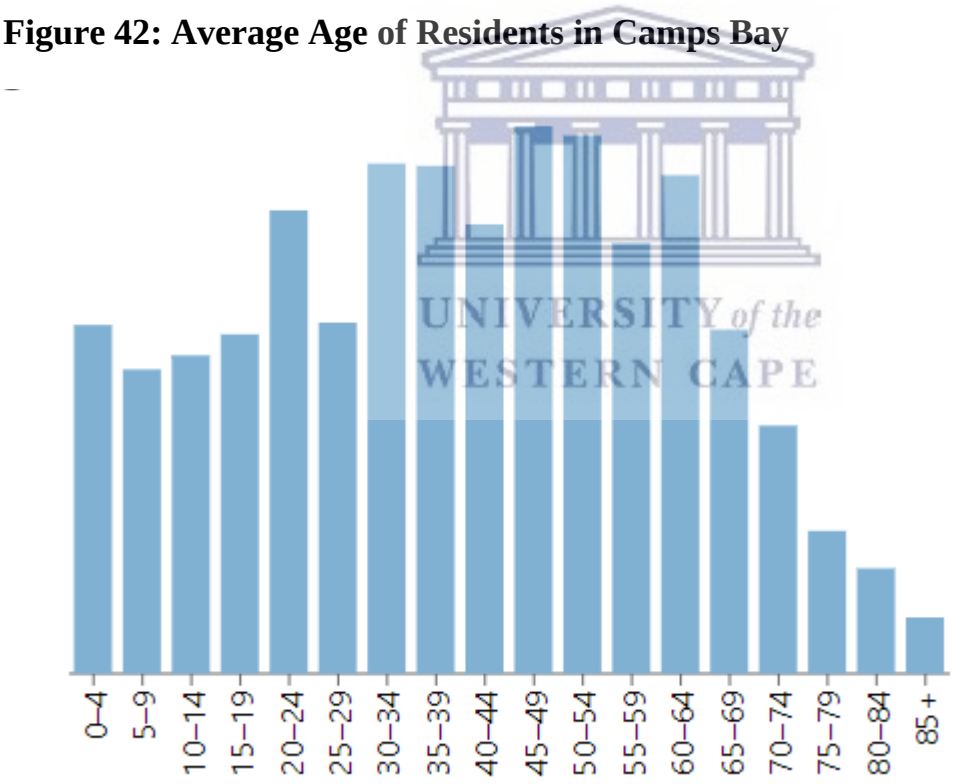
Another CBBRA official said while residents were generally aware of their rights to participate in governance processes with the city, many people were too consumed with "their own private lives" and "do not have empathy for the community." CBRRA resolves issues through litigation instead of protesting. Regarding how to improve citizen

participation, both officials said this could be done through creating more awareness about participation programmes to citizens.

Respondents indicated that a fair portion of residents in this study area does not use their properties as their primary homes. They either sub-let their properties as holiday homes or visit occasionally from their other bases inland or overseas. Many of the properties were left in the care of managing agents or sub-letting agents. Often these agents were given the power and authority to represent owners in dealings and engagements with the city.

The findings also show that the use of social media in citizen political participation in Camps Bay might be related to an aging population in the area. Willemse said, "… a large number of people are elderly and may not be technology savvy." The average age in Camps Bay as captured by the Population Census in 2011 and Figure 42 below.

Figure 42: Average Age of Residents in Camps Bay



Source: Census (2011)

Figure 42 above shows that the dominant age group in Camps Bay is the 45 to 49-year-old age group and the median age of 38 is almost ten years higher than Cape Town's overall median age of 29 (Wazimaps, n.d.). The main conclusion, however, is that social media among the Camps Bay elite may in fact be a means to protect the privacy of residents. It is

important also to look at the range of media and combinations that are used. The preference for email is notable.

THE YOUNG CITIZENS IN CAMPS BAY

All the young respondents said they owned a cellphone and a laptop and used social media in their daily lives. Camps Bay youth 1 (CAM 1, a female) argued that she used social media to keep up to date with news and current affairs and often posted on social media. She uses Facebook to connect with friends and loved ones and market her business. She also uses the platform to repost and share news that she finds interesting. CAM 1 argued that municipal officials "say too much on social media but do little to help people and this makes people lose interest in their activities. Officials must listen to community voices." CAM 2, also female, called herself a brand influencer and saw herself as a product who "lived on social media." She said social media gives,

> lots of exposure and provides free advertising for her. The youth are not participating in municipal processes online because they are not invited to do so. Adults are a problem because they do not allow young people, especially to express themselves freely in governance matters.

Respondents use social media to stay abreast of news developments, connect with friends and family, and market their businesses and personal brands. One of the respondents said she used social media because of pressure from friends. Facebook and Twitter were amongst the most popular social networks in the area. One person also mentioned Instagram, but Facebook was more popular because "it is easier to use and connect with family and friends." The respondent also said it was easier to repost "interesting" content on Facebook and to follow so-called brand influencers.

Respondents were divided on the use of social media to pass on information to residents by the municipality. They felt that this approach is not the best as not all residents are tech-savvy, even if social media is "instant" media to reach affected communities.

Respondents felt there's a general lack of awareness of citizen participation programmes for the youth in the area. As one of them put it, "the youth are not aware of what they should do to participate in municipal processes." Overwhelmingly, the respondents suggested that it was important for government officials and the community at large to listen to the concerns of young people. They also felt that the youth are not invited to ward-level meetings, and

they are made to feel “unwanted” by some ward councillors and other stakeholders if they do attend. There is also a feeling that young people are not always understood by their parents and communities.

One respondent said he advocates for more protests by young people to make their voices heard, while another supported the idea of social movements to raise the voice of the marginalised. There seemed to be a consensus amongst respondents that municipalities must follow up on concerns raised by communities so that a ‘healthy level’ of interest by residents in governance processes can be maintained. A lack of trust in officials and the impact of fake news and growing concerns about online safety also emerged as concerns.

KHAYELITSHA AND SUBCOUNCIL 10 (CAPE TOWN)

Khayelitsha is in many ways the diametrical opposite of Camps Bay. Subcouncil 10 consists of six wards which are Ward 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, and 99. It covers the central part of Khayelitsha on the Cape Flats (City of Cape Town, 2016). The subcouncil is bounded by Mitchells Plain in the west and the N2 highway in the northeast. Its northern, eastern, and southern boundaries connect with other sections of Khayelitsha and the False Bay coastline (City of Cape Town: Subcouncils, 2018). Furthermore, 99 per cent of people in Subcouncil 10 are Black and Xhosa speaking. The area is home to over 400 000 people (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Approximately 63 per cent of households in the Khayelitsha/Mitchells Plain district fall within the low-income bracket, of which 16.5 per cent have no income (City of Cape Town, 2016). Furthermore, poverty is widespread in the area and many people live in overcrowded shack settlements without adequate access to electricity water, and sanitation (Ntongana and Swana, 2014).

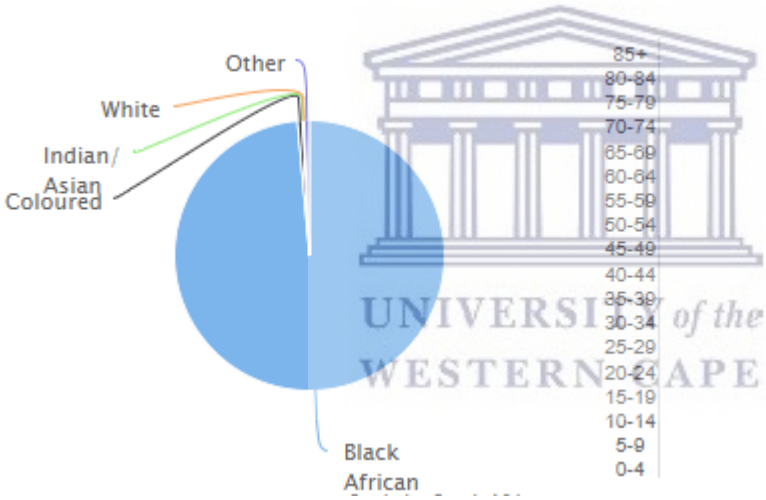
Politically, Khayelitsha is a stronghold of the ruling ANC (Plaut, 2019; Makinana, 2019) but the EFF has gained ground. In an internal report assessing the status of the ANC in the Western Cape Province in 2019, the only province the ANC does not govern, the party identified the EFF as an additional threat to support base in Khayelitsha (Makinana, 2019).

In contrast to Camps Bay’s wine and politics meetings, mass action, disruptions of citizen participation meetings, and open anger are quite common in Khayelitsha as noted for example in a subcouncil meeting that took place in the area on Wednesday, April 19, 2017.

It was further noted at this meeting that citizen participation collapsed and government and the City of Cape Town officials could not interact with people on the ground. Although IsiXhosa, English, and Afrikaans are the official languages in the Western Cape, it was noted that perhaps one of the reasons for the collapse of the citizen participation meeting was due to the failure of City of Cape Town officials to address people in their preferred language of IsiXhosa (City of Cape Town, 2017).

Figure 43 below shows a breakdown of the population by race in Khayelitsha or subcouncil 10 in Cape Town based on the last population census in 2011. Internet access, ownership of household goods (including cellphone and laptops), and levels of education are also shown in Figure 44, Figure 45, and Figure 46 respectively.

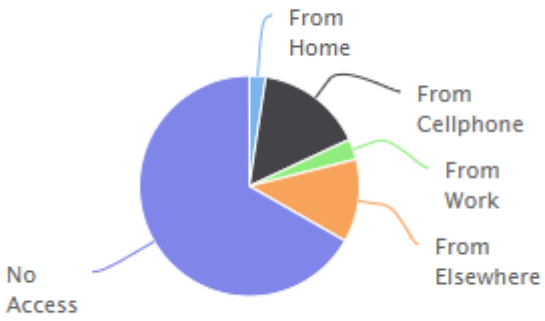
Figure 43: Population groups in Khayelitsha



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 43 above shows that Khayelitsha's population is predominantly Black Africa at 98.6 per cent of the population. The rest is made up of Asian, Coloured, Indian, White, and Other.

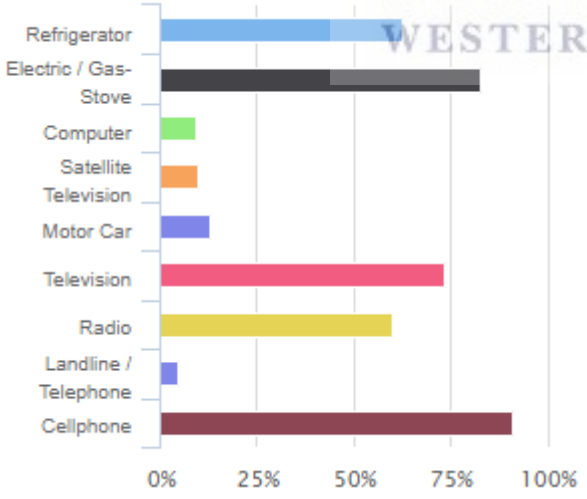
Figure 44: Internet access in Khayelitsha



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 44 above shows that 66.8 per cent of households do not have access to the Internet in Khayelitsha. Only 2.4 per cent of households have access to the Internet from home, 15.7 per cent access the Internet from their cellphone, 3.0 per cent access it from work, and 12.2 per cent from elsewhere.

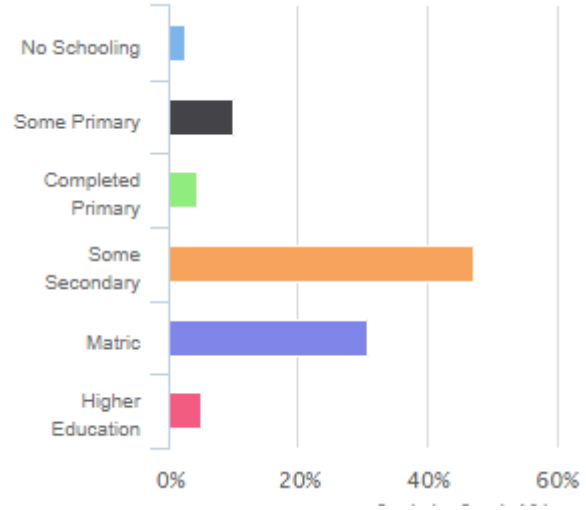
Figure 45: Household goods ownership in Khayelitsha



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 45 above shows that 9.1 per cent of households have computers and 91.3 per cent have mobile phones but not necessarily smart phones. Those without smart phones can access radio especially UMhlobo Wenene which boast 5 million listeners. A considerable number of residents maintain connections with relatives and friends in the Eastern Cape.

Figure 46: Education levels in Khayelitsha



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 46 above shows that 2.6 per cent of households in Khayelitsha do not have schooling, 9.8 per cent have some primary schooling, 4.4 per cent completed primary education, 47.4 per cent have some secondary schooling, 30.8 have matric and 4.9 per cent have a higher education.

SESKHONA IN KHAYELITSHA

Seskhona movement, one of several movements in Khayelitsha, emerged in 2013 around "disruptive" poo-throwing actions. One of its former founding leaders Andile Lilli revealed in a 2014 interview with the online publication GroundUp that,

> Foreigners view Cape Town as a perfect city, but they do not know that poor people in the city are suffering and are provided with bad services. We threw poo in the airport because we wanted to show people the real Cape Town and the conditions people live in. And we are not apologetic about what we did. Some people turned their backs on us, but we made our point (Retrieved from https://www.groundup.org.za/article/andile-lili-sets-sights-2016-elections_1984/, accessed 19 October 2021).

In a sense, the "comrades" organisation made its own media events by sensationalising the plight of the poor. The movement has attracted global and local scholarly attention and highly cited publications (McFarlane and Silver, 2017, for example, coined the term *poolitics* and recalling Swanson's "sanitation syndrome"). It has also been criticized for being disruptive but little else. Robins (2014) thus sets the "spectacular" politics of the Seskhona

people's movement in Cape Town against the "slow activism" of the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) – a contrast that might be overdrawn.

The officials of Seskhona, including one of its leaders Loyiso Nkohla, said that Seskhona did not prefer to use social media as "it did not understand how social media would help to resolve community issues." Nkohla said, "In the absence of social media, the best way to mobilise is going to communities and calling a meeting with leaders and ward committees (face-to-face)." Nkohla said he believed that calling a public meeting on a loud hailer was very effective in mobilising communities.

He said if the organisation had to choose an effective social media platform, it would go for WhatsApp given that "it is used widely by their members." He also said data costs remained a critical issue for community members affected by factors such as poverty and unemployment. Seskhona leaders said since its inception, the organisation has been frustrated with the city not responding to issues of service delivery in general. Protests in the city itself have been organised (see Figure 47 below)

Figure 47: Protests in Cape Town

Source: Facebook.com (Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/564545280282839/photos/a.564946236909410/567769946627039/ accessed 19 October 2021).

Nkohla said communities and their members do not understand what is required of them when it comes to participating in governance processes, let alone participating online. Nkohla argued that social media was not reliable in their work. He said many people do not understand their rights in governance issues. To improve the situation, Nkohla suggested that the city must have direct communication with communities and city officials must be accessible to residents, and ward councillors must be approachable too. He also said it would help to ease tensions if the city and community leaders were proactive and resolved issues before they blow out of proportion.

Seskhona officials said more public meetings are required to resolve issues and these must be held continuously. The lack of communication, ignorance of issues, and undermining communities from city officials often leads to tensions between the city and residents. He said some city officials were "just not geared for the public participation process and do not understand the issues in various communities." He also said the ANC and DA people dominating ward committees was "a big problem". He also felt that all issues at ward meetings were politicised at the expense of communities and councillors had too much influence on the appointment of ward committees and the structure should be apolitical to work better.

Nkohla noted, "People are being appointed to positions in the city because they are close to whoever is mayor at the time and do not have a direct understanding of government processes and the real issues on the ground affecting communities, including social media." Community consultations by city officials in public participation do not take place in a meaningful way and city officials plan and approve public participation themselves without involving people.

The attitude of Seskhona towards social media usage in citizen participation is not surprising given that Figure 46 above shows that most of the residents in Khayelitsha do not have access to the Internet. Although many people have cellphones as seen in Figure 46, most of them rely on data from free public WiFi hotspots and elsewhere.

Despite Seskhona's input, this study interestingly found that the community of Khayelitsha does not fit into the typical stereotype about "disadvantaged communities" as lacking agency and power. The ownership of cellphones critical for online participation is high in the area and 50 per cent of residents have a secondary education. Seskhona's Facebook page recently showed more than 800 people liked the post and 860 people followed the page.

Seskhona leaders say the online citizen participation process is open to manipulation by city officials and political parties for their gain. They would like to see an increase in education awareness programmes about general internet safety. Significantly, around 2016 this organisation petered out as its leadership slowly was co-opted into the City of Cape Town by the then Mayor Patricia de Lille and other areas of the Western Cape provincial government.

YOUTH VOICES IN KHAYELITSHA

Young respondents in Khayelitsha said they use social media in their daily lives. Most respondents own a cellphone and a laptop. One of them also owns an IPad and a desktop. A previous study found that evidence of sharing of media resources in a group of twenty young people from Makhaza. "Phones are often semi-public shared resources. For impoverished families using a single phone, shared access often overrides mobility and convenience" (Walton et al., 2012:404).

Respondents used social media to connect with their peers and the "outside world." One of them said she used social media purely for entertainment purposes. Most of them use social media to meet new people, gaming, share pictures, promote their business, and follow fashion and business trends. Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp are the most popular social media platforms used in the area. Respondents said Facebook was most popular for keeping in touch with family and friends. LinkedIn and Instagram were also mentioned in the answers, but they were not popular. Khayelitsha youth interviewee number 1 (KY 1, male) responded negatively in the following way to questions posed about social media use.

> I use social media mainly through Facebook for marketing my business and Instagram for promoting my lifestyle. …the municipality is not willing to use to our views and there is far too much red tape, and older people do not want to listen to the views of young people.

KY 2 (female) uses social media to collect information about trends and events that are relevant to the youth and post inspirational, and funny stories. She argues "that ward committees do not focus on issues that need to be addressed in communities." Three of the respondents said they preferred to go and meet their ward councillor face-to-face instead of relying on social media to communicate. Two others said they do not engage with their ward

councillor on issues affecting their community. Another two respondents said they prefer community meetings as ward councillors are not active on social media. Respondents say the use of social media to pass on information to the public by the municipality is working, but municipal officials are not following up on suggestions from the community. The municipality is not “capitalising” on the time spent by young people daily on social media.

KY I seems to see the municipality as an institution managed by older people with a generational gap that does not understand modern forms of communication. He suggests that young people are needed to run the local state. KY 3 felt that,

> The municipality should push more on the social media space and ward-committees should have specific youth sub-committees to look at youth issues. The municipality should be more active on different social networks and make sure that they keep all their information interesting to capture the interests of young people.

KY 4 uses social media for business-related activities. She noted that “there is no information on the municipality on social media. I go to the office of the ward councillor when there are issues. The municipality needs to engage with the youth in different conversations, listen to them, and contribute to their development.”

KY 5 said, “I use social media to develop my brand be visible, keep in touch with friends through Facebook and use Instagram to strictly to promote my work. As far as youth and municipal relations are concerned, KY 5 believes that.

> There’s a huge gap between the youth and ward meetings. The municipality needs to involve young leaders with complete trust and get social media influencers to lead innovative projects, but also make sure you pay them and be transparent.

The youth interviewed in Khayelitsha overwhelmingly say they are aware of citizen participation in general, but they see a vast generational gap and they are not participating in municipal processes. The youth are frustrated by slow-moving bureaucratic processes, young people are all about innovation and embracing new ways of thinking, the youth are not inspired by the older generation and government officials to participate,

The respondents also gave varying answers on how they think citizen participation can be improved in the area. These include making the process “fun and easy” for young people, municipalities delivering on promises made to the electorate, involving young people on all levels of the participation process and listening to the different voices and opinions of young

people while nurturing and engaging them properly. The respondents also argued for giving young people a chance and doing more research on the needs and wants of young people, listening to the concerns raised by communities and showing a commitment towards solving their problems, giving communities enough information for participation to take place and genuinely following-through on concerns raised on participation platforms, and investing in the education of young people on their rights and expectations of government processes.

The respondents felt that their views are not represented at ward-level meetings. They cited various reasons such as, “a huge gap between the youth and ward meetings.”, not a lot of youth standing in to be elected as ward councillors, the people attending ward meetings do not understand issues affecting the youth and what is best for the youth, topics discussed at ward meetings are focussed on government programmes and events, there’s a lack of follow-through by ward councillors on issues raised at ward meetings, and the views of young people are not taken seriously. Only one respondent thought that the youth are represented at ward-level meetings but did not elaborate on why she thinks so.

Young people interviewed in Khayelitsha said for social media to effectively strengthen democracy, local government can help by doing some of the following,

- Hiring so-called social media influencers to encourage young people and who them that it is ‘cool’ to participate.
- Recruiting young people to lead the way in the innovation and digital space so they can encourage each other to participate.
- All processes of participation must be transparent.
- Constant engagement with young people on their needs and other stakeholders.
- Municipalities must establish a bigger presence on social networks, not just one of informing the public but engaging young people about their issues.
- Social networks of municipalities must carry interesting and fresh content and should be updated regularly.
- Communities must always be consulted and also make decisions on their needs.
- Issues affecting municipalities must be made visible on social networks and information affecting communities should not be censored.

The challenge for the City of Cape Town is to invest in further research and find out why young people may not be engaging with city officials while spending a lot of time online. Although they are active on social media, young people in Khayelitsha still prefer face-to-

face meetings with their ward councillors as a way to mitigate the effects of misinformation on social media and also make sure that their concerns and suggestions are being listened to.

Young people do not participate online if they do not believe in a particular cause, but they happily engage if they endorse a particular cause such as the #FeesMustFall protests. The youth seem reluctant to participate in government processes if they feel that they are not being listened to by authorities or are frustrated with bureaucratic processes. During the #FeesMustFall protests there seemed to be a sense of ownership of the protests and the movement by young people and this made it easier for them to participate online because the initiative was started by them.

The challenge for the City of Cape Town is encouraging more engagement with young people to get them to embrace its formal processes of participation and encouraging more innovation in the use of technology. The fact that young people in Khayelitsha are aware of citizen participation programmes means that they are willing to be involved in governance programmes and are optimistic about the future of local government based on their involvement. There are positive examples of "the adoption and use of WhatsApp by the … Khayelitsha School Library assistants (who) helped to resolve some of the major communication challenges encountered in impoverished communities such as Khayelitsha" (Bitso, n.d.).

Young people in Khayelitsha believe that social media has the potential to strengthen democracy if used correctly to involve the views of the youth. There seems to be a lot of optimism when they feel included and that authorities are listening to their concerns. The hiring of social media managers in the City of Cape Town is seen as a step in the right direction for the city, although that in itself is not enough if young people feel that they are not making a real contribution to the running of the city's social media pages.

CONCLUSION

This chapter focussed on the political communications, voices of social movements, and the youth in Cape Town. There are numerous activists, non-governmental organisations, political organisations, churches, and ratepayers' associations operating in subcouncil 16.

Contemporary Camps Bay reflects inequality in South African society with millionaire dwellings, hundreds of domestic workers, the homeless, and street children sharing the same space. The CBRRA is actively fighting to preserve the elite character of the area and “modernising” its communication strategy to include more social media usage to this end. Privacy among the wealthy is highly valued while also maintaining close ties with the councillor and at the same litigating against the city.

In the sprawling high-density Khayelitsha, despite the digital divide this study interestingly found that the community does not lack agency and uses its mobilizing power. More than 50 per cent of residents have a secondary education and may be seen as digitally literate. The ownership of cellular phones is high with evidence of sharing of digital resources critical for online participation. Residents here often find creative ways of engagement despite their area being classified as a low-income area in Chapter 8.

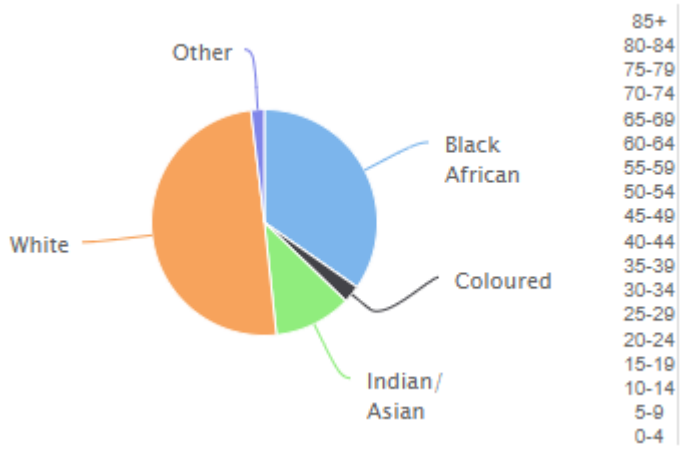
CHAPTER 9: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND YOUTH IN JOHANNESBURG

This chapter focuses on social movements and the youth in Johannesburg. Interviews were conducted with two officials in each of the civic organisations under study (OUTA/Sandton and SANCO/Soweto). The findings are presented in four sections for easy comparison, starting with OUTA followed by the youth in Sandton, and then SANCO followed by the youth in Soweto. The questions posed to the officials from OUTA and SANCO are recorded in **Appendix 2** at the end of this study. The questions for the youth focus groups are in **Appendix 3**.

SANDTON OR REGION E (JOHANNESBURG)

Sandton is one of South Africa's wealthiest areas. A geographic and economic description of the area is also provided in Chapter 7 of this study so the reader can follow arguments of social media usage within context. Figure 48 below shows a breakdown of the population by race in Sandton based on the last full population census in 2011. Internet access, ownership of household goods (including cellphone and laptops), and levels of education are also shown in Figure 49, Figure 50, and Figure 51 respectively.

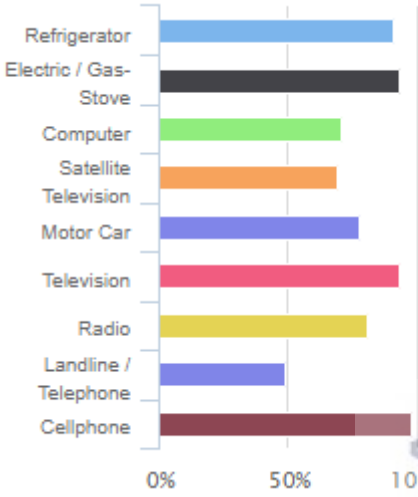
Figure 48: Population in Sandton



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 48 above shows that the White population makes up 49.8 per cent of the population in Sandton, Black Africans make up 34.7 per cent, Indian/Asians make up 11.1 per cent, Coloureds make up 2.5 per cent and Other make up 1.9 per cent.

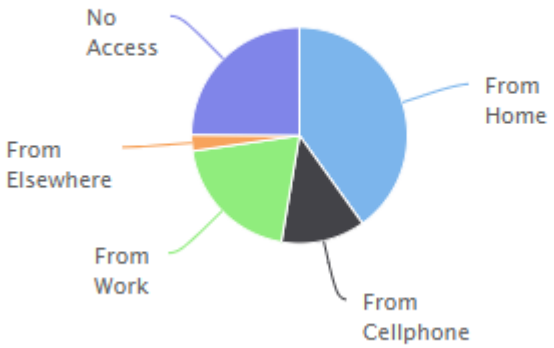
Figure 49: Household goods ownership in Sandton



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 49 above shows that 70.6 per cent of households have a computer (in Khayelitsha only per cent have computers), and 97.8 per cent have a cellphone -- crucial for online participation.

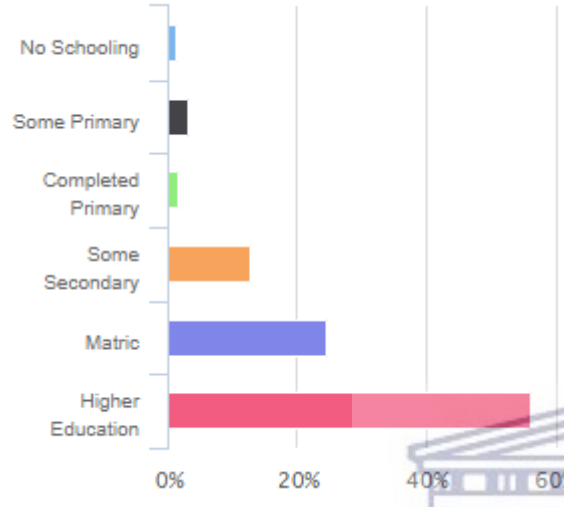
Figure 50: 51Internet access in Sandton



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 50 above shows that 40.1 per cent of households have Internet access at home, 12.6 per cent access the Internet from their cellphone, 20.0 per cent from work, 2.4 per cent from elsewhere, and 24.9 per cent do not have access to the Internet.

Figure 51: Education levels in Sandton



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 51 above shows that 1.3 per cent of households have no schooling, 3.1 per cent have some primary education, 1.7 per cent completed primary education, 12.9 per cent have some secondary education, 24.6 per cent have matric, and 56. 4 per cent have a higher education.

OUTA (JOHANNESBURG)

OUTA, formed in 2012 focuses on poor and inappropriate forms of transport and service delivery, including an increase in corruption and state looting, and a general lack of accountability. As previously stated in this study, OUTA has a nationwide presence and mandate, but also a big presence in Sandton. Followers from all over South Africa engage with its content on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. On its website (https://www.outa.co.za/vision-mission), the organisation says it wants to build, “A prosperous country with an organised, engaged and empowered civil society that ensures responsible use of tax revenues throughout all levels of government.” The bulk of the

organisation's funding comes from individuals and small medium-term enterprises as illustrated in Figure 52 below.

Figure 52 How OUTA is funded (March 2012 to February 2021)

OUTA INCOME BREAKDOWN: 2013 to 2021 (9 years)

PERIOD	9 Years of operation	Ave per annum	% Breakdown
TOTAL INCOME (Mil)	**213.84**	**23.76**	100.0%
Individuals	146.76	16.31	68.6%
SMME	56.39	6.27	26.4%
Big Business	4.68	0.52	2.2%
***Other**	6.01	0.67	2.8%

* Donor Foundation for specific project funding.

Source: OUTA website (Retrieved from https://www.outa.co.za/funding accessed 12 December 2021)

OUTA uses its financial backing and resources such as money and time to accomplish its goals. The organisation will also mobilise protests on behalf of members (residents) using the information its posts on its online platforms. It also tends to rely on litigation to engage in governance issues with the municipality, and one of its most popular cases is the ongoing billing crisis in Johannesburg that now spans almost two decades.

OUTA made its mark by challenging eTolling in the North Gauteng High Court on 29 April 2012 for all the people of the province, including residents of Sandton. Since then, the organisation has had a growing number of legal and other challenges against the government for service delivery issues (OUTA Chairman's Report AGM 2013). Commenting about their new mandate, OUTA Chairman Wayne Duvenage said,

> The new OUTA was born on the back of our success in challenging the e-toll saga, giving rise to many a request from the public to broaden our mandate. With a growing team of activist-minded team members, focused on project management, backed by a strong social media and journalism approach, OUTA's sustainable growth is made possible through an effective communication strategy that

> generates wide-scale support from the public. Building capacity remains central to OUTA's ability to be effective in our work. Our revised structure is made up of a core project management team of Portfolio Managers / Directors in the areas of Energy, Transport, Water, and Special Projects. They are supported by four specialist teams that focus on case building/litigation, investigation, research, and communication (Annual Report 2016/17: 6).

OUTA uses Twitter and Facebook intensively (see Table 9 below). Online information is updated three to five times a week and consists of updates on the work of OUTA and programmes. The official interviewed said,

> The use of social media allows a two-way communication process between supporters, sponsors, and the organisation. The use of social media helps to build the organisation's presence and strengthen its brand publicly. We mainly use social media to distribute information. We monitor various publications and commentators for relevant political information. We rely on research provided by certain political polls.

The official said OUTA believes that social media can strengthen democracy and can also be used to fill the gaps created by traditional forms of communication in local government. The OUTA official added that the organisation "mobilises members and citizens through social media platforms, emails and on its official website".

According to the official, there is also awareness about public participation in Sandton to some extent," but there are problems." The official said citizens are not fully engaging in municipal processes and are not aware of what they need to do to participate. Social media can bridge the gap created by the fact that not enough people attended public meetings for true and meaningful participation to happen.

Regarding OUTA's relationship with the Johannesburg metro, the official said the use of social media by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality is "okay but could be improved in some areas". The official also said on a personal level, the better advertising of processes such as the IDP process could help to improve citizen participation. OUTA argues that "participation programmes are not being adequately advertised and people do not know where to look or find information regarding participation". The official said the monitoring system in local government could be improved, for instance, by introducing a ticketing system where people can trace and monitor progress themselves. The official noted that sometimes the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality acts "swiftly to concerns and sometimes turns a blind eye."

Table 9: Usage of social media by OUTA as at May 2020

Social Media Page	Date account established	No of followers (Hundreds)	No of people followed by the page (Hundreds)	No of likes on page	Types of people followed by page	Type of content posted
Twitter @OUTASA	March 2012	64K	1218		Various individuals Politicians Journalists	-current Affairs -Various content
Facebook	2012			143K		-current affairs

Source: Compiled from social media accounts of OUTA

Table 9 above shows that OUTA has a Twitter page and Facebook page and regularly updates online information for the benefit of supporters, sponsors, and the organisation. At the time of writing this thesis, the main Twitter page @OUTA had 64 000 followers. OUTA started its Twitter account in March 2012.

Twitter and Facebook are mostly used to distribute information as opposed to engaging citizens in governance. Table 9 above also shows that the Twitter follow/follower ratio for OUTA is 52.54 or (53:1). The number shows that the follow/follower ratio is in favour of the organisation rather than its supporters. A possible explanation for this is summarised in Chapter 10 of this study.

No details were provided for Facebook and WhatsApp. Given the high numbers of people with cellphones and laptops, high levels of people with Internet access in the home, and high levels of education, it is to be expected that many people are online in Sandton.

THE YOUTH IN SANDTON

The Sandton youth focus group consisted of six youth who reside in the area. The six youth in Sandton use Facebook and WhatsApp in their communications. This finding is not surprising for an area such as Sandton given its categorisation as one of South Africa's wealthiest suburbs (Republic of South Africa, 2011). The literature in this study also shows that the use of social media has gone up not just in South Africa, but globally.

Although the youth in Sandton believe that the use of social media by the municipality to pass on information is benefitting residents, the findings show that this does not necessarily mean that young people are spending their time online participating in governance issues. They are spending their time connecting with friends and socialising amongst other things. Young people in Sandton say they do not communicate with their ward councillors in the area.

SAN 1 responded by saying that she used Facebook and Instagram to advertise her business and brand but not for engagement with the municipality. She said she prefers communicating with the municipality via email and telephone because most of the time officials do not respond to social media queries.

Interviewee number 1 (SAN 1) believed**,**

> Municipalities must follow-up immediately on online complaints raised by residents, especially on service delivery issues. Social media is an easy way to communicate but it is not being used to its full benefits by the municipality.

Despite high access to the Internet in the home in Sandton, young people in the area still believe that they too can benefit from reduced data costs to benefit citizen participation. South Africa's high youth unemployment has affected the country, including young people who have tertiary education in areas such as Sandton. In Chapter 1 of this study, high data costs and unemployment were highlighted as one of the factors that may affect citizen participation online in local government. The same frustrations were expressed by young people in Camps Bay in Cape Town that city officials were not listening to their concerns. Most of the respondents said they believed the system of using social media to pass on information to the public by the municipality is working. One or two respondents indicated that while social media worked for the municipality, this did not mean that they are using it. The rest of the respondents said they do not engage with their local ward councillor at all. SAN 3 said,

> I do not get enough information from the municipality to participate online. The municipality needs to be honest and take complaints of residents seriously and act on them (complaints). If people feel that their issues are being taken seriously, they will take part in governance processes no matter the platform at their disposal.

One respondent felt that "older residents" should attend ward meetings and not young people.

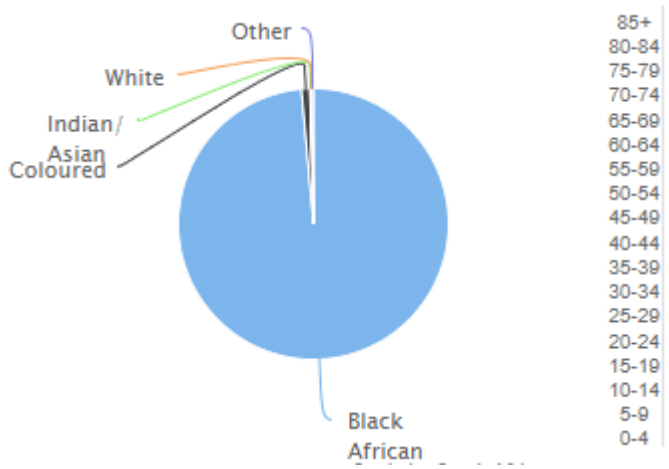
SOWETO OR REGION D (JOHANNESBURG)

The township of Soweto, one of the biggest in South Africa, is part of this region and it borders the city's mining belt in the south and has historically been a stronghold of the ANC and SANCO. In 2011, Soweto had a population of 1, 271, 628 people according to the 2011 Census (Republic of South Africa, 2011). The racial makeup of Soweto is 98.5 per cent Black, 1.0 per cent Coloured, 0.1 per cent Indian/Asian, 0.1 per cent White and 0.2 per cent Other (Republic of South Africa, 2011).

Political culture in Soweto is partly rooted in the June 16, 1976, uprising (South African History Online, 2020). Thousands of youths took to the streets to protest the use of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction and police opened fire on them. The protests soon spread countrywide, profoundly changing the socio-political landscape in South Africa (Gukelberger, 2020). In the 1980s, residents refused to pay the white government for rent, electricity, and water during boycotts. Today, Soweto embodies the social and class divisions within South Africa and the black majority (Kingsley, 2019). He argues that it is a place of flashy cars and grand mansions, but also shanty towns, high unemployment, and lack of service delivery to the poor. Political activity is still high in the area.

As this is a comparative study, Figure 53 below shows a breakdown of the population by race in Soweto based on the last full population census in 2011. Internet access, ownership of household goods (including cellphone and laptops), and levels of education are also shown in Figure 54, Figure 55, and Figure 56 respectively. The figures below will enable the reader to get a better understanding of the socio-economic issues and social media challenges in Soweto and their possible impact on citizen participation.

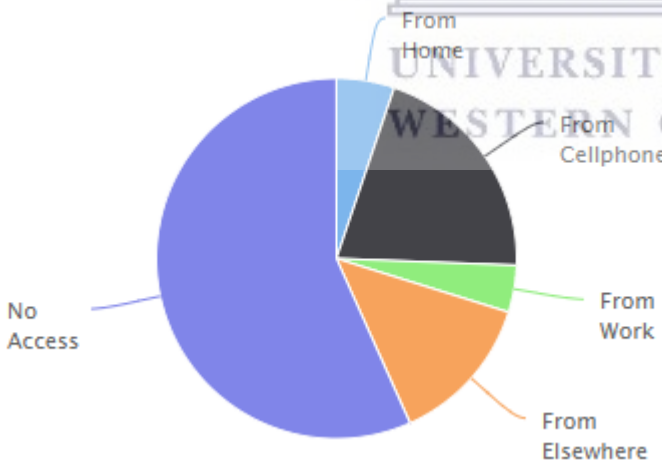
Figure 53: Population groups in Soweto



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 53 above shows that 98.5 per cent of the population in Soweto is Black African. The rest is either Asian/Coloured/India, White or Other.

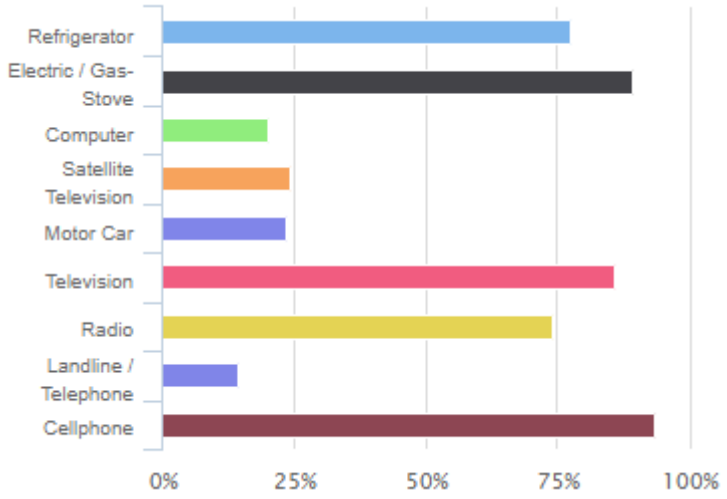
Figure 54: Internet access in Soweto



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 54 above shows that 56.7 per cent of households in Soweto do not have access to the Internet, 5.2 per cent have access to the Internet at home, 20.4 per cent get access on their cellphone, 4.2 per cent get access from work, and 13.5 per cent from elsewhere.

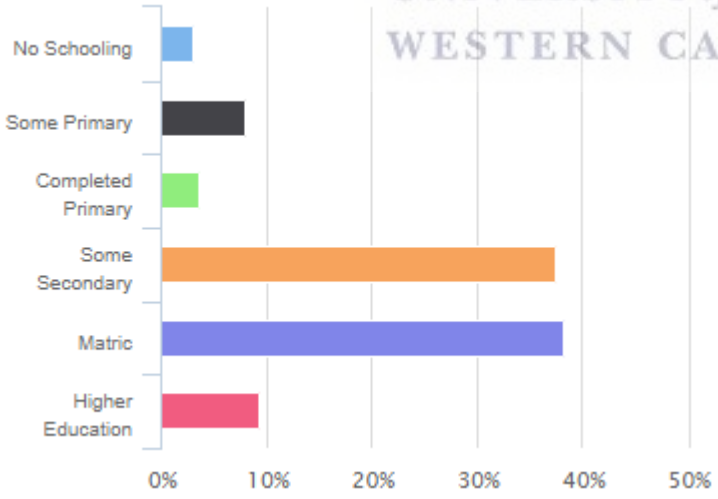
Figure 55: Household goods ownership in Soweto



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 55 above shows that 20.2 per cent of households in Soweto have a computer (double that of Khayelitsha) and 93.4 per cent have access to a cellphone which is crucial for online participation.

Figure 56: Education levels in Soweto



Source: Statistics South Africa (2011)

Figure 56 above shows that 3.1 per cent of households in Soweto have no schooling, 7.9 per cent have a primary education, 3.7 per cent completed primary education, 37.5 per cent have a secondary education, 38.3 per cent have matric and 9.3 per cent have a higher education.

SANCO IN SOWETO

According to Seekings (2000), “Between 1990 and 1993, civics played an active role in local and even national politics. At the local level, civics were prominent in local government restructuring and development initiatives.” Seekings adds that SANCO was formed in 1992 to among others eradicate poverty, homelessness, insecurity. It is aligned to the ANC and has a seat in NEDLAC, but the organisation has collapsed in some areas. In 2013 Sanco which usually pursues a politics of accommodation with the government (Zuern, 2011) tried to revive itself in Soweto. Piper’s astute observation (2015) that civil politics in South Africa often mirrors political society can be seen with SANCO and with the SACP that dominates the trade unions.

SANCO uses social media because it is an easier way of reaching members and communities within the greater Johannesburg Region. The organisation mainly uses WhatsApp groups and is taking advantage that many people use technology to access information. This is because WhatsApp is cheaper and more accessible. SANCO uses social media to distribute information and to mobilise communities within its designated geographic area. The official I interviewed noted that SANCO often provides daily updates on development needs for the community. SANCO used social media all the time to organise demonstrations and protests. The official said he was “99 per cent pleased with the use of social media by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality to pass on critical information to the community and social movements.” He noted that issues and challenges facing the community are posted on social media to mobilise support, and then meetings are organised to formalised appropriate interventions. Communities raise issues about societal ills, “in particular the ones that need urgent attention. Trusted” activists and representatives need to be employed in communities and municipalities.”

There is a lack of “adequate” information on government programmes and projects. The official blamed “ignorance and despondency” are the reasons behind a lack of citizen participation. Not all views of community members are represented at ward-level meetings. This is because people by their nature have different priorities, challenges, and expectations, and not everyone participates in discussions on social media.

SANCO says the youth are not participating in governance processes, although they are very active on social media. SANCO recommends that municipalities must appoint young

people to embark on service delivery campaigns due to their knowledge of social media. The municipality must also hold more door-to-door campaigns aimed at gathering data on the needs and challenges of communities. Generally, though, SANCO says it is satisfied with how the City of Johannesburg uses social media to pass on critical information to residents needed for participation.

The findings show that SANCO leaders feel that social media can strengthen democracy, but municipal officials are not realising the full potential of Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. The biggest concern for SANCO is the failure of the youth to participate in local government affairs and processes.

THE YOUTH CITIZEN VOICES, INTERVIEWS IN SOWETO

All the youth respondents in Soweto said they use social media. They use social media used to interact with friends and family and to gain knowledge. One respondent said he used social media to "promote his business." Facebook and WhatsApp are more popular in the area. One of the respondents said the use of social media to pass on information to the public by the municipality is not working because some officials are not able to use social media. A lot of young people in the area are relying on their cellphones to get information, and municipalities are not capitalising on this. As one respondent put it, "Disseminating information is working for the municipality, but not for the public." SY 1 responded the following way to a few questions posed about social media,

> I use social media for socializing, interacting, and gaining knowledge. I am more of an entertainment person. The information I post is mainly jokes, sarcastic remarks, and social entertainment and events.

SY 1 also reflected on the municipality's engagement with youth. He argued that,

> They are not helping the youth or sharing necessary information with them. Government is more interested in its own policies and gains. There's no real interest shown by the municipality in youth, and they must come out to the community and interact physically with the youth.

It is clear from the above quote that municipalities need to go beyond social media platforms and show a presence in communities so that young people can better understand municipal plans and programmes.

Soweto youth interviewee number two (SY2) seems to use social media to text friends and family and exchange photographs. He also uses it to advertise and promote his business in the township**.** SY2 argues that "municipalities should go beyond social media campaigns and must involve the community in planning activities that will involve the youth". This view of participation suggests that communities want to plan with municipalities, and they see local government more like a partnership than an entity that must just do activities for them. It also suggests that media campaigns are not just enough to change the mindsets of young people. They are looking for more involvement in municipal processes and activities.

Regarding the youth and the municipality, SY3 also argued that,

> Most youths do not get the right information from municipal officials. There are only a few projects where the correct information is shared, and the municipality needs to consider forming a specific ward-committee or group for the youth for information-sharing purposes.

Most of the respondents said they do not engage with their local ward councillors because officials do not listen to people and their issues. Those that engaged with local councillors used WhatsApp groups. One respondent said he believed in going directly to the municipal office to air his grievances or make an appointment to see a councillor.

Respondents say a lack of awareness programmes makes it difficult for them to participate in governance programmes. The respondents also feel that young people are generally not well educated on issues of governance and lack interest in governance issues. Respondents feel that strong advocacy work can help to improve participation in South Africa. They said advocacy work must include increased information sharing about government processes and improving the overall communication strategies of municipalities.

The respondents believe the general views of young people were being ignored, and ward councillors were interested in self-enrichment, and this must "stop." Respondents said the failure of ward councillors to inform communities adequately about meetings is a huge problem in many communities. The respondents said municipal officials and ward councillors must use social media to be more visible in communities, thereby improving democracy and participation. They said to attract the 'youth voice', planning activities must be social media-based to attract many ideas from young people. There is a concern by the youth in Soweto that some city officials are still not able to use social media properly although the city has a dedicated unit established to run its main social media accounts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Table 10 below shows that out of the four social movements, OUTA is the only one that uses social media presence consistently and purposively. The organisation has the largest media following amongst the four social movements under study.

Table 10: Consolidated/Comparative data on social media accounts of CBBRA, SESKHONA, OUTA, and SANCO, May 2020

Social Media Page	*Date account established*	*No of followers*	*No of people followed by the page*	*No of likes on page*	*Types of people followed by page*	*Type of content posted*
Twitter @CBRRA	February 2010	157	277	N/A	- Influencers - Private individuals -Organisations - Journalists	- Details of meetings -Clean-up campaigns
Twitter @OUTA	March 2012	64 000			Various individuals	
Facebook @CBRRA	March 2010	122	n/a	106	n/a	Public meetings
Facebook @OUTA	**2012**					

Source: Compiled from the various social media platforms of CBBRA, Seskhona, OUTA, and SANCO

In comparison, leaders of Seskhona in Khayelitsha and SANCO in Soweto prefer using WhatsApp instead of Twitter and Facebook as part of their communication strategy. Twitter and Facebook usage are not popular in Camps Bay where litigations communication is preferred. However, although OUTA also prefers litigation, it has invested in the use of social media due to the value brought by the various platforms in its everyday operations

as well as the imperative to keep collecting substantial funds and donations. OUTA charges membership fees of R200 a month.

CHAPTER 10: REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The main objectives of this thesis were to explore and compare the multiple ways that different local governments and geographically based classes of citizens use social media to enhance or devalue democratic participation using Cape Town and Johannesburg as case studies. This study also looked comparatively at how various classes of people within Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in protests and citizen participation. My intention was to look at the question of modes of class mobilisation in media citizenship which has been neglected although much has been written on the digital divide. Unequal media citizenship has deepened the debate about the role of the Internet in improving democracy and accountability in local government. But as I have argued, there are many oversimplifications in this debate that tends to underestimate the "poor" or fail to see how the wealthy interact with the state.

This study has found that there are important differences in the ways different classes use social media and that the capacity of the "poor" and their social movements to engage as citizens using social media has been understated. While many people are still digitally disengaged in South Africa due to challenges of continuing inequality and poverty, there are also several indications that the disadvantaged layers of society also have agency and can appropriate and domesticate opportunities offered by technology. My findings suggest that the impoverished use social media for at least three reasons: first to stay in touch with family and friends and share pictures; the second reason relates to a variety of economic activities from promoting small businesses, entertainment to job searching; the third is that within the broad township population, leaders might use social media but have a distinct preference for using traditional ways of organising such as loudhailers and street-level meetings to communicate. The latter is more evident in Khayelitsha where distrust of the local state is very high and key leaders are not optimistic about the capacity of social media to improve their relations with the local state. In the case of SANCO in Soweto, there is extensive use of WhatsApp. Extensive concern exists about the safety of personal information especially if the state accesses it. While many poor residents want to remain invisible to the surveillance activities of the state, the state also cloaks itself in bureaucratic language and procedures. Social media does not solve these political complexities.

In affluent organisations, my findings suggest that the use of email is popular but litigation or the threat thereof is used in communications with the city. Resident associations in these areas are more optimistic about the use of social media to improve citizen participation, donations, and transparency, even though they use it as a means of bourgeois privacy and nimby protections of private property and property assets. In Camps Bay, especially, litigation against the city is preferred as is a close relationship with the councillor in governance processes while remaining negative about the city at large. More traditional means of communicating such as sending emails and face-to-face meetings are still preferred.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG

There are at least six notable themes in the use of social media in political communications in Cape Town and Johannesburg. The first similarity relates to inner political and institutional conflicts about who controls the municipality in the context of worsening issues of urbanisation, housing and spatial inequality leading to mixed messages, increased anxieties and demoralised bureaucracies for Cape Town and Johannesburg. Both metros had previously been led by “mayors of colour” belonging to the DA in respected politician Patricia de Lille in Cape Town and self-made businessman Herman Mashaba in Johannesburg. News of the resignation of the two mayors in 2018 and 2019 respectively exposed a level of instability and deep fault lines within the DA. The BBC reported at the time that Mashaba had resigned as Johannesburg mayor over a DA race row. He is quoted as saying his decision was sparked by the re-admission of Helen Zille, a white politician who provoked widespread anger in 2017 when she praised aspects of colonialism on Twitter, to the party's high ranks (BBC, 2019). Mashaba also lamented that his "pro-poor agenda" had been "undermined, criticised and rendered nearly impossible" by the DA. Just like De Lille in Cape Town, Mashaba’s election had been as key to increasing the party’s support among black and coloured voters.

In Cape Town, De Lille left the DA and the city in 2018 after an acrimonious battle with the party. It followed allegations of maladministration and criminal charges brought against her and a motion of no confidence, which she survived thanks to the ANC and some DA members (February, 2018; Eyewitness News, 2018). Governance specialist Judith

February argues that the interference of the DA national leadership in the running of the city may have been the final straw in the relationship between the party and De Lille.

> When the Cape Town water crisis reached its peak, DA leader Musi Maimane sped to Cape Town to deal with the matter. He then spent some time handing out buckets in a leafy Cape Town suburb but had the sense to make a speech on the Cape Flats. From the inside looking in, one might then have asked, in what capacity did Maimane swoop into the city? On what constitutional basis was he, as an ordinary MP, taking over this crisis? (February, 2018:1)

In Johannesburg, the election of a black mayor from the DA in 2016 was seen as a sign that the party could potentially threaten the ruling ANC's grip on power at the national level (News24, n.d.). However, Mashaba, a self-made businessman, seemed to throw “cold water” at a press conference following his resignation in 2019. He said at the time,

> I cannot reconcile myself with people who believe that race is not important in their discussion of inequalities…..The election of [Helen] Zille as chair of the federal council is a victory for people who are opposed to my belief systems.(BBC, 2019: 1).

The second common theme is that both metros use Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp in their daily operations. Municipal officials seem to agree that these social media platforms can improve citizen participation but there is still a tendency to rely on traditional ways of communication to cut costs for municipalities. In both instances, online participation ends up being a “tick-box” exercise.

Thirdly, residents and social movements have complained about poor or slow turnaround processes to resolve their concerns raised online. Residents in both cities also say they do not trust municipal officials with their personal information. All these problems seem to deepen the distrust between residents, social movements, and municipal officials.

Fourthly, public relations methods that are used by both cities are more of a one-sided, bureaucratic tool to disseminate information about official programmes to residents rather than to foster engagement between the state and its citizens. The state tends to want to “manage” communication from residents along specific channels. The bureaucratisation of communication as my interviews show involves delaying and referring communication upwards rather than empowering less senior government officials with more discretion to deal with issues. Overall, my findings strengthen the arguments by Garman and Wasserman (2017) and others about the incapacity of the State to listen and engage.

The fifth element is that findings from both cities show that the use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have a paradoxical impact on citizen

participation in local government processes and politics. Citizens are generally angry with their respective municipalities who use the social media platforms to do public relations and damage control and in some ways by opening channels such as Twitter to citizens, have made citizens even more enraged.

The sixth theme is that different classes of people have different routes or channels in which they communicate with their respective municipalities, for instance, some communities, especially the poor choose mass mobilisation and the burning of infrastructure to attract the attention of officials. More affluent communities seem to favour the use of the legal route to settle their differences with their respective municipalities It is also clear in this study that the lack of meaningful inclusion of residents in engagement processes with municipal officials and politicians is a big concern in all the areas under study. Residents and social movements in affluent areas such as Camps Bay (Cape Town) and Sandton (Johannesburg) may also resort to not participating in political processes if they feel that their concerns are not being listened to. This is not to suggest that protests do not happen in these areas, but social movements and interest groups in affluent areas have financial and time resources to challenge service delivery issues and complaints in court. Residents and social movements in Khayelitsha (Cape Town) and Soweto (Johannesburg) are more inclined to use other means of attracting the attention of authorities such as protests, or also not participate online if they feel that their needs are not being met by authorities. This study has also found that deepening inequalities because of exclusion in online participation processes are a concern for city officials in both municipalities.

Social movements in Khayelitsha and Soweto prefer using WhatsApp instead of Twitter and Facebook as part of their communication strategy. The issue of the cost of using social media platforms plays a role in the decision of the leaders of the social movement to choose this platform. It is also coupled with their lack of understanding of how other forms of social media work. They are more inclined to use emails, face-to-face meetings, ward meetings, loud hailers, and other more traditional ways to communicate with residents and municipal officials.

Residents association leaders of Camps Bay just like in Sandton are concerned that their respective municipalities are not fully utilising the potential offered by their social media platforms to encourage citizen participation. Comparatively social movements in both areas

also feel that new media can benefit democracy and improve the participation of communities in governance processes.

THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

The City of Cape Town has a dedicated PPU that is marked by problems of understaffing and bureaucratic wrangling that diminish citizen participation. Officials in this unit often complain of being overworked.

In line with the main research question, the results show that city officials in Cape Town acknowledge that Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp are popular with residents, and could have a profound impact on increasing citizen participation in local government processes and politics. However, there is still some fear and scepticism amongst individual officials in the municipality about the human and political capacity of the city and the integrity and safety of social media. This in turn negatively affects their attitudes towards social media which also robs residents of an opportunity to benefit from its effective implementation. The use of language in Cape Town is proving to be a challenge for municipal officials as social media is done in English.

The City of Cape Town has invested in infrastructure but has yet to reach a more ubiquitous use of social media. Thus, the most active Twitter account has been twitter alerts (essentially informing residents of power and water outages and road traffic alerts)

There are also major concerns that once officials (especially those in the PPU) receive feedback from residents, there is no proper monitoring and follow-up about what happens to that information. Ironically, officials fear that “too much democracy” exposes the inefficiency and lack of coordination in the state. Officials in the PPU engage in blame-shifting. Departments often take too much time to process the information and PPU officials are not giving timeous feedback to communities. Staff shortages in the PPU in Cape Town are glaring and the standard operating procedure for the citizen participation process is not followed fully, often resulting in a “tick-box” exercise. The lesson here is that the promise of media citizenship may force governments to become more responsive to citizens, but the signs so far are not good. Bureaucratic insulation and the tendency towards secrecy and political enclavism is an ever-present reality as Olver’s (2019) book on Cape Town reveals.

Officials in the city's PPU admit that service delivery issues arising from different communities with different voting records are not treated with the same urgency. DA-run ward officials tend to listen to the DA voter. This research shows that social media is used at a very low level and more as a tool to *disseminate* information and project positive images and sound bites of the administration to the public rather than a tool to encourage feedback from residents in line with the aims of citizen participation. The city wants to use media for their bureaucratic uses and channelise citizen issues into tick box-style communications.

The research reveals that unless city officials more fully embrace the benefits of using social media in citizen participation, problems of marginalisation of communities in the process will persist. The idea of the Internet as a public good needs to be vigorously propagated so all citizens can access information about political parties, government processes, and so on.

THE JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

City officials in Johannesburg tend to be proactive in seeking media attention that focuses on the good things they want citizens to see. The municipality's website is used not to engage citizens but is a uni-directional platform like in Cape Town. Joburg has invested resources into mediatising the city as a spectacle recalling the city's history as the centre of gold mining. Yet very few if any have bothered to view its YouTube videos. Joburg's walk-in centres where members of the public can communicate with officials are preferred by residents as opposed to waiting endlessly while on "hold" on the phone.

Although Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are used by the city to communicate different messages to residents whom the city calls "customers", these are carefully matched to the "target audiences" or what the city called "customer" segments. This kind of citizen classification and profiling comes with its problems and challenges including leaving some communities out of the citizen participation process. Johannesburg's website has an image and design that essentially look like a corporation marketing the city to tourists. There are hardly any explicit political or democratic messages on the home page.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG

This study found that in Cape Town residents spend time online, but they are not necessarily participating in governance issues. The CBRRA, which has the financial resources, communicates through litigations and intense but “polite” interactions with the ward councillors feeding into the narrative that civil politics in South Africa often mirrors political society. Its social media presence has a dedicated portfolio in the association, but the process is moving at a slow pace. The organisation is on a drive to “modernise” its communication strategy. By contrast, in Cape Town townships, social media is inseparable from the local political language such as comrade. There is a strong sense of social media being tied to a different kind of society and a different set of ethics built around solidarity. There are also complex problems of communication and breakdowns of meetings. Mass mobilisation using traditional ways of communication and protests to attract the attention of authorities is common so social movements can deal with service delivery problems.

In Johannesburg, residents are also spending time online but are not necessarily participating in governance issues. The city and organisations such as OUTA are also involved in litigation and counter-litigation to resolve some of their issues. OUTA uses its social media presence consistently and seriously but appears to take more of a bourgeoisie stance in conducting itself. The organisation has the largest media following amongst the four social movements under study. Online information is updated three to five times a week and consists of updates on the work of OUTA and programmes. In Soweto, SANCO is taking advantage that many people are using technology to access information but still are using the rent-a-crowd approach to build an organisation largely in support of a declining ANC in Johannesburg.

YOUTH AS CITIZENS

Young people interviewed from both classes owned a lot of gadgets such as cellular phones or laptops enabling them to go online for various reasons. This is despite an existing digital divide in the country. They seem to be spending more time online for more personal reasons than communicating with municipal officials. The youth in Camps Bay and Sandton believe that the lack of awareness in citizen participation in their areas is due to a lack of information from the municipality. Perhaps the reason for the lack of awareness in participation in these

areas is that they are less highly politicised compared to Khayelitsha and Soweto. Highly politicised communities tend to be aware of the representative or formal democratic systems that they can use to influence local government policies and service delivery (Cherry, 2011).

The youth interviewed in all areas under study believe that communicating using social media is the "future" and these platforms present unlimited opportunities for democracies and the growth and development of local government. The study also found that young people were also upbeat about the benefits that social media presents for strengthening democracy and raising the voice of marginalised communities.

The working-class youth interviewed in Cape Town and Johannesburg expressed interest in creating awareness programmes to educate them about online participation. They say such campaigns can run on social media or via traditional methods of participation such as community radio stations and local newspapers. They have also suggested that both municipalities invest heavily in educating communities about fake news and online safety so that the personal information of residents is protected. They want both metropolitan municipalities to educate young people in local government affairs. They say young people want to participate online only if the environment is conducive and their data costs are subsidised. Young people in both cities have called on officials to embrace a culture of inclusion in their innovation programmes, including improving online participation. They say it presents an opportunity for municipalities to experiment on how to best engage with their communities but as Miller (2019) stresses it is the specificity of *content,* not the medium/platform that makes social media *social*.

THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

This study has both practical and theoretical significance. It critically builds upon studies by scholars (Chiumbu and Ligaga, 2013 and Wasserman 2011, 2014, Wasserman and Garman, 2012, 2014; and Schoon, 2017). The study argues for localised research on specific geographically defined classes so that localised senses of meaning and content can be studied. This focus on local "epistemic" communities emerges strongly in Schoon (2017) and Miller (2019). In a sense, this research speaks to the politics of difference (Young 1999) and how local communities are empowering themselves by using technologies in creative ways.

The focus on specific protest repertoires and citizen mobilisation at the local level complement existing research in the field of social media and political communications. Leaning towards an optimistic realist viewpoint, this study also contributes to the theoretical understanding of how social media (Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp) are changing and reinforcing societal relationships *within* localities rather than between civic and state organisations. The thesis is both optimistic and pessimistic: pessimistic about the political will and intentions of the local state but hopeful about citizens at the horizontal level of social solidarity.

The State and powerful corporations may have vastly more information about individual persons than ever before, but people are able to resist and counter-organise in many ways as recent struggles in townships show. Moreover, as Keane (2009: 17) eloquently puts it:

> Nothing is sacrosanct – not even the efforts of those who try to protect or rebuild what they claim to be sacrosanct. Past generations would find the whole process astonishing in its global scale and democratic intensity. With the click of a camera, or the flick of a switch and the tap of a keyboard, the world of the private can suddenly be made public. Everything from the bedroom to the boardroom, the bureaucracy and the battlefield, seems to be up for media grabs. Thanks to stories told by journalists, themselves unelected representatives of publics, this is an age in which private text messages rebound publicly, to reveal marital unfaithfulness and force the resignation of a government minister as happened in Finland in 2008.!!

Moreover, instead of seeing citizens as customers to be managed, as local governments tend to do, Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) argue,

> From a theoretical perspective, the New Public Service offers an important and viable alternative to both the traditional and the now-dominant managerialist models. It is an alternative that has been built on the basis of theoretical explorations and practical innovations. … the responsibility of government is to promote citizenship, public discourse, and the public interest (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000: 557).

In the preceding chapters, the researcher presented vignettes of moments of different experiences of citizenship in the complex liberal democracy that we call South Africa. Any detailed communication plan for the City of Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities needs to consider the localised realities of social connectedness. The benefits of using social media in protest and citizen participation emerge most strongly in micro-contexts and the study of content. The debate on the utility of a platform misses the fact that it is simply a technology with no social meaning or causality. Most instruments, products and devices have unintended consequences, and with inherently flexible and

creative human agents, new and frequently different uses for a product or technology may be discovered. This is especially so among the poor.

The general debate on the optimistic and pessimistic scholarly schools falsely counter positions the issue, which in the end might better be seen as a set of contradictory propositions which people hold simultaneously. Most critics see social media as impeding education, too much about entertainment and so, yet most of them in their own lives rely on social media and have embraced new technology, to be like everyone else.

South Africa's three biggest political parties such as the ANC, DA, and EFF are all using a combination of legacy media and non-traditional media platforms but in very different ways and with different content. South Africa's hard-won democracy continues to be an elusive reality, particularly at the grassroots level. This is evidenced by continuing public protests. Citizen participation in a democracy is not just an event, but rather an ongoing and evolving process with highly particularistic features. The essence of democracy is the right to be ruled and to rule but the right to difference. South African communities are still rendered passive when it comes to participation, yet there is unprecedented willingness to protest and make a difference. Not enough studies are being done on the existing conditions and social content of mobilisations of citizens. Therefore, we need to invest in more innovative ways to make citizen participation more inclusive, adversarial and localistic to strengthen substantive democracy.

A key argument of this research is that we need to explode the myth that the poor are passive and have little value to add. At the same time, we need to further interrogate exclusionary communities of privilege who benefit from the labour of others and underdeveloped places like Soweto and Khayelitsha. Rather than allowing big tech companies of communicative capitalism to determine the pace and form of our cities and their citizenship, we need a much more grounded contextual sense of how to move forward.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire forms part of research being undertaken towards the awarding of the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration (PhD) with the University of the Western Cape. The title of the thesis is **"Social Media, Protest and Citizen Participation in Local Government. A Comparison between the City of Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities: 2010 to 2017."** The study aims to assess how various classes of people in Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in protest and citizen participation concerning the municipal governance processes and local state responses. Participation in the study is optional and all information provided will be kept confidential.

Usage of social media

1. Does the municipality have a public participation strategy and how does it work?
2. What is your annual budget for media and public participation?
3. Does the municipality use social media in its operations? Yes/No
4. What types of social media do you use and why? (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc)

a. To match social media platform with message

b. To match the platform with the target audience

5. When is it appropriate to use social media?

a. Occasions

b. Topics

c. Timing

d. Place

6. What is the main purpose of your municipality's social media usage?

a. Distributing information

b. Gathering information

Interaction with the public (complaints/queries)

7. What would you say are the benefits, if any, of using social media to pass information on to the public? (Please explain)

8. What, in your view, are the challenges in using social media to pass information on to the public?

a. How do you overcome these, if they exist?. Please take us through

9. Do you keep statistical data of social media activity in the municipality? Yes/No

a. How is the data broken down for analysis?

b. How often is it updated? Estimate

10. What made you start using social media?

11. Please provide examples of major media campaigns or targeted interventions

12. On the city's website do you have statistics on its use and interactive platforms?

Scalability and Relevance

13. Do you differentiate between the socio-economic groups when deciding on the appropriate format of engagement? (Please elaborate)

14. Is there a difference in social media engagement with the municipality in various areas? (i.e. Townships vs Suburbs) (Please explain)

15. What kind of content do you post on your social media page/s and how often is it updated?

a. Are the topics that are more popular than others? Please elaborate

b. Are the topics relevant for all townships and suburbs in the municipality? Please explain how you handle these.

c. What kind of feedback do you normally receive from members of the public?

d. How do you use social media to communicate disasters such as the drought, land invasions, and/or poo protests in Cape Town?

16. Are there any other ways used by ordinary citizens to participate in local government issues in your municipality besides social media?

Awareness and Relevance of Citizen Participation

17. In your view, are citizens fully aware of what they should do to participate in municipal processes?

a. If not, what are the reasons for a lack of participation?

b. How do you think citizen participation can be improved?

18. How does the municipality best access silent voices?

19. What is the link, if any, between citizen participation and improved democracy?

a. In your view, what threatens this link?

b. What reinforces it?

20. Lastly, what do you think your municipality is doing in being inclusive and encouraging improved participation?

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CIVIC ORGANISATIONS AND OFFICE BEARERS

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire forms part of research being undertaken towards the awarding of the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration (PhD) with the University of the Western Cape. The title of the thesis is **"Social Media, Protest and Citizen Participation in Local Government. A Comparison between the City of Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities: 2010 to 2017."** The study aims to assess how various classes of people in Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in protest and citizen participation concerning the municipal governance processes and local state responses. Participation in the study is optional and all information provided will be kept confidential.

Usage of social media

1. Does your organisation use social media in its operations? Yes/No
2. What made you start using social media?
3. What is the main purpose of your organisation's social media usage?

a. Distributing Information

b. Gathering Information

c. Mobilisation

d. Other

4. What types of social media do you use and why? (i.e.Twitter, Facebook etc)

a. (To match social media platform with the message)

b. What kind of information do you post on your social media pages?

c. How often is the information updated?

5. What kind of device do you personally own? (i.e.Cellphone, Laptop etc)

6. How would you rate the use of social media by your municipality to pass on critical information?

7. How do you use social media, if at all, to organise demonstrations and protests in your area?

8. How do you use social media, it at all, to seek out political information from your local ward or municipality?

Applicability and Relevance

9. How does the organisation engage/mobilise ordinary citizens on issues affecting them?

a. How do you choose which platform to use?

b. What do you consider when matching a particular issue to a particular platform?

10. How would you define the work/role of a community activist?

11. How, if at all, do you use social media in your activist work?

12. Which issues are typically raised via social media?

13. How do you feel about the way your municipality is handling your concerns raised on social media? Please elaborate.

Citizen Participation – Drivers and Barriers

14. What does citizen participation mean to you?

15. What are the reasons for a lack of citizen participation/if any?

16. How do you think citizen participation can be improved?

17. What is the link between citizen participation and improved governance?

18. In your opinion, are the views of everyone, including silent citizens, represented at ward-level meetings/If not why?

19. Do you think citizens are fully engaging in municipal processes and are they aware of what they should do to participate?

Optimisation

20. In your view, what should be done differently in raising issues with your local municipality?

21. Any other information you would like to add?

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire forms part of research being undertaken towards the awarding of the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Public Administration (PhD) with the University of the Western Cape. The title of the thesis is **"Social Media, Protest and Citizen Participation in Local Government. A Comparison between the City of Cape Town and Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipalities: 2010 to 2017."** The study aims to assess how various classes of people in Cape Town and Johannesburg use social media in protest and citizen participation concerning the municipal governance processes and local state responses. Participation in the study is optional and all information provided will be kept confidential.

Objectives:

- Investigating how citizens engage in governance
- Investigating how citizens view social media as a platform for citizen participation

Usage of social media

1. Do you use social media? Yes/No
2. What made you start using social media?
3. For what purpose do you use social media?
4. What types of social media do you use and why? (i.e.Twitter, Facebook etc)

a. (To match social media platform with the message)

b. What kind of information do you post on your social media page?

5. What kind of device do you own? (i.e.Cellphone, Laptop etc)
6. Would you say the use of social media to pass on information to the public by the municipality is working? (Please explain)

7. How do you engage with your local ward councillor on issues affecting your community?

Citizen Participation – Drivers and Barriers

8. In your opinion, are the views of the youth represented at ward-level meetings/If not why?

9. Do you think citizens, the youth, in particular, are fully engaging in municipal processes?

a. Are the youth aware of what they should do to participate? (Please explain)

b. What are the reasons for a lack of participation, if any?

10. How do you think citizen participation can be improved?

Optimisation

11. In your view, what should be done differently in raising issues with your local municipality?

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF INTERVIEWS AND ENGAGEMENTS

CT 1. Municipal official no 1, Cape Town Metro, 5 August 2019.

CT 2. Municipal official no 2, Cape Town Metro, 5 August 2019.

CT 3. Municipal official no 3, Cape Town Metro, 6 August 2019.

CT 4. Municipal official no 4, Cape Town Metro, 6 August 2019.

J 1. Municipal official no 1, Johannesburg Metro, 2 September 2019.

J 2. Municipal official no 2, Johannesburg Metro, 2 September 2019.

J 3. Municipal official no 3, Johannesburg Metro, 11 September 2019.

J 4. Municipal official no 4, Johannesburg Metro, 11 September 2019.

OUTA, October 2019

SANCO, October 2019

JHB Youth Focus Groups, October 2019

Seskhona, November 2019

CBRAA, November 2019

CT Youth Focus Groups, November 2019