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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF HOW SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLICS ENGAGED IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM, FACEBOOK, OVER NKANDLAGATE IN 2015

by

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A Research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA by course work and Research Report in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities



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Date

March 2016

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is completely my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university. All the sources and quotes used have been acknowledged accordingly. I am not allowing anybody to use my research without my consent, the consent of my supervisor or the University of the Witwatersrand.

_____

Sally Kumwenda

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ABSTRACT

The Nkandlagate scandal, in which the South African President, Jacob Zuma allegedly spent an estimated R246 million of taxpayers' money on the renovation of his Nkandla residence, created huge public outcry. This reached yet another height in 2015 when Zuma's administration declared that the President was not going to pay back the money as demanded by the South African publics. The publics of South Africa used social media platforms to express themselves over the decision. Studies have shown that social media platforms provide an opportunity for political mobilisation of publics and their participation in democracy. Using critical discourse analysis, this study seeks to investigate how South African publics engaged in the social media platform, particularly Facebook, over Nkandlagate. The research focuses on the discussions by two political parties' Facebook pages: an opposition party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The analysis involves posts and comments made by South African publics on each of the Facebook pages to establish how South Africans made use of Facebook to express themselves over Nkandlagate, how the two parties covered Nkandlagate and what kind of discourse emerged from the parties' posts. The concepts used in this research include the networked public sphere, democracy, watchdog and collective will/opinion. Three dimensions of critical discourse analysis were used for data analysis in this study: description (text genres), interpretation (discursive type) and explanation (social practice.) The insights of South African publics social practices were recognised. This research argues that to a large extent, social media has provided South African publics with access to Facebook a public sphere through which democracy – particularly in terms of freedom of speech – is exercised. However, there is a lack of democratic interaction in that although there was interactive engagement amongst publics, there was a lack of interactive engagement between politicians and publics.

Keywords: *Social media, public sphere, Facebook, democracy, Nkandlagate*

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DEDICATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration..... ii

Abstract..... iii

Dedication..... iv

Acknowledgements..... v

List of Tables..... ix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION..... 1

1.1 Background of the Study..... 1

1.2 Digital Divide..... 2

1.2.1. South Africa and digital divide..... 4

1.3 Rationale of the Research..... 5

1.4 Research Question..... 7

1.4.1 Central research question..... 7

1.4.2 Sub question..... 7

1.5 Research Design and Methodology..... 7

1.6 Outline of Chapters..... 8

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW..... 9

2.1 Introduction..... 9

2.2 Preliminary Studies..... 10

2.2.1 Brief history of President Jacob Zuma..... 10

2.2.2 Nkandla 'gate' background..... 13

2.2.3 Facebook..... 17

2.4 New Media..... 18

2.5 Participatory Democracy..... 19

2.6 Participatory Journalism..... 21

2.7 Social Media Networks..... 23

2.8 Arab Spring..... 26

2.9 Challenges Associated with Social Media..... 27

2.10 South Africa and Social Media..... 28

2.11 Facebook is the Most Popular and Influential Social Networking Website in South Africa with 12 million monthly active users..... 29

2.12 Why do People Join Facebook? 30

2.13 Facebook use in South Africa..... 32

2.14 Power Influence of Social Media to Politicians: Benefits and Challenges..... 33

2.15 South African Political Parties and Social Media..... 35

2.16 The Range of Political Parties' Social Media Usage..... 38

2.17 Barriers to the Usage of Social Media by Political Parties in South Africa (ibid.)..... 38

2.18 Conclusion..... 39

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... 40
3.1 Networked public sphere..... 40
3.2 Critics of Habermas..... 43
3.3 The network society..... 46
3.4 Concepts used in this research..... 51
3.4.1 Democracy..... 51
3.4.2 Networked public sphere..... 52
3.4.3 Watchdog..... 52
3.4.4 Public opinion..... 53
3.5 Conclusion..... 53

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY..... 55
4.1. Qualitative research method..... 55
4.2. Sampling and data collection..... 56
4.3. Critical discourse analysis..... 57

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS..... 61
5.1. Analysing the texts..... 61
5.1.1 Analysis 1: Post..... 62
5.1.2. Analysis 2: Comments..... 64
5.1.3. Analysis 3: Post..... 66
5.1.4. Analysis 4: Comments..... 68
5.1.5. Analysis 5: Post..... 70
5.1.6. Analysis 6: Comments..... 71
5.1.7. Analysis 7: Post..... 73
5.1.8. Analysis 8: Comments..... 75
5.1.9. Analysis 9: Post..... 77
5.1.10. Analysis 10 Comments..... 79
5.1.11 Analysis 11 Post..... 80
5.1.12. Analysis 12 Comments..... 81
5.2. Conclusion..... 83

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS..... 85
6.1 Participatory democracy in action..... 85
6.2 Freedom of expression in a South Africa..... 86
6.3 The networked public sphere, but not the bourgeois public..... 86
6.4 Public opinion..... 87
6.5 Watchdog..... 88
6.6. What is the reality..... 88

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 90

APPENDICES..... 104

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1……..….. 32

Table 2…… 38

Table 3…… 39

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is a critical discourse analysis of how South African publics engaged in the social media platform, namely Facebook, over *Nkandlagate*. This is the term coined and used to describe the scandal over the use of public funds to upgrade President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla residence[1]. The research focuses on the issues surrounding *Nkandlagate* over a one-year period in 2015. When *Nkandlagate* became news, it gained its prominence for the very first time in 2009. Although there were ongoing formal and informal debates and discussions over the issue from 2009 to 2015 – between and amongst political parties, media and publics (including scholars) – the unstoppable furore was concentrated in 2015.

During 2015, *Nkandlagate* received an infamous boost from the involvement of the Public Protector. It was also in 2015 that the Public Protector, headed by the fearless Advocate Thuli Madonsela, became a driver and hope for the entire public to bring the matter to finality. As a researcher, I picked the 2015 period as ideal, central and interesting and selected this research. It was also in 2015 that *Nkandlagate* protests, demonstrations and various social and community gatherings gained momentum and voices to show discontent, dismay and anger. The scandal gained additional prominence as the protests against *Nkandlagate* rose to new heights. International media houses, such as CNN, BBC and various international print media, joined the reporting as the focus turned on South African Constitution, the Public Protector, democracy and President Zuma. Pay back the money became a hashtag whereby various concerned South African publics[2] protested against the Nkandla spending in more organised ways, even on social media. Every protest or demonstration in the streets was then translated into social media. Organised nationwide marches grew bigger, wider and far reaching after the ANC declared in

[1] England, A. (2014). Jacob Zuma defiant on 'Nkandlagate' ahead of South Africa elections [Online]. Available: http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/b8019b8a-d457-11e3-a122-00144feabdc0.html#axzz42FTjFKfB [05/08/2015].

[2] These were artists; actors and singers, organisations like Right2Know, United Front, EFF, and some of the South African unions, representatives of the Archbishop of the Anglican churches of Cape Town and the Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela.

parliament on 6 August that President Zuma would not pay back the said money[3]. Political activists, especially those from the EFF, called for South African publics to engage in discussions across various social media platforms concerning *Nkandlagate*[4]. This research examines how publics expressed themselves over *Nkandlagate*, by critically analysing the discourses that emerged on both the EFF and ANC Facebook pages during 2015.

1.2. THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Technologies enable and constrain human practices; their main dimensions are the material access to them (mainly with the help of money in modern society, as technologies are sold as commodities) and the capability to use them for self-benefit and the benefit of others (Fuchs & Horak, 2008). Therefore, another major challenge to social media and the Internet as a whole is the digital divide.

> The digital divide refers to unequal patterns of material access to, usage capabilities of, benefits from computer-based information and communication technologies that are caused by certain stratification processes that produce classes of winners and losers of the information society, and participation in institutions governing ICTs and society (Fuchs & Horak, 2008: 101).

Material access refers to a lack of possession of computers and network connections, such as hardware, software, applications, networks and the usability of ICT devices and applications. Usage and skills access refers to the capabilities needed for a person to operate ICT hardware and applications in order to produce meaningful online content and to be able to engage in online communication and co-operation. Benefit access refers to ICT usage for individual benefit and that which might advance a good society for all (Fuchs & Horak, 2008; Van Dijk & Hacker 2003). Institutional access means publics' participation in institutions that govern the Internet and ICTs and to the empowerment of publics by ICTs to participate in political information, communication and decision processes. On the one hand, stratification patterns are social hierarchies, such as age, family status, ability, gender, ethnicity, origin, language and geography (urban/rural) (Fuchs & Horak, 2008: 101); the consequence of these categories is that different types of the social divide are created. On the other hand, unequal patterns of material access,

[3] Ndeze, B. (2014). ANC: Zuma won't pay the money. *IOL news.* [Online]. Available: http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/anc-zuma-won-t-pay-the-money-1.1758213#.VlCXBc8VjlU [11/11/2015].
[4] This was said on 7 August 2015 when publics gathered outside the South African Constitutional Court in protest

usage capabilities, benefits and participation concerning ICTs are also due to class divisions. Hence, there is also an economic divide, a political divide and a cultural divide (ibid).

Wilson (2006) outlines eight aspects of the digital divide which he relates to six demographic dimensions of the digital divide: gender, geography, income, education, occupation and ethnicity. These digital divide aspects are: physical access (access to ICT devices), financial access (cost of ICT services relative to annual income), cognitive access (ICT skills), design access (usability), content access (availability of relevant applications and information online), production access (capacity to produce one's own content), institutional access (availability of institutions that enable access) and political access (access to the governing institutions where the rules of the game are written) (Wilson, 2006: 300).

Modern society is structured in such a way that there is a form of social capital that is accumulated and unevenly distributed in order to create different social classes and class fractions with different (high, medium, low) amounts of economic, political and cultural capital (Fuchs, 2003b). Structural inequalities are created by the multidimensional class structure of modern society resulting in gaps in access, usage/skills, benefit and participation concerning ICTs. People who are endowed with only a little economic, political or cultural capital are less likely to have access to ICT than those with high income, far-reaching and influential social relationships, good education and high skills. These people are more likely to have access to ICTs, to be capable of using ICTs, to benefit from this usage and to be supported in political participation by ICTs (Fuchs & Horak, 2008: 102).

Despite there being rapid development and availability of ICTs in Africa – which have brought about a new era of new media, bringing with it immense possibilities for democracy in the form of freedom of expression – there needs to be a careful approach to new media technologies as facilitators of democracy (Dzidonu, 2000). Although in Africa ICTs have been seen as enablers for the creation of democracy, the continent still lags behind in the development of ICT skills and infrastructure and the increase in ICT uptake and intensity of use. Key to the ICT debate is the problem of access which needs to be emphasised. Additionally, although the growing adoption of mobile phones recently has led to increased access to ICTs for many Africans and is regarded as key technology for democracy in Africa, air time and wireless Internet service remain costly and smartphones are still uncommon (Banda 2010; Goldstein & Rotich, 2008;

Oteku et al., 2010). This limited access to ICTs to the majority of Africans results in the limitation of device usage to occasional usage of voice and SMS, including use regarding media participation (Dugmore, 2009). Therefore, in Africa, more than anywhere else, Internet users are expected to be mostly well-educated, well-to-do people who reside in urban areas (Walton, 2011).

1.2.1. South Africa and the digital divide

According to the November 2015 Internet World Stats, South Africa is the fifth largest country in Africa by population, with 54,777,809 people. Of these, only 26,841,126 are Internet users and 13,000,000 are Facebook users. Just like many other countries, South Africa is affected by the digital divide, with the most challenges being: a high level of inequality; a weak ICT infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and a lack of ICT readiness in government, with more pressing demands in the public service that make ICT development a lower priority in budget terms (Muneri, 2015). From these statistics, there is undisputable evidence that most South Africans do not have access to the Internet, let alone Facebook. A number of media and journalism scholars, like Moyo (2009), Chuma (2014), Mabweazara (2014), and Muneri (2015), have addressed the issue of access from various theoretical perspectives. Moyo 2009 argues that:

> The disparities in the access to technologies can potentially affect access to information from the Internet by the disadvantaged communities and also create or reinforce the social economic inequalities based on the digital marginalization of the poorer classes and regions (Moyo, 2009: 122).

Pointing out issues of access is not a failure to acknowledge the potential of technology to enhance democracy and therefore slightly bridge the long existing digital divide in South Africa. However, while acknowledging this potential of technology as being visible in South Africa, it is worth recognising it as being characterised by economic challenges which still create a digital divide in society; hence, failure for some people to use the Internet plethora of resources and facilities such as news and information in social media platforms, including Facebook.

Although in South Africa and other African countries participation on the Internet is curtailed by factors like access, costs, censorship and lack of technological literacy, it can be argued that generally the Internet is a relatively open and accessible public sphere where anyone who has access can freely express their views as long as they can remain within the laws and do not

infringe on other people's rights (Moyo, 2009: 141). The Internet is capable of broadening citizens' participation, as it provides communicative space that can largely be connected to Habermas' concept of the public sphere and theorisation on civil society (Muneri, 2015).

In terms of this research, the digital divide explores and clarifies the role of social media to compliment already powerful South African traditional media. The widespread usage of social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, MySpace, YouTube, Flickr, Wikipedia and Facebook, become real time platforms to share news, create news, commentary and influence society in real time.

This research cannot ignore the interrelatedness, intertwining and interlinking of various social media platforms and how to a certain extent they bridge the digital divide. A typical example is how a news bite of *Nkandlagate* would appear in a high-end newspaper like the Sunday Times, but a reader would extract an abstract to their Facebook profile, thread or post and then link the same headline to their Twitter page. This means that the same post will gain viewership, readership and awareness across various social media platforms, bridging the digital divide in real time.

This research will also clarify that what happens on EFF and ANC Facebook pages has a ripple social media effect. Most users of Facebook accounts are linked to WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram accounts. My research interest is Facebook, but the researcher is cognisant of the fact that a person in the rural areas of South Africa could receive the same news as the suburban rich and affluent Sandton dweller almost at the same time. That is the power and in discriminatory nature of social media. The *Nkandlagate* story became the most popular hashtag because of social media's ability to bridge social divide and avail the digital divide.

1.3. RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH

More and more people are increasingly using social media in Africa. According to the 2011-2014 World Wide Worx Facebook reports by Arthur Goldstuck[5], at the end of August 2011, 5.33 million South Africans were using Facebook on the Web; and by August 2014, there were 11.8

[5] Arthur Goldstuck is the Managing Director of World Wide Worx technology market researchers.

million Facebook users in South Africa. This is a reflection of Facebook going mainstream in South Africa. It is generally accepted that social media networks affect politics (Toivo, 2014). Likewise, worldwide, political parties are shifting towards more participatory models of policy development using social media, thereby deepening democracy (ibid). However, such potential of social media in Africa has not been extensively explored, as has been the case in western countries. Some scholars – for example, Daniels (2015), Muneri (2015) Rodrigues and Schiffrin et al. (2015) – have argued that social media platforms such as Twitter present an opportunity for the deepening of democracy. One of the key findings of a research done by Daniels (2015) on the use of social media – mainly Twitter – in the Johannesburg newsroom, for example, was that journalists' public engagement on Twitter appears to be neither widespread nor that deep (Daniels et al., 2015: 308). Journalist spaces are indeed opening up but they are not as expansive, inclusive and wide open, as most users continue to be the elite (ibid: 309). Daniels therefore argues that democracy in Africa in this respect is yet to come (ibid). However, this research does not focus on journalists' use of Twitter, but of the publics' use of Facebook to voice protest and interact with opinion leaders, colleagues, friends and acquaintances that can either consolidate or weaken the voters' opinions. On the other hand, Muneri (2015) argues that although social media has offered an opportunity for greater participation, not all publics have a chance for such participation, due to political and economic constraints (Muneri, 2015: 179).

Other scholars, such as Rodrigues and Schiffrin (2015), have looked at some of the efforts by African publics to try and examine economics, corruption and the extractive sector using digital technology. Their argument is that although publics are making efforts to expose the many corrupt and environmental, social and economic effects of the large extractive companies (oil, gas and mining) – using social media for example –their efforts have not succeeded in bringing about the needed large, systematic structural changes. According to them, one of the reasons for this failure is the lack of transparency, as these efforts are not accompanied by accountability from the government and companies (Rodrigues & Schiffrin, 2015: 125).

However, it is valuable to understand what those publics who participate in the discussions on social media regarding politics are saying, how and why are they saying it and what the impact may be. Examination of the meanings behind their discussions is important as it could be a way of assessing the level of democracy brought about by social media to publics. This research

examines the discourses that emerged from the *Nkandlagate* posts on Facebook in order to ascertain the extent to which this has enriched or not enriched the democratic space in South Africa. The South African publics entered the space of public debate and discourse which was previously only occupied by journalists, academics, analysts and commentators. The Facebook space was unmediated and allowed for a free flow of thought and debate.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1. Central Research Question

How did South African publics use Facebook to express themselves over *Nkandlagate?*

1.4.2. Sub Questions

What was the political parties' coverage of *Nkandlagate?*

What kind of discourse from publics emerged on Facebook about *Nkandlagate?*

Why did South Africans use Facebook to express themselves over *Nkandlagate?*

1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research used *Nkandlagate* and the medium of Facebook as a case study. It is qualitative research using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a methodological approach. The methodology was chosen because social media, which is also the main source of data in this research, is a discursive system and this will be discussed extensively in Chapter 3. The research used purposeful sampling methods.

1.6. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The rest of the research report will be presented as follows:

Chapter 2: This chapter discusses a literature review and crucial topics in line with the research, including participatory democracy and social media. The literature review starts with an outline of preliminary studies to provide useful information to help understand some issues and concepts that are directly related to the topic under study.

Chapter 3: This theoretical framework section will discuss the various social media theorists and the concepts that will be useful for this research report. It will make the link between democracy and social media.

Chapter 4: This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used in the gathering of data for this study. The chapter discusses in detail the qualitative method, sampling and data collection strategy used in this research and describes Fairclough's critical discourse analysis as the main methodological approach to this study.

Chapter 5: Data analysis of the study will be disseminated in this chapter. It is the section in which all the analyses on Facebook posts and comments will be made to find out relevant themes for this research.

Chapter 6: The findings of this study will be discussed in this section. This chapter will draw together all the findings and use the social media theorist (Benkler) to make some useful reflective conclusions about publics' use of Facebook on *Nkandlagate.*

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review is an objective, thorough summary and critical analysis of the relevant available research and non-research literature on the topic being studied (Hart, 1998). Fink, (2009) defines a literature review as 'the process of reading, analysing, evaluating and summarising scholarly materials about a specific topic' (ibid: 1). A good literature review gathers information about a particular subject from many sources, with the primary goal of providing the reader with current insights on the topic being studied (Carnwell & Daly, 2001). A literature review helps in forming the basis for other goals, such as the justification for future research in the area (Cronin et al., 2008: 38). 'For scholars, the depth and breadth of the literature review emphasises the credibility of the writer in his or her field' (Black, 2007: 2).

This research's main focus is on new media – particularly social media, and specifically Facebook – and its usage by publics when engaging in the discussions concerning controversial issues. In this case, the focus of the research is on the discussions on political parties' Facebook pages about *Nkandlagate* and the ongoing controversy in South Africa. The term 'social media' cannot be mentioned without a discussion of the popular Facebook. While to the general public Facebook conjures friends and family, scholars might think of democracy related issues. This research on Facebook is concerned with the freedom of expression aspect of democracy. To what extent did the discourses that emerged around *Nkandlagate* posts on Facebook enrich democracy?

This research has examined literature concerning democracy in the form of participation by publics to express their views, basically known as 'participatory democracy'. Its meanings and practices, including participatory journalism, have also been discussed. New media has also been defined in the literature review as an enabling factor for participatory democracy; social media and Facebook are closely related. The literature review has also discussed how political parties worldwide have used Facebook to their benefit, where they have been successful and not successful and the challenges they face using Facebook. This fact, and how voters use Facebook

and the challenges they face with it due to the digital divide, for example, has also been discussed extensively. With the focus on South Africa, the literature has included discussions on the enabling and constraining factors faced by South Africans in their usage of new media technologies, the involvement of South African political parties on social media platforms and the challenges and positives they have experienced.

In order to be able to better appreciate the rationale for this study, one needs to understand some issues and concepts that are directly related to the topic under study. This researcher provides some preliminary studies for contextual purposes. The chronological order for the literature review is as follows: preliminary study, participatory democracy, new media defined, participatory journalism, social media networks, challenges associated with social media, Facebook and the power influence of social media for politicians, as well as benefits and challenges.

2.2. PRELIMINARY STUDIES

2.2.1. Brief history of President Jacob Zuma

Born on April 12, 1942, in Nkandla, northern Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), South Africa, Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma became the Chairperson of the ANC's Southern Natal region in November 1990. He was then elected the Deputy Secretary General for the party in 1991. In December 1994, Zuma was elected National Chairperson of the ANC and Chairperson of the ANC in Natal. At the ANC's National Conference held at Mafikeng in December 1997, Zuma was elected as the ANC's Deputy President. In 1999 he was appointed as the Deputy President of South Africa. He was then elected President of the ANC on 18 December 2007 with 2,329 votes, beating Mbeki's 1,505 votes, and was sworn in and became the President of South Africa on 9 May 2009 (Legassick, 2014). This was after the breakdown in the relationship between the ruling ANC and its presidential appointee, Thabo Mbeki, in September 2008 when the ANC National Executive Committee deemed Mbeki unfit to govern South Africa. Mbeki elected not to challenge this decision and resigned as President of South Africa on 21 September 2008 (Mbeki, 2008). Zuma was re-elected as ANC leader at the ANC conference in Manguang on 18 December 2012,

defeating challenger and then Deputy President, Kgalema Motlanthe, by a large majority[6]. Following the 2014 general elections on 21 May 2014, in which the ANC retained their majority, Zuma was elected for a second term as President by the National Assembly[7].

Zuma began engaging in politics at an early age and joined the ANC in 1959[8]. Zuma's father was a policeman who died when Zuma was young; his mother was a domestic worker. He did not receive formal education[9].

Zuma began his political career in the ANC at a young age by attending the party's meetings as a volunteer in Durban[10]. In 1959, he joined the ANC and the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). That same year, he joined the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and began attending ANC and trade union meetings at Lakhani Chambers in central Durban from 1960 to 1963, while attending political education classes[11]. In 1960, after the ANC was banned, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) was formed as its armed wing, of which Zuma became an active member. He and other MK members were arrested in June 1963 on their way to Botswana for military training. Zuma was released on 29 December 1973[12]. In December 1975, Zuma left South Africa for Swaziland and then Mozambique. In Swaziland, Zuma was responsible for running the ANC's Swaziland/Natal operations. He was re-arrested In March 1976, along with Thabo Mbeki and Albert Dlomo, and held at the Matsapha prison in Swaziland. Alongside his comrades, Zuma was released in April 1976 and deported to Mozambique. In Mozambique, Zuma dealt with the thousands of young people who left South Africa after the Soweto uprising in June 1976. However, Zuma's work remained largely focused on the internal underground of the ANC. While in Mozambique, he was co-opted as a member of the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) in 1977. By 1984, Zuma had been elected the Deputy Chief Representative of the ANC and was also appointed as Chief Representative of the ANC the year the Nkomati Accord was signed between Mozambique and South Africa; he remained in

[6] Island, R. (2015). South African History [Online]. Available: http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/jacob-gedleyihlekisa-zuma [26/01/2016]
[7] (ibid).
[8] Beresford, D. (2009). 'Zuma's missing years come to light'. The Times (UK).
[9] 'The Jacob Zuma Page'. ANC. [Online]. Available: http://www.anc.org.za/list_by.php?by=Jacob%20Zuma [26/01/2016].
[10] Island, R. (2016). South African History [Online]. Available http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/jacob-gedleyihlekisa-zuma [20/06/2016].
[11] (ibid)
[12] (ibid)

Mozambique[13]. In December 1986, the South African government requested Mozambican authorities to expel six senior members of the ANC, including Jacob Zuma. As a result of the pressure applied by the apartheid government on Mozambique in January 1987, Zuma was forced to leave Mozambique for Zambia. While in Zambia, Zuma was re-elected to the ANC's NEC at the Kabwe Conference in 1985 and also served on the ANC's Military and Political Committees after their formation in the mid-1980s, and also the Intelligence Department at the ANC Head Office in Lusaka[14]. Along with Mbeki, Zuma formed part of the ANC President, Oliver Tambo's negotiation team, which met with the South African government representatives in the late 1980s to early 1990s. Zuma clandestinely returned to South Africa in March after the ANC was unbanned in February 1990[15].

As a politician, Zuma has faced significant legal challenges. He was charged with rape in 2005, but was acquitted. In addition, he fought a long legal battle over allegations of racketeering and corruption, resulting from the conviction for corruption and fraud by his financial advisor, Schabir Shaik. On 6 April 2009, the National Prosecuting Authority decided to drop the charges, citing political interference. Zuma has 700 charges against him[16] relating to, amongst others, sexual assault, misogyny, nepotism, fraud and corruption. The ANC seems fractured and split over Zuma's numerous gaffes and mistakes; for example, Zuma made some controversial remarks that highways in Gauteng province are 'not some national road in Malawi', and that South Africans should not 'think like Africans generally'[17]. Recently, Zuma was also implicated in what has been termed as *Nenegate* for firing and hiring finance ministers over a nuclear deal. Zuma is said to have aimed for direct control of the Treasury and state finances by holding the line on reckless government spending on an unaffordable US$100 billion nuclear power station programme and a threatened re-arrangement of a $624 million leasing deal with Airbus Industries[18]. The nuclear deal was being pushed hard by the Guptas, a powerful business family,

[13] (ibid)
[14] (ibid)
[15] (ibid)
[16] Andrew, M. (2012). 'Zuma has 700 charges, I only have one'. *IOL News* [Online]. Available: http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/zuma-has-700-charges-i-only-have-one-1390396 [5/3/2016].
[17] Fabricius, P. & Sapa (2013). Malawi insulted by Zuma remark. *IOL News*. [Online]. Available: http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/malawi-insulted-by-zuma-remark-1596397 [5/13/2016].
[18] Battersby, J. (2015). BRILLIANT: John Battersby unpacks Nenegate, Jacob Zuma's greatest blunder. [Online]. Available: http://www.biznews.com/leadership/2015/12/24/brilliant-john-battersby-unpacks-nenegate-jacob-zumas-greatest-blunder/ [20/06/2016].

who are said to have had major interests in uranium mining and are also close to Zuma. Influenced by the Guptas, Zuma fired the Finance Minister, Nhlanhla Nene, when Nene insisted on full observance of lawful procurement procedures in the nuclear programme and on major if not indefinite delays. The result was hundreds of billions of rand being wiped off the value of banking and financial shares and the battered currency, and the rand going into freefall and losing around 5% of its value. In one year, it had lost a third of its value against the dollar and sterling, with the rand touching R16 to the US$ and R24 to the British pound[19]. Nene was replaced by Des van Rooyen, who was in turn, within a couple of days, replaced by Pravin Gordhan[20]. There was a massive backlash in all sectors and widespread calls for Zuma to go[21]. *Nkandlagate*, which is central to this research, is another controversial issue currently surrounding President Jacob Zuma and his administration. The ANC appears split over support for the President over Nkandla, although publically they all appear to support him. While President Jacob Zuma had the unwavering support of many MPs over unauthorised expenditure on the security upgrades to his Nkandla home, some MPs prior to the Constitution Court judgment were now saying that they were merely following instructions[22]. Following the court's judgment on 31 March 2016 that Zuma should pay back the money –to which he and ANC officials agreed – some ANC MPs expressed their anger towards Zuma. The MPs, especially those who were on the Nkandla committee, felt they were being used and abused by Zuma and think he undermined their work and 'threw them under the bus'[23].

2.2.2. Nkandla 'gate' background

The suffix 'gate', used to describe political scandals, dates back to the 1970s in Washington D.C. in the United States of America, when the term *Watergate* was coined. The U.S. Congress discovered a break-in at the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters at President

[19] (ibid)
[20] Battersby, J. (2015). John Battersby unpacks Nenegate, Jacob Zuma's greatest blunder. *Fin24.* [Online]. Available. http://www.fin24.com/BizNews/brilliant-john-battersby-unpacks-nenegate-jacob-zumas-greatest-blunder-20151224 [05/03/2016].
[21] Battersby, J. (2015). BRILLIANT: John Battersby unpacks Nenegate, Jacob Zuma's greatest blunder. [Online]. Available: http://www.biznews.com/leadership/2015/12/24/brilliant-john-battersby-unpacks-nenegate-jacob-zumas-greatest-blunder/ [20/06/2016].
[22] Du Plessis, C. (2016). The heads that will roll: Zuma allies face an uncertain future. *Mail & Guardian*. [Online]. Available: http://mg.co.za/article/2016-02-11-zuma-allies-face-an-uncertain-future [20/06/2016]
[23] City Press. (2016). ANC MPs turn on Zuma. [Online]. Available: http://city-press.news24.com/News/anc-mps-turn-on-zuma-20160213-2 [20'06/2015].

Richard Nixon's administration offices on 17 June 1972. Nixon's administration was discovered to be involved in illegal activities, such as bugging the offices of political opponents and people of whom they were suspicious[24]. Apart from the discovery of multiple abuses of power by the Nixon administration, the scandal also led to articles of impeachment and even the resignation of Nixon as President in August 1974[25]. The term *Watergate* has come to incorporate a range of secret and often illegal activities undertaken by members of the Nixon administration and became famously known as *Watergate* after its scene of occurrence at the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C. The suffix 'gate' has since become synonymous with political scandals in the United States and globally. Similarly, in South Africa, the scandal in which Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) was exposed for receiving funding from the security branch of the apartheid government in 1991 was described as *Inkathagate*[26].

Nkandlagate, which is the focus of this research, derives its name from President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla residence (*City Press*, 2013). Nkandla is a town in the uThungulu district of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and is the seat of the Nkandla Local Municipality. The residence is located 40 kilometres to the south of the town of Nkandla, beyond the Nkandla Forest and on the road to Kranskop. The Nkandla region encompasses nearly 115,000 inhabitants, spread relatively sparsely over a large area. Nkandla is mainly a rural area and is in the top five of the poorest places in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The majority of the population is Zulu[27]. *Nkandlagate* is one of the biggest stories in South Africa, in which President Jacob Zuma's renovations of his Nkandla residence is claimed to have cost almost R246 million of taxpayers' money (ibid). The Nkandla project started in May 2009, but the story surrounding *Nkandlagate* dates back to November 2009.

Mail & Guardian journalists, Chris Roper (former editor) and Mandy Rossouw (now deceased), accidentally stumbled on the Nkandla development when they set out for Nkandla with the aim of interviewing the residents about how they felt about having the President of the country as

[24] Rambo, J (2006). The Watergate Scandal. Scholastic. [Online]. Available: http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=11259 [16/11.2015].
[25] Marsh, B. (2005). IDEAS & TRENDS; When Criminal Charges Reach the White House. [Online]. Available: http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9904E7DF1F3FF933A05753C1A9639C8B63 [16/11/2015].
[26] Norm, D, (1991). Fallout from 'Inkathagate' forces concessions [online]. Available: https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/779 [16/11/2015].
[27] Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2015). [0nline]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nkandla,_KwaZulu-Natal [20/06/2016].

their neighbour. This is when they discovered that the seemingly dilapidated Nkandla residence was in the process of acquiring a new look, as there were some signs of development taking place in the area. Twelve people were seen digging and there was some heavy earth-moving machinery. Rossouw and Roper moved to the site office, where they saw the architectural drawings taped to a wall – these displayed extensive development plans of what Nkandla was destined to be transformed into, both as a large complex and as a massive story[28]. According to Roper, one of the people involved in the Nkandla homestead revealed to them that the total cost of renovations was estimated at R65 million, with the likelihood that this would be exceeded.

Before publishing the story, the *Mail & Guardian* journalists asked the Executive arm of government for comments on the ongoing development. The government's response was that it had no records on the Nkandla development and no interest in President Zuma's personal property advancements. The government later released a public statement which read: 'The Zuma family planned before the elections to extend the Nkandla residence and this is being done at own cost. No government funding will be utilised for the construction work'[29]. At the same time, the government also accused the *Mail & Guardian* of 'setting out to embarrass the President' by publishing the Nkandla story. On 3 December 2009, President Zuma issued a statement acknowledging the Nkandla project and also ordering that his privacy needed to be respected, while disputing any suspicions of abuse of state resources by his family[30]. This was seen by *Mail & Guardian* journalists as an attempt by the government to cover up the story[31].

On 4 December 2009, Rossouw published the first story on *Nkandlagate* in the *Mail & Guardian* with the heading: *President Jacob Zuma is expanding his remote family homestead at Nkandla in rural KwaZulu-Natal for a whopping price of R65 million*[32]. *Nkandlagate* has since been the centre of discussion in South Africa. While in 2009, the government refuted having any records about the Nkandla homestead, a 2013 formal report recorded that the Department of Public

[28] Roper, C. (2013). The day we broke Nkandla. *Mail & Guardian* [Online]. Available: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-12-04-the-day-we-broke-nkandla [10/11/2015].
[29] Magwenya, V. (2009). Construction work at President Zuma's residence. [Online]. Available: http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=644 [17/11/2015].
[30] De Wet, P. (2013). The Nkandla house that Zuma built, four years on. *Mail & Guardian* [Online]. Available. http://mg.co.za/article/2013-12-04-zumas-nkandlagate-four-years-on [16/11/2015].
[31] Roper, C. (2013). The day we broke Nkandla. *Mail & Guardian* [Online]. Available: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-12-04-the-day-we-broke-nkandla [10/11/2015].
[32] Rossouw, M. (2009). Zuma's R65m Nkandla splurge. *Mail & Guardian* [Online]. Available: http://mg.co.za/article/2009-12-04-zumas-r65m-nkandla-splurge [17/11/2015].

Works was involved in the upgrade of Nkandla six months before Rossouw and Roper consulted government officials for comments over the story. Additionally, it was made known that the South African Police Service had become involved a full month before the questions were asked (De Wet, 2013). However, the Department of Public Works also denied that there was any work or extension project taking place at President Jacob Zuma's homestead at Nkandla.

By 2014, R246 million estimated to have been spent on renovating not only the Nkandla residence, but also the supposed upgrades (firepool, the new cattle kraal, chicken coop and culvert, amphitheater and visitors' centre)[33]. Seven years have passed since 2009 with no effort by President Zuma's administration to investigate the story, although at first there was a promise to investigate the story by the Public Works Minister, Thulas Nxesi, who also promised to employ a Special Investigating Unit to launch its own probe. In January 2013, a government report which was highly contested by South African publics was released by Nxesi in which he reported that Zuma was neither culpable nor involved in the *Nkandlagate* scandal and had not received personal benefit[34].

On 19 March 2014, the Public Protector of South Africa released the *Secure in Comfort* report: 'A report on an investigation into allegations of impropriety and unethical conduct relating to the installation and implementation of security measures by the Department of Public Works at and in respect of the private residence of President Jacob Zuma at Nkandla in the Kwazulu-Natal Province'. The report findings were that 'the implementation of the security measures failed to comply with the parameters set out in the laws in question for the proper exercise of such upgrades and hence constitutes improper conduct and maladministration' (Madonsela, 2014: 427-442).

In response to the *Secure in Comfort* report, on 6 August 2015, Police Minister, Nkosinathi Nhleko, declared in parliament that President Jacob Zuma would not have to pay back any money stipulated to have been spent on his Nkandla homestead[35]. This was based on his Nkandla

[33] Evans, S. (2014). Nkandla report: Zuma unduly benefited from upgrades. *Mail & Guardian*. [Online]. Available: http://mg.co.za/article/2014-03-19-nkandla-report-zuma-unduly-benefitted-from-upgrades. [19/11/2015].
[34] See the Investigation Report Prestige Project A: Security Measures President's Private Residence: Nkandla [online]. Available: www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/nkandla.pdf [13/11/2015].
[35] Evans, J. (2015). Zuma does not have to pay back the Nkandla money. *News24*. [Online]. Available: http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Zuma-does-not-have-to-pay-back-the-money-20150528 [15/11/2015].

report findings which he presented to parliament in Cape Town on 25 May 2015. The report stipulated that President Jacob Zuma did not have to repay a cent for the multimillion rand upgrades at his private home, because all of the features, including a swimming pool, were built for the President's security[36].

The issue of *Nkandlagate* regained prominence this particular year, 2015, as it had in 2009 when the story had just found its way into the media for the first time. Countrywide, South African publics organised protests on 7 August 2015 against Nhleko's speech. Involved in the protests were artists (actors and singers), organisations like Right2Know, United Front, EFF, some of the South African unions, representatives of the Archbishop of the Anglican churches of Cape Town and the Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela.

Apart from these offline demonstrations, activists called for publics' participation on various social media such as Twitter and Facebook to indicate their disapproval of the declaration. The purpose of this research was to extract data from Facebook pages on *Nkandlagate* discussions, with Facebook being selected as it is easier for data extraction than Twitter and it is also flexible in the number of words one could write when compared with Twitter, which is limited to 140 characters (Daniels, 2014: 300). Additionally, recent research has shown that Facebook is the most popular social media platform used by South Africans. According to Fuseware and World Wide Worx (2015) research findings, there are 11.8 million Facebook users in South Africa.

2.3. FACEBOOK

The main social media platform in this research is Facebook. Facebook is an online social networking service which was launched on 4 February 2004 by Harvard University Students, Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz Chris Hughes and Andrew McCollum (Di Capua, 2012). After registering to use the site, users can create user profiles, add friends, exchange messages, post status updates and photos, share videos and receive notifications when others update their profiles. Users may also join common-interest user groups organised by workplace, school or college or other characteristics and categorise their friends into lists such as

[36] eNCA. (2015). Police Minister releases the Nkandla report. [Online]. Available: https://www.enca.com/south-africa/live-police-minister-releases-nkandla-report [20/06/2016].

'People from Work' or 'Close Friends'. According to Facebook Reports First Quarter 2015 results, as of August 2015, Facebook had over 1.18 billion monthly active users. Facebook has become more and more a subject of interest for researchers and there have been more than a hundred studies published about Facebook since its establishment (ibid: 37). Unlike any past technologies, Facebook is part of the new media grounded on an interactive community (Lister et al., 2003; McNair, 2006).

2.4. NEW MEDIA

Most technologies described as 'new media' are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible and interactive (Lister et al., 2003). According to Lister et al. (2003), the word 'new' in new media, implying 'the most recent', also gives an ideological sense that 'new' is better, glamorous and exciting (Lister et al., 2003: 11). Banda et al. (2009) hold that new media is able to enmesh with old media by providing multimedia platforms through which greater democratic participation, inclusion and expression is practised (Banda et al., 2009: 2). Banda (2003) and Fourie (2001) argue that new media appear to have claims and hopes attached to them; they have ideologies for the possibility of the Third World 'catching up' with the West. New media also implies an aura of change. According to Lister et al. (2004), it has brought about several changes, including being seen to have sped up the deconstructive element of post modernity (Lister et al., 2004: 10-11). Although this is contested, it is widely subscribed to as a deep and structural characteristic of changes in societies and economies since the 1960s, with correlative cultural changes (ibid). For example, the shift from elitist to participatory forms of democracy is perceived as being associated with the less hierarchised nature of new media. In this regard, new media is seen to have subverted the old hierarchies of communication, thereby decentering the very act of communication (Banda et al., 2009: 3; Lister et al., 2004: 10).

As argued by Lister et al. (2003), attached to 'new media' is its quality of inclusiveness. New media technology is seen to have extended the old media interactivity possibilities by having, for example, online editions of newspapers and political parties' online forums, which enable inclusion and engage media audience (Lister et al., 2003: 11). Diversity of bias and a balance of

critical opinions have also increased (ibid: 139). There is also the stimulation of critical scrutiny of the political elite due to greater media competition and 24-hour news cycles. Gimmler (2001) and Dahlgren (2005) also have positive views about the Internet having strengthened the public sphere and deliberative democracy (the need to justify decisions made by citizens and their representatives) by promoting more equal access to information, interactivity and a greater practice of discourse among publics (Gimmler, 2001: 31).

Internet facilitates democratic discourse and civic culture to a wider range of publics, although it has consequences in the break-up of a singular, integrated public sphere into multiple, heterogeneous communicative forums and practices (Dahlgren, 2005). On the other hand, although 'new media' seem to have improved qualities compared to old media, there are still issues of great concern; these include access, inequality, power and the quality of information available on new media technologies as discussed in the introduction (Fourie, 2003).

However, Lister et al. (2003) and McNair (2006) argue that the Internet as the new media has strengthened participatory democracy by increasing the availability of opportunities to a wider range of people by enabling them to produce and distribute media (McNair, 2006: 135-140).

2.5. PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The term 'democracy' is a combination of two Greek words, (*dêmos*) to mean 'people' and (*krátos*) to mean 'power' or 'rule' (Held, 2006). Since its origination in Greece, there has never been unanimity on the definition of democracy. While in the past democracy meant participation of all 'eligible publics' to speak and vote in the assembly, women, slaves, foreigners non-landowners and males under 20 years old were automatically excluded as they were not deemed 'eligible publics'[37]. To this day, there still remain several variants of democracy, but the two basic forms are direct democracy and representative democracy, both concerned with how eligible publics execute their rights. Direct democracy is a form of democracy in which all eligible publics demonstrate direct and active participation in the political decision making. It is a democracy in which people have direct power to govern, as opposed to being governed by

[37] Cartwright, M. (2013). Ancient History Encyclopedia. [Online]. Available: http://www.ancient.eu/user/markzcartwright/ [10/11/2015].

representative[38]. Representative democracy is that in which political power is exercised indirectly through elected representatives, while the whole body of eligible publics remains the sovereign power[39]. Central to this research is direct democracy, also known as participatory democracy (Maduz, 2010: 1). David White (2015)[40] defines participation in social science as various strategies used by people to express themselves and ideally exert influence in relation to political, economic, management or other social decisions.

> Whereas all democracy is to some degree participatory, with some form of an original consent given (e.g. constitution) and periodic popular elections, according to its advocates, direct democracy involves the extensive and active engagement of publics in the self-governing process. Seen in this light, direct or participatory democracy can be described as democracy itself, properly understood (Maduz, 2010: 1).

In the twenty-first century, participatory democracy emphasises the wide participation of constituents in political systems. It aims to create opportunities for everyone to contribute meaningfully in making decisions and also to broaden the range of people with access to such opportunities (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). In order to achieve self-determination by publics, there is a need for democratic rights not to be restricted to political decision-making (Pateman, 1970). While participatory democracy has been hailed for its ability to give space to originally marginalised voices, Sandoval and Fuchs (2010: 141) warn against being too optimistic about these concepts. Their argument is that understanding the concept of participatory democracy in contemporary society characterised by social and economic inequality is not enough. Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) argue that participatory media should be conceived as a 'critical media' in which, apart from the political realm, democracy should also incorporate economy based systems such as participatory ownership and decision making. In this regard, participatory democracy will be able to provide 'critical content' to the advancement of social transformation and contribution of genuine democracy. Sandoval and Fuchs's views are shared by Manji (2008), who argues that in a society with so many divisions and in which technology has a tendency to amplify instead of ameliorate social differences, there is nothing progressive about technology. However, researchers have generally hailed the Internet enabling tools such as social media to

[38] Mifflin, H. (2011). American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 5th Edition. Harcourt Publishing Company. [Online]. Available: http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Direct+democracy [21/11/2015].
[39] Bouvier, J. (1856). A Law Dictionary, Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States. [Online]. Available: http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Representative+democracy [21/11/2015].
[40] White, D. (2015). What is Political Participation? - Definition, Forms & Example. Study.com. [Online]. Available: http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-political-participation-definition-forms-examples.html [20/11/2015].

have not only made participatory democracy possible, but which have also led publics to engage in journalism in what is termed as participatory journalism (Bowman & Willis, 2003).

2.6. PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM

Bowman and Willis (2003) define participatory journalism as the ability by publics to engage in an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information with the purpose of providing independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information as democracy requires (ibid: 9). Bill Kovach (2001) further expounds on participatory journalism:

> In an era when anyone can be a reporter or commentator on the Web, 'you move to a two-way journalism.' The journalist becomes a 'forum leader,' or a mediator rather than simply a teacher or lecturer. The audience becomes not consumers, but 'pro-sumers', a hybrid of consumer and producer (Kovach & Tom, 2001: 9).

Participatory journalism is said to have brought about what is termed 'media democracy'. The concept of media democracy entails the use of information technologies to both empower individual publics and promote democratic ideals through the spread of information and the democratisation of the media system itself by preventing ownership concentration or strong regulation (Exoo, 2010). A key idea of media democracy is that recently, media ownership concentration in the hands of few corporations (state and private) and conglomerates has limited the range of voices and opinions being expressed in the media and has led to an increase in the commercialisation of news and information (McChesney, 1997). A diverse range of information providers is essential for a democratic society to enable viewers, readers and listeners to receive a broad spectrum of information from varying sources that is not tightly controlled, biased and filtered (Golding & Murdock, 2000).

The ability of traditional media to conduct investigative reporting and act as a public watchdog has also been eroded, leading to an increase in prioritising infotainment and celebrity news over informative discourse (Zhao, 1998). Erika Rodrigues and Anya Schiffin (2015) talk about the inability of traditional media in Africa to investigate the activities and finances of the large extractive sector companies. African journalists have found it difficult to undertake evocative

long-form investigative reporting to expose the environmental, economic and societal effects brought about by these extractive companies (Rodrigues & Schiffin, 2015: 124).

A significant characteristic of participatory journalism is dialogue, as there is no central news organisation controlling the exchange of information – as is the case with traditional media. The conversation mechanism improves on the traditional roles of journalism and generates a dynamic, egalitarian give-and-take ethic (Bowman & Wills, 2003: 9). The fluidity of this approach emphasises the publishing rather than filtering of information, as conversations happen publically, as opposed to traditional news organisations that are structured to filter information before publishing it through collaboration among the editors and reporters, without involving the public (ibid).

The different structures and organisations that produce traditional and participatory journalism also differentiate them. While traditional media are created by hierarchical organisations, participatory journalism is created by networked communities that value conversation, collaboration and egalitarianism (ibid: 12). While participatory journalism has been heralded as enhancing media democracy by greater participation of publics through the use of Internet-based tools such as Twitter and Facebook, research done by Daniels (2014) indicates that the level of that democracy, particularly on Twitter, is limited in access and content as it lacks a more inclusive diversity of voices. Like Facebook, Twitter is mostly used by the elite to affirm each other's views (Daniels, 2014: 309).

Participatory media has brought both challenges and opportunities for traditional media. Kristin Skare Orgeret (2015) states that the role of traditional media is under pressure today due to new technology and new media's facilitation of new cultural practices enabling societal change and shaping new practices of democracy and understandings of freedom of expression (Orgeret, 2015: 142). Apart from the challenge of being stripped of their role as news gatekeepers, traditional media, especially newspapers, have seen a 'shift of press advertising to the Internet and fragmented audiences moving increasingly to non-linear consumption which is less susceptible to commercial impact and therefore less valuable to advertisers' (Barnett, 2009: 2). Newspapers are now competing for advertising revenues and audiences with participatory publics. Wilkinson, McClung and Sherring (2009) have indicated *The Drudge Report*, *Flickr*, and *Rocketboom* as independent websites that became Internet brands. According to them, these

sites arguably compete with traditional media, because they attract advertising and audiences for particular types of news and/or content (Wilkinson et al., 2009). Traditional media are also in collision with non-media fields. Law firms create documentaries and multimedia presentations, while government relations people provide expertly crafted news reports and information services – as do hospitals and medical firms – which are professionally written and produced to the expectation of a standard news report (ibid).

Professional journalists have criticised publics' generated content as lacking journalistic ethical standards, impartiality, newsworthiness and trustworthiness (Bowman & Wills, 2003). Publics may rush to break news without verification of facts and often correct sources of stories are difficult to trace [41] as some people may use fake identities. However, professional journalists are now trying to cooperate with this digital disruption. Media companies are now trying to incorporate publics in their news making. For example, it is increasingly common for newspaper websites to feature photo galleries where local amateur photographers can post their work, which visitors can even purchase. Daniels (2015) examines how newsrooms struggle for survival and have even turned to native advertising – paid-for content – or sponsored content that merges editorial content with advertising, due to failure of online advertising to compensate adequately for the loss in print advertising. Native advertising has been practised by *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* and has also been adopted by *Mail & Guardian, City Press, Sunday Times* and other newspapers in South Africa.

2.7. SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

Social media are new information technology networks which use interactive forms of communication and user-generated content where there is creation and maintaining of interpersonal relationships (Lynch & Hogan, 2012). Social media – such as MySpace, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, wikis and blogs – foster interactions between users online. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social media networks as web-based services that allow individuals to 'construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users

[41] Smith, P. (2015). Chilling Stories Of Fake Online Identities And Why People Create Them. [Online]. Available: http://www.buzzfeed.com/patricksmith/this-is-why-people-create-false-identities-on-the-Internet [09/08/2015].

with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system' (Boyd & Ellison, 2007: 211). It is an Internet-based application that is built on ideological and technological foundations that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Balarabe, 2014).

The existence of social media became noticeable worldwide during times of crisis, with the very first incident being the attacks on New York City and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. For the very first time, people looked to the web for eyewitness reports, some of which were even used by mainstream media[42]. The second crisis was during the 2004 Asian tsunami, where the photographs and videos which some tourists had uploaded on their personal blogs were used on television and in print (Lule, 2004). However, the 2005 London bombings took social media to the highest level when people who were affected by the attacks sent their images and personal accounts to mass media, making traditional media realise the potential of social media platforms in situations where their journalists/reporters could not be present in time (Siegl & Foot, 2004). Social media enables users to communicate and share information instantly and independently from their geographical location (Di Capua, 2012). Additionally, people are able to express how they feel and think and can also form online communities based on affinities, interests, political and religious views and common causes (ibid: 36).

Characteristics that make social media possible in new media technologies are their ability to promote openness, connectivity, community, conversation and participation (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2014: 902). The openness of social media is due to there being few barriers to accessing information or making comments; hence promoting user feedback and participation (ibid). Meadows-Klue (2007: 246) argues that a Web is a near-frictionless media channel along which anything can flow. For example, the younger generation shares their lives on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter and various organisations distribute information and receive feedback via their corporate blogs. This openness is a result of social media's networking philosophy; the availability of easy-to-use mechanisms for creating and sharing content. Having the characteristic of connectivity (defined as interpersonal), community and general social ties (Teixeira, 1992: 36), social media provides mechanisms through which interpersonal ties can be

[42] Outing, S. (2011). Taking Tsunami Coverage into Their Own Hands. The Pointer Institute. A Global Leader in Journalism [Online]. Available: http://www.poynter.org/uncategorized/29330/taking-tsunami-coverage-into-their-own-hands/ [18/11/2015].

maintained. Through social media, people who tie offline could easily expand their relationships and experiences online (Ha & James, 1998). Social media promotes community conversation by allowing individuals and organisations to identify and communicate with the people with whom they share some commonality (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2014). Social media promotes a two-way conversation which differentiates it from traditional media channels such as television, radio, newspapers and magazines, as these only deliver a linear communication mechanism (Rowley, 2004). Rafaeli (1988) argues that 'conversationality' is an important virtue of social media as it is the ideal of interactivity. Participation is behaviour/action-oriented interactivity, whereas conversation is rooted in the communicational aspect of interactivity (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2014).

Social media networks are said to have presented an alternative space for: political discourse between publics; communication and interaction between politicians and the public they represent; oversight by publics of the operations of the state and publication of protest and dissent (Salanova, 2012). Studies by, for example, Yochai Benkler (2006), have shown that the advent of digital technologies that make social media possible has transformed the way civil servants and institutions disseminate information and communicate opinions. Benkler argues that social media have speeded the transmission of information at a lower cost amongst individuals, communities and organisations in a globalised era.

Many studies have hailed social media for enabling publics to directly and actively exercise their rights on political issues through their participation on social media platforms. A situation report by the Institute for Security (2012) argues that 'social media have the potential to facilitate the active citizen political engagement required to bring about political change in Africa' (Chatora, 2012: 1). Benkler (2006) argues that the Internet as a tool for mobilisation has presented to people the potential of being speakers, rather than just being listeners. Apart from challenging the traditional media, social media platforms have also, to a large extent, indicated the potential to challenge sovereign power. Grassroots movements have benefited through the Internet, which has brought about new possibilities for publics to organise themselves, even under authoritarian regimes. Although there is an increase in the censorship and capabilities of the state and/or corporates to limit access, shut down the Internet and to criminalise content, Salanova (2012) and Benkler (2006) state that the Internet has still proven to be harder for authoritarian regimes to

control and censor than traditional media outlets. In Africa, social media networks are increasingly becoming mass communication tools and vehicles for mobilisation.

2.8. ARAB SPRING

Several scholars have argued that the 2010/2011 revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt are attributable to social media-based tools like Facebook, Twitter and mobile phone technology which played an important role in organising, supporting and staging the revolutions (Bohler-Muller & Van der Merwe, 2011). Although some scholars have highlighted the ability of social media to create awareness and mobilise the masses against the status quo, social media detractors, such as Regina Salanova (2012), undermine the power of social media, especially as a tool for social and political change. While Salanova agrees that social media can have a crucial role in coordinating and mobilising grassroots movements, in addition to being useful in forging political change, they are neither the actors nor the drivers of a revolution (Salanova, 2011: 8). Agreeing with Salanova, Malcom Gladwell (2010)[43] argues that online social networks (Twitter and Facebook) can never yield actual confrontation with forces of injustice due to their large proportion of superficial or marginal relationships characterised by 'low-intensity' emotional bonds. According to him, activism comes primarily from strong social connection which Facebook and Twitter do not have; hence they are too weak to motivate people into real action (ibid).

However, Salanova and Gladwell's views become a highly debatable issue by looking at numerous revolutions in the Arab world which are largely attributed to the impact of social media in shaping political debates, as well as political and social mobilisation (Yang, 2013: 708). These include: the fleeing of Tunisian President Ben Ali on 14 January 2011 to Saudi Arabia; resignation of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on 11 February 2011; the deposition in Libya of Muammar Gaddafi on 23 August 2011 (he was later killed on 20 October 2011), and the surrendering of power by President Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen to Abd Rabbuh Mansur Al-Hadi on 27 February 2012 after presidential elections.

[43] Gladwell, M. (2010). 'Small Change: Why the Revolution will not be Tweeted.' *The New Yorker*. [Online]. Available: http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell [19/11/2015].

Other countries, such as Morocco, have seen leaders reforming their constitutions due to the wave of uprisings, while other leaders like Nouri al-Maliki, a Prime Minister in Iraq, refrained from pursuing re-election. On the other hand, there have been incidents where digital technology activism has not materialised into political change, as was the case with the 2007 Saffron revolution in Burma in which dozens of protesters were arrested (Fink, 2009). Therefore, although social media can have certain impacts on social and political change as mentioned above, it is not always the case.

2.9. CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Although social media has registered some degree of promoting participatory democracy, there are some challenges associated with this. Due to this freedom and opportunities created by the social media (the coverage and openness), there is often a lack of credibility and trustworthiness of the source. With the use of mobile phones, people create fictional identities (Facebook names) and they post information and visuals on the Net with long-lasting damage (Usman, 2015: 458). With a source's credibility doubted, the authenticity of the content may also be doubted; hence, posing another challenge as true fact could be distorted on the Net (ibid).

According to Eisenberg (2013)[44], there is also the technological disruption challenge posed by the social media. Usman (2015) argues that:

> This form of media and mobile revolution is about data, real time velocity and variety of data sometimes unstructured (pictures, videos, sentimental analyses, etc) from desperate sources which causes indigestion and confusion. Sorting out the information and acting on it so as to meet up the demands of the public an organization serves is actually a concern (ibid: 458).

Social media can also be misused by users. There are incidents where users, especially politicians, have abused the networks by posting insults and attacking personalities – in most cases, contrary to the constitutional provisions of human rights. Additionally, some users post pornographic images which pose a serious challenge to moral values (ibid). According to conservatives:

[44] Elsenberg, B. (2013) 'The Shake weight Challenge of Social Media' [Online]. Available: www.bryaneisenger.com [29/01/2016].

> The sexually explicit content of pornography is an affront to decent family and religious values and deeply offensive to a significant portion of citizens who hold these values. The consumption of pornography is bad for society. It undermines and destabilizes the moral fabric of a decent and stable society, by encouraging sexual promiscuity, deviant sexual practices and other attitudes and behaviour that threaten traditional family and religious institutions, and which conservatives regard as intrinsically morally wrong. Furthermore, pornography is bad for those who consume it, corrupting their character and preventing them from leading a good and worthwhile life in accordance with family and religious values (West, 2013: 11).

Usman (2015) also argues that the sense of diversity/complexity is another challenge associated with social media. According to him, social media has cleared the veil of the homogenising trend which was previously provided by the traditional media to all age categories. Displacement of rugged and reliable media sources (Newspapers, magazines and TV shows) is equally affecting computers, as people spend less time on conventional media and concentrate on the social media (Pogue, 2015).

The fate of personal privacy is another challenge in social media. Personal privacy cannot be guaranteed in an environment within which diverse types of information can be disseminated (Usman, 2015). There are also challenging security concerns, especially considering the increase in the occurrence and number of cyber-crimes. Social media can be used to spread political messages initiated by insurgents/terrorists (ibid). Other challenging security concerns include surveillance of, in particular, political and social activists by state and /corporate entities.

2.10. SOUTH AFRICA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

According to a South African Social Media Landscape (2011) study by Fuseware (a social media monitoring platform) and World Wide Worx (a leading market research company), South Africa has seen a growing number of social media users since 2011. By mid-2011, there were 1.1 million Twitter users, 4.2 million Facebook users and approximately 10 million Mxit users registered with the leading social media platform[45]. At the end of August 2012, 5.33 million South Africans were using Facebook on the Web; 2.43 million were on Twitter and 9.35 million on Mxit (Fuseware & World Wide Worx, 2012). In 2013, 6.8 million Facebook users were registered – according to a report by Fuseware and World Wide Worx (2014) – with 5.5 million

[45] World Wide Worx (2011).Social media goes mainstream in SA [Online]. Available: http://www.worldwideworx.com/socialmedi/ [31/01/2016].

users on Twitter and 6.3 million users on Mxit. In August 2014, there were 11.8 million Facebook users, 6.6 million Twitter users, with 6.5 million Mxit users (Fuseware and World Wide Worx 2015) registered; by 2015, there were 14.4 million Facebook users in South Africa, 7.2 million users on Twitter and no records on Mxit[46], according to the report by *We Are Social*[47].

The (2015) research on gender balance found Facebook to be the first high-technology social media platform in South Africa with equal take-up by males and females. Of those Facebook users whose gender is identifiable, 5.6 million males and 5.6 females use the platform[48].

From the above data, Facebook has shown a consistent increase in the number of users, with the biggest margin – compared to other social media platforms – followed by Twitter. Mxit has shown a massive decrease in the number of users for the past years. According to an investigation by Memeburn (2015), the drop has been due to intense international competition and a smartphone revolution, because the success of Mxit was largely built on feature phones[49].

2.11. FACEBOOK IS THE MOST POPULAR AND INFLUENTIAL SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITE IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH 12 MILLION MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS

Among social media networks, Facebook is the most popular and influential social networking website in South Africa, with 12 million monthly active users. According to Facebook Reports First Quarter 2015 results[50], Facebook is a free social media platform service with a joining age limit of over 13 years, provided one has a mobile phone number or an email address (Di Capua, 2012). On the Facebook website, users create a profile by listing personal information which

[46] Report by We Are Social (2015). Most popular social platforms in South Africa. [Online]. Available: http://mybroadband.co.za/news/Internet/117284-most-popular-social-platforms-in-south-africa.html [31/01/2015].
[47] We Are Social (2014). Digital, Social & Mobile Worldwide in 2015. [Online]. Available: http://wearesocial.com/uk/special-reports/digital-social-mobile-worldwide-2015 [31/01/2015].
[48] World Wide Worx, (2014). Facebook bridges SA gender divide. [Online]. Available: http://www.worldwideworx.com/facebook/ [31/01/2016].
[49] Thomas, S. (2015). Mxit: the rise and collapse of 'Africa's largest social network'. Memeburn Tech Savvy Insight and Analysis. [Online]. Available: http://memeburn.com/ [31/01/2016].
[50] Facebook First Quarter Report. (2015). Facebook reveals user numbers for South Africa. [Online]. Available: http://businesstech.co.za/news/Internet/98085/facebook-reveals-user-numbers-for-south-africa/ [31/01/2016]

may include their names, gender, hometown, relationship status, birthday, profile picture, educational background, employment situation, lists of personal interests and contact details. Users can establish connections with other users by inviting each other to become 'friends' so that they can access the websites of users with whom they have become 'friends' (Roos & Slabbert, 2014: 2847).

Various activities can be performed on Facebook, including sending private messages through inboxes or public messages on each other's timelines (Di Capua, 2012: 37). Writing messages was found to be one of the most frequent activities on Facebook, according to Golder et al. (2007). Users can upload photographs, 'tag' themselves or other people in the photographs, update their 'status', comment on other users' postings, 'poke' a friend, indicate that they 'like' a particular posting, and 'subscribe' to specific users' public postings without necessarily adding that user as a friend (Roos & Slabbert, 2014: 2847).

Facebook has 'private settings' which enables users to limit their 'visibility' and the visibility of what they post on their 'walls'. They may choose 'private' so that only those with whom they are friends can see whatever they post on their walls; or they may choose 'public' to make their posts visible to everyone, including those who are not their friends. However, although the user may utilise several private settings to restrict their visibility, certain information in the profile remains visible to everyone. This enables users to recognise each other through the displayed information before sending friend requests (ibid).

2.12. WHY DO PEOPLE JOIN FACEBOOK?

In trying to understand why people join Facebook, Gangadharbatla (2008) did research to explore whether willingness to join social networking websites (in this case Facebook) had to do with the need to belong, collective self-esteem and Internet self-efficacy. The hypothesis proved that this was the case and this research concluded that these factors may also influence individuals' attitudes, such as a user's personality toward social networking sites. Social influence is another element determining people's use of Facebook. Teo et al. (2009) conducted research among 381 Singaporean respondents whose average age was 25; the following facts were established as users' direct likeability to join and use Facebook: the number of friends

using Facebook, the belief that Facebook is the most popular networking site amongst individuals and, finally, that it has the most active users in Singapore and worldwide (ibid).

Research has also established that people join Facebook for recognition purposes. This was found from a study conducted among 438 Facebook users from Hong Kong. Using an online survey, Zhang and Tang (2009) studied the relationship between gratifications and different Facebook uses and they identified six gratifications that can be regrouped under two categories which, according to them, are related to certain degrees of collective self-esteem, which 'reflects the relevant value an individual "places" on a social group' (Zhang & Tang, 2009: 5).

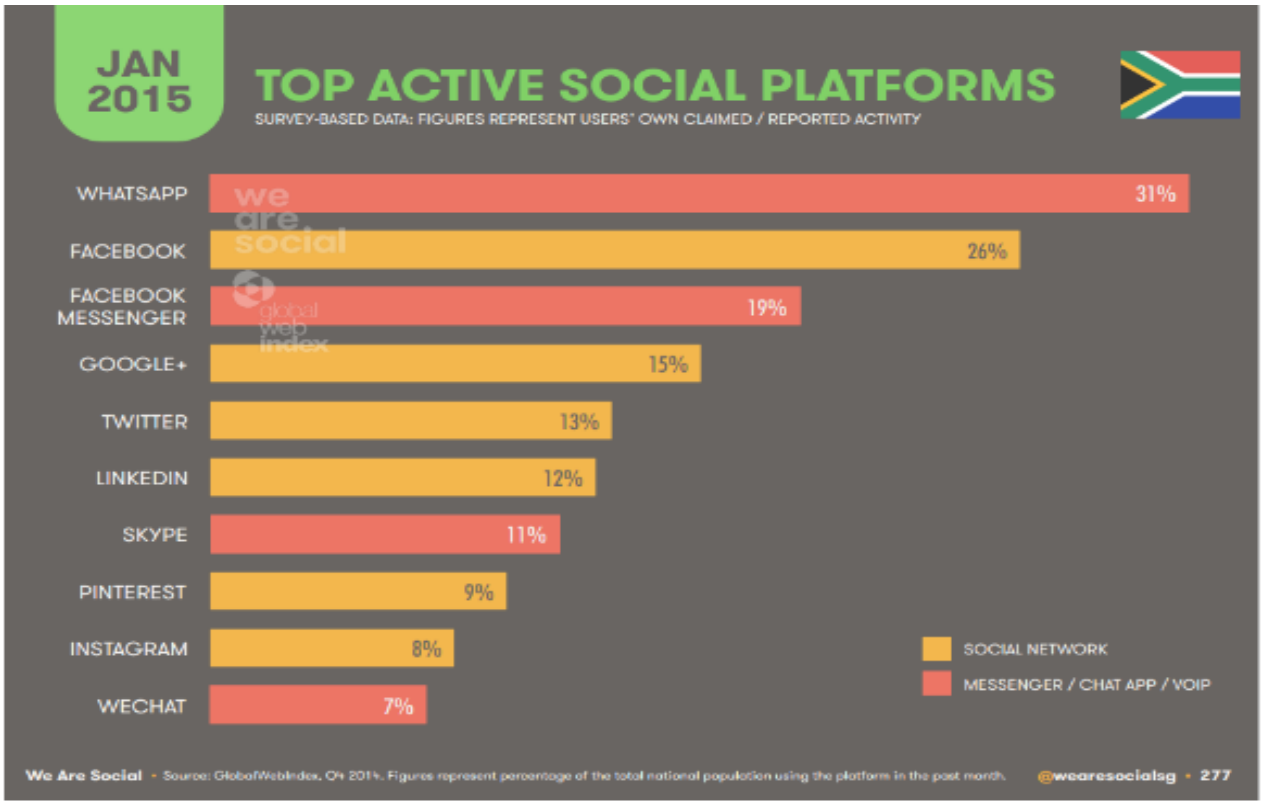
One of the categories was called social compensation and includes recognition gain, emotional support, social network extension and social network maintenance, depending on a response from another user. In other words, gratification derived from Facebook enables users to gain and maintain recognition from others (ibid). Personality and willingness to communicate, experience and social influence are also some of the reasons established by some researchers to determine why people join Facebook (Di Capua, 2012).

2.13. FACEBOOK USE IN SOUTH AFRICA

A recent 2015 research by *We are Social* also indicates Facebook as the most popular social network in South Africa, with 26% active users, followed by Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram, respectively[51].

[51] Shezi, L. (2015). What do SA's 24.9 mil Internet users spend most of their time doing online? *Htxt.africa* [Online]. Available: http://www.htxt.co.za/2015/01/21/what-do-sas-24-9-mil-Internet-users-spend-most-of-their-time-doing-online/ [28/01/2016]

Table 1



Several studies have concentrated on the use of Facebook to initiate and maintain relationships and many researchers have found that Facebook is mostly employed to keep in touch with people and to know them better (Joinson, 2008; Golder et al., 2007; Sheldon, 2008; Wiese & Farrugia, 2009). A survey conducted by Stern and Taylor (2007) among 364 university students found that most Facebook users use it to maintain already existing relationships and only a small number of users try to meet new people or try to initiate relationships. As Facebook allows instant communication between users who are geographically apart, some researchers also found Facebook to be frequently used to maintain distant relationships (Golder et al., 2007; Sheldon, 2008; Dong, 2008). 'Facebook may foster relationship building by allowing users to track other members of their community' (Lampe et al., 2006: 167). Thus, Facebook users may retrieve information about their peers on the website, keep track of their activity, read what they write or look at what they post on their walls in order to keep in touch with them (Di Capua, 2012: 38).

While the potential of social media to enhance democracy has been extensively explored in western countries, such studies remain virtually unexplored in Africa where democracies are still

fresh and where social media has indicated having quite a distinct potential effect on politics. However, as mentioned earlier, a new book, titled *Participatory Politics and Citizen Journalism in a Networked Africa*, is an example of new research coming out of the continent on citizen journalism and social media. This research paper aims to delve into this relatively understudied field to explore how South African publics used Facebook to express their views on *Nkandlagate.* Facebook has been chosen due to its popularity as a social networking platform among South Africans. Central to this research are the kinds of discourse that emerged from the posts and their meanings.

2.14. POWER INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO POLITICIANS: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

The growth of social networking sites such as MySpace, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, wikis, blogs and Instagram has been one of the notable trends on the Internet. There has been an increase in their utilisation by political parties (Lynch & Hogan, 2012: 84). Mackay, (2010: 23) states that Web 2.0 (World Wide Websites that emphasise user-generated content, usability, and interoperability) provides an opportunity for voters to engage themselves in a real online dialogue with their representatives which, as argued by Briones et al. (2011), provides the possibility of relationship building. Such relationship cultivation between parties and voters enables the fostering of positive attitudes towards the parties (Seltzer & Zhang, 2011: 42). According to Wellman et al. (2001), there is a greater likelihood for people who are involved in online political activities to be involved in similar activities offline, a view shared by Verba et al. (1995: 345), who argue that 'publics who are interested in politics are more likely to be politically active' in terms of participating in contesting as political leaders, voting for political leaders, as well as involving themselves in the formation of public policy. According to Tolbert and McNeal (2003: 175), there is evidence that advancement in communication technology may play an important role in influencing electoral behavior.

The explosion of media outlets on the Internet has led to a fragmented information environment, in what is described by Bennett and Iyengar (2008: 717) as 'stratamentation' (stratification and simultaneous fragmentation). One of the notable trends in the growth of social media networks is

the increase in their utilisation by political parties (Lynch & Hogan, 2012: 84). According to Zhang and Seltzer (2010: 164), 'the Internet is a powerful tool for stimulating political participation'. Social media enable candidates to communicate directly with publics, keeping control of the content, distribution and timing of their messages, as well as reducing their dependence on traditional intermediaries, such as journalists. Social media has been very influential in helping new or less established parties get their voice heard (Moe & Larsson, 2013).

The first electoral campaign in which the use of social media had a decisive impact was Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential campaign[52] . The core of the web-based campaign was a well-designed, versatile and dynamic website: 'my.barackobama.com' (MyBO). According to the European Business Review (2010), through the campaign's social network, people were connecting to each other and activating themselves on behalf of the campaign. The result was the creation of two million profiles. Over 200,000 offline events were planned by registered users and volunteers; these users also wrote 400,000 blog posts and created 35,000 volunteer groups. Obama raised $639 million from 3 million donors, mostly through the Internet (Vargas, 2008). Volunteers on MyBO generated $30 million on 70,000 personal fundraising pages[53] and donors made 6.5 million donations online, totalling more than $500 million. Of those donations, 6 million were amounts of $100 or less, the average being $80. The average donor gave more than once. Obama's campaign garnered 5 million supporters on social networks. By November 2008, Obama had approximately 2.5 million (some sources say 3.2 million)[54] Facebook supporters, outperforming McCain by nearly four times. Obama had over 115,000 followers on Twitter – more than 23 times those of McCain. Fifty million viewers spent 14 million hours watching campaign-related videos on YouTube – four times McCain's viewers[55]. The campaign had sent out 1 billion emails, including 10,000 unique messages targeted at specific segments of their 13 million member list. The campaign had garnered 3 million mobile and SMS subscribers. Apart

[52] Several sources have acknowledged this; e.g. Harfoush, R. Yes We Did - An Inside Look at How Social Media Built the Obama Brand, new Riders 2009 and Pew Internet. The Internet's Role in Campaign 2008. Pew Internet and American Life Project, April 2009

[53] Harfoush, R. (2008). Inside the Obama Campaign: Lessons Learned. [Online]. Available: https://happywookie.wordpress.com/2008/12/08/102/ [29/01/2016].

[54] Harfoush, R. (2008). Inside the Obama Campaign: Lessons Learned. [Online]. Available: https://happywookie.wordpress.com/2008/12/08/102/ [29/01/2016].

[55] Edelman Research, (2009) 'The Social Pulpit,', p. 2

from using social media tools more effectively than other candidates to organise, communicate and fundraise, the campaign also leveraged them to support its grassroots strategy that tapped into the hearts of the voters. The result was a victory for both the Democrats and Obama and became the legacy of one of the most effective Internet marketing plans in history, where social media and technology enabled the individual to activate and participate in a movement (Lewin, 2008). Evidence has it that Obama's victory in the 2008 elections through social media has influenced many political parties to seriously involve themselves in social media platforms worldwide[56]. During the 2007 French presidential elections, social media demonstrated a strong influence towards the centre-right Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) party's Nicolas Sarkozy's election results, when he scored a decisive victory over the opposing socialist candidate, Ségolène Royal, for the French presidency. Over 40% of Internet users reported that their voting decision was due to the conversations and other activities on the Internet. In the Finnish parliamentary election of 2011, clear evidence indicates that the True Finns were the first party to succeed in using social media to mobilise their supporters in Finland. Other significant political events in which social media played a crucial part include the 2011 Egyptian Revolution this happen. This happened in a large, populated and traditionally Arab state in which the transition of power in Egypt was the most significant change in the so-called Arab Spring. The chain of events leading up to it was quite intense[57].

2.15. SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In the South African 2014 elections, political parties, such as the EFF, Democratic Alliance (DA) and the ANC, saw an increase in their votes, partly due to their usage of social media platforms. The official social media audience of Julius Malema, the EFF leader, was built from scratch over a period of a year and showed exponential growth. According to the CEO of Apurimac Media, Will Green, the Apurimac research showed that DA and its leader, Helen Zille, had the nimblest Twitter fingers. The party registered 734 tweets and Zille had a total of 634 tweets in the third

[56] Miller, C. (2016) Politicians give social media a vote of confidence: The *Irish Examiner* [Online]. Available: http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/politicians-give-social-media-a-vote-of-confidence-378290.html [30/01/2016].

[57] Wolman, D. (2011) The Instigators - How a Small Band of Digital Activists Risked Their Lives and Helped Bring Down the Government of Egypt. Atavist.

week of April, while the ANC recorded the biggest Facebook growth: from 52,536 likes to 136,046 likes from 7 March to 2 May 2014. Lupia and Philpot (2005: 1124) argue that the increase in people's political interest on the web is due to the web's potential to allow people to post, at a minimal cost, content that can be viewed all over the world. South Africans used their personal social networks or news and political websites to share their own political viewpoints during the 2014 elections.

Freedom House (FH)[58] did a survey to assess youth attitudes towards democracy and its core ingredients of voting, accountability and political parties' actions to tap into the youth's political orientations n South Africa. The report, which was compiled by Susan Booysen[59], involved 12 political parties, the biggest five being the ANC, DA, EFF, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the National Freedom Party (NFP). Within the survey, political parties explained their experiences in using social media for the 2014 elections, with Twitter, Facebook, Mxit, WhatsApp, Google broadcasts and podcasts being the mostly used.

The key findings were that the 'political parties vary in impressions as to the specificity (or not) of issues that concern the youth. The issues are both substantive (concerning aspects of public policy and government action) and procedural (relevant to participation in elections and politics). Some parties claim all of their policies are youth-centric; others focus on issues that concern the youth specifically, including education, work opportunities, gangsterism, community safety or substance abuse' (FH, 2015: 1). With regard to social media usage, the findings of the interviews with political parties were that social media provided multiple benefits for strengthening representative democracy in South Africa, including: providing access to politicians; satisfying citizens' needs for information and expanding awareness of party political options; offering two-way, interactive communication; contributing to 'direct democracy'; helping to ascertain responses to government actions; enabling politicians to identify new pressing issues, and assisting in demystifying politics and enlarging citizen participation. Furthermore, social media could help enhance party capacity for outreach due to cost efficiency. To illustrate, audiences of substantial size could be reached with minimal technical output costs attached to postings (ibid).

[58] Freedom House is an independent watchdog organisation dedicated to the expansion of freedom around the world. It was founded in 1941 and analyses the challenges to freedom; advocates for greater political and civil liberties; and, supports frontline activists to defend human rights and promote democratic change.

[59] Susan Booysen is a professor at the Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P&DM), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Although South African politicians used social media for campaigning in the 2014 elections, this FH report indicates that most of the parties were not very well-acquainted with the use of social media; they were either learning in the process or employing expertise to help them improve their skills (FH, 2015: 11). However, smaller parties were unable to keep their social media platforms afloat after the elections, due to lack of enough internal staff to continue the learning process (ibid).

The table below indicates Twitter and Facebook as the preferred social media platforms for political parties. Political parties considered factors such as 'ease of access, cost of usage, ability of the medium to carry out its message, having approximate control over the communication dissemination and whether their target youth audiences will relate to the fashion status of the application' (FH, 2015: 12). The table depicts some trends that are also highly seasonal. It was difficult to sustain great or fair social media use after election time, especially by small parties – one of which was the NFP. Although the NFP was able to create trends on Twitter – using their experts, of course, which helped to increase their following and created awareness of the leader's speeches and details of the leader's campaign trail – the party failed to sustain the platform in the post-election period.

2.16. THE RANGE OF POLITICAL PARTIES' SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Table 2

Party	Facebook	Twitter	Mxit	Whatsapp	YouTube	Broadcasting on Facebook	Webpage
ANC	A (1)	A	A (4)	A (1)	A	A	A
DA	A (2)	A	A				A
EFF	A	A		A (3)		A (3)	A
IFP	A	A					A
NFP	A	A					A

Key: A= high level; a= modest level

1. To call meetings and to create groups
2. Facebook gets hacked, becomes too impersonal once you go over 5,000; hundreds of small DA Facebook profiles
3. Good for groups, to debate issues, on land; Skype-like interviews on Facebook
4. The ANC created MyANC on Mxit

Source: FH, 2015: 12

The DA also indicated awareness of possible incoherence that could happen due to the openness of DA political leaders Tweeting or Facebooking using the party's name. To overcome such dangers, the DA created a strong national party social media page as a common forum for all political discussions to serve as its voice.

2.17. BARRIERS TO THE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY POLITICAL PARTIES IN SOUTH AFRICA (ibid)

Multiple barriers were highlighted by all the parties who were involved in social media (FH: 2015: 12). The recorded barriers are experienced by all political parties, although at different levels. The ANC was seemingly the most aware of the risks associated with social media (ibid). Below is a table indicating all the barriers faced.

Table 3

Level	General aspect	Specific Illustration
Infrastructural [National level]	No mobile phone signal in remote areas	The majority rural areas suffer this problem
Affordability and familiarity [Personal level]	No access to smartphones, a prerequisite to social media	With high poverty and unemployment rate the majority cannot afford smartphones
Skill/low familiarity [personal level]	Supporters have access to phones but without matching level skills	Language and literacy or tech literacy constraints
Party political resources	Low human resource capacity to facilitate social media use	Party finances do not permit more extensive HR to facilitate; for example, in terms of persons to generate trending or for poster design.
Hostile political environment	Social media use is public, and false messaging or the possibility for infiltration	

Apart from the barriers in relation to social media listed in the table above, small political parties also lamented about the barriers they face to use traditional media (ibid: 13).

2.18. CONCLUSION

According to the literature review, social media are not ubiquitous and access to them is highly differentiated globally, as richer individuals and countries have faster Internet access, enabling them to use much more creative social media than those countries and individuals without access. However, this being the case, the conclusion derived from the literature review is that new media/social media has provided both publics and political parties in South Africa with some degree of democracy through freedom of expression.

The next section will be the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. NETWORKED PUBLIC SPHERE

This research is framed through the networked public sphere theory, as it examines social media networks, particularly Facebook, with the main theories deployed by Yochai Benkler (2006). Benkler (2006) defined the networked public sphere as the set of social spaces in which publics discuss and develop opinions on social and political issues, eventually coalescing into public opinion. He argued that networked public spheres, such as the Internet, provide a distinguished set of potential benefits, as it is harder for governments to control communications due to the highly distributed networked architecture of the Internet. This makes the networked public sphere different to and advantageous over traditional media which are easier targets for capture and control by the government, due to their reliance on a small number of technical and organisational points of control (Benkler, 2006: 266).

Ever since the general public began to access the Internet soon after its emergence in the early 1990s, scholars, activists, politicians, journalists and ordinary publics have debated the Internet‘s potential effect on society at large, particularly its impact on political systems and its potential for deepening democracy. Many theorists hailed electronically networked political communication – especially the World Wide Web – as the solution to problems created by the top-down, one-way mass mediated system through which most publics could participate in political systems (Barlow, 1996; McManus, 1992). A number of critical theorists, such as Curran (2000), Habermas (1989) and McChesney (1999), have shown that the traditional mass media (print and broadcasting) have largely failed in their role as public spheres. In contrast, this role is being fulfilled by the Internet which offers publics the opportunity to encounter and engage with a huge diversity of positions, according to some theorists (Gimmler, 2001; Kellner, 2004).

However, there are a great number of theorists who do not fully ascribe to the claims articulated towards the Internet by other theorists. Dahlberg (2001, 2005b), Gomez (2004), and Murdock and Golding (2004) have pointed out significant factors – for example, inequalities in access and participation, un-reflexive communication, corporate domination of online attention, state

surveillance and censorship. Further, they critique validity claims locally, nationally and internationally as limiting open and reflexive debate online.

Although there are some doubts about the Internet as a public sphere, this research will focus on the aspects that have to a large extent made the Internet function better as a public sphere, bearing in mind that it has managed to function better as a public sphere when compared to modern mass communication (newspapers and broadcasting). Many Internet supporters took on board the work of Jürgen Habermas's philosophical communitarian political theory in their celebration of the emancipatory potential of the Internet; he stressed the crucial importance of the public sphere for a free society governed by deliberative democratic consensus-building. In order to understand the Internet as a public sphere, this research discusses some concepts concerning the public sphere, based on the work of Habermas, and includes other arguments about the public sphere and how the Internet is a public sphere.

The idea of a public sphere has not only had a long history, but also a distinguished and conceptual one. Political philosophers from the time of Aristotle have contemplated the relationship amongst publics, between publics and the state and between publics and political society (Koçan, 2008). One of the best known sociologists and philosophers in the tradition of critical theory and pragmatism on the public sphere is Habermas (1989). Habermas (1962) traces the concepts of 'public' and 'private' back to ancient Greece and then through the hierarchical world of the Middle Ages, where public and private had no separate existence.

The development of a modern state and economy has resulted in the current recognition of public and private, although not homogeneous. 'Public' relates to public authority of the state, and 'private' relates to the economy in capitalist societies, society and the family. Depending on a secular nature of the polity, public and private are defined and separated in terms of law and of institutions. They serve as characteristic functions of the public and private realms. The public sphere exists as part of the private world that moves into the public domain (Habermas, 1962: 4). The two terms lost their distinction with the key shift in the modern world, such that interest groups from either side of the public-private divide operate together. 'Public and private are replaced by one massive "societal" complex that is in some respects like the feudal state of the Middle Ages. In this context, the public sphere in its traditional form is no longer possible' (ibid: 5). Public sphere, as defined by Habermas (1989), is the 'realm of our social life in which

something approaching public opinion can be formed where access is guaranteed to all publics' (ibid: 102). This theory will assist this research because it resonates with the public sphere that Facebook is becoming in South Africa, especially in relation to the Nkandla saga.

Habermas (1962) formed the basis of the 'structural transformation theory' in which he describes 'the process by which the public sphere shifts from being the centre of rational-critical debate, embedded within the constitution and within society, to being a debased version of its former self' (ibid: 5). According to Habermas, this shift was being dictated solely by social, economic and political structures which were changing in form and function. Such structural changes include institutions like coffee houses and salons, which are economic structures. In South Africa, Facebook and the discussion on Nkandla could be seen as a Habermas public sphere.

In 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere', Habermas argues that '*publicness (or publicity)* of representation did not constitute a social realm (that is as how a public sphere was meant to be), but rather, it was something like a status attribute whereby [T]he manorial lord displayed and presented himself as an embodiment of some "higher" power. It had nothing to do with the representation of people as is the case when either a lawyer represents his/her client or a member of the national assembly represents a nation' (ibid: 7). Habermas goes on to argue that in the Middle Ages of European society, there was no indication of a public sphere as a 'unique realm distinct from the private sphere' (1989: 103) and each power division operated as sheer spectators of those above their authority. The feudal landlord publicly represented his power where the lord and the estate of the realm was the land, 'instead of merely functioning as deputies for it, they represent their power before the people, instead of for the people' (ibid: 103).

With time and some political changes in European society, this kind of feudalism collapsed in the eighteenth century and paved the way for the bourgeois to take centre stage. Habermas (1989) examined the bourgeois public sphere of 18th century Europe as:

> The sphere in which private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor (ibid: 27).

Habermas's account of the bourgeois conception of the public sphere, stressing its claim to be open and accessible to all, has triggered many controversies. One of the biggest and most important critiques of the Habermasian public sphere is the lack of inclusion/diversity and its focus on the elite; for example, its gender-biased nature (excluding women from the public) and its exclusion of the proletariat from the public sphere. In this research, Benkler's networked public sphere is important because Facebook has presented the South Africa publics with access to the Internet, a networked communication public sphere through which online discussions on Nkandla take place.

3.2. CRITICS OF HABERMAS

Critiques of Habermas's universality of the public sphere – such as Hauser (1999) – have attempted to extend or re-imagine the concept of the public to 'Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres' in which 'rhetoric is central to the concept of the public sphere', in contrast to Habermas's idealistic notion of the bourgeois public sphere. Hauser came up with this discourse-based model of the public sphere by exploring the discursive dimensions of publics, public spheres and public opinions. Hauser argues that a 'vernacular rhetorical model' that allows for partisan rhetoric does not attempt to conceal multiple publics and marginalised voices as is the case with the bourgeois public sphere (Hauser, 1999: 11). Others, like Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (1993), introduced the notion of an oppositional public sphere to ideologically compete with the bourgeois public sphere, as manifested in proletariat public sphere. Similarly, critics such as Jean-François Lyotard (1984) argue about the potential of Habermas's public sphere being emancipated in The Postmodern Condition in the Capitalist Political Economy, in which knowledge is controlled in highly computerised societies, how it is represented as a game of language and the way 'universal knowledge' is 'delegitimised' (Lyotard, 1984: 81). Additionally, feminist theorists have argued about the continued gender-biased nature of Habermas's public sphere (Fraser, 1990; Landes, 1988).

In this research, Facebook is regarded as a public sphere, as it has offered such a space to South African publics where everyone with access could participate in the critical political debates and discussions on Nkandla.

Habermas's contemporaries at the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1995), have critically analysed the downfall of critical debate and the emergence of a cultural notion of leisure. Their views are based on a Marxist argument which suggests that 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas' (Marx & Engels, 1976: 59). Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the change is a direct result of the mass-produced and mechanically reproduced culture, manufactured through structural changes in cultural industries. In their analysis, Horkheimer and Adorno suggest that the 'man with leisure has to accept what the cultural manufacturers offer him' (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1995: 74). This is an argument which, in a Marxist context, means that the class which controls the means of material production also controls the means of mental production, whereby the ideas of those who lack the means of production are subject to it.

However, Habermas pointed out three important institutional criteria he recognises as the preconditions for a public sphere to exist. These include: 1) disregard of status; 2) common concern; and 3) inclusivity (Habermas, 1989: 36-37).

This chapter will now discuss these concepts which have value for this research into Nkandla and Facebook.

- **Disregard of status:** The purpose of the public sphere is the establishment of an objective forum free from state control or any authority of rank and status. Disregarding status will emancipate the public sphere, thereby asserting a uniformity arena of 'common humanity' for better arguments.

- **Common concern:** Before the development of the public sphere, there used to be a monopoly of interpretation in the fields of literature, philosophy and art, with such authority being vested in the hands of churches and the state. This culture continued even at a time of specific spheres' adherence to the rational thinking emanating from capitalism development where there was more information required – a period when philosophy, literature works and art became commercialised and were accessible to private publics who could afford them. These items ceased to be components of the churches' and courts' publicity of representation. These cultural products became accessible to private individuals who now had the responsibility to determine their

meanings and communicate rationally with others. 'Cultural products and information in terms of philosophy, literature and art works thus became the common concern of private publics and this paved the way for other issues of common concern to be introduced as topics of deliberation' (ibid: 36).

- **Inclusivity**: Even at times when the public strengthened its boundaries to exclude people, it was never able to fully close itself to disallow participation. The public always understood and found itself immersed within a more inclusive public of private individuals who – insofar as they were propertied and educated – as readers, listeners, and spectators could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to discussion. Issues discussed, which were previously confined to the debates amongst secluded groups, now became general in their significance and accessibility. Thus, everybody had to and was able to participate. Wherever the public established itself institutionally as a stable group of discussants, it did not equate itself with the public but at most claimed to act as its mouthpiece and to form the bourgeois representation.

  The public sphere was always conscious of being part of a larger part and acting as a representative group of that larger public even when the first public spheres developed as specific groups of people. The potential of it being a publicist body was evident as its discussions did not merely remain internal but could be directed to the outside world (Habermas, 1989: 37). These are some of the points used by Habermasians to explain how new media technologies such as the Internet/social media could fulfill the conditions of a public sphere as a forum for critical and rational debate (Wilhelm, 2000; Hoar & Hope, 2002). This research discusses to what extent the publics' use of Facebook to critique the President's homestead spending on Nkandla operated in this way.

From the mid-2000s, there has been an extensive amount of work performed in Habermas's name regarding the Internet and the public sphere. However, Habermas's keynote speech on the remark he made to the International Communication Association in 2006 regarding the claims that had been made in his name since the early 1990s about the Internet, triggered yet another debate between Habermas and the pro-Internet post-Habermasians (Geiger, 2009). According to Habermas:

> The Internet has certainly reactivated the grassroots of an egalitarian public of writers and readers. However, computer-mediated communication in the web can claim unequivocal democratic merits only for a special context: It can undermine the censorship of authoritarian regimes that try to control and repress public opinion. In the context of liberal regimes, the rise of millions of fragmented chat rooms across the world tend instead to lead to the fragmentation of large but politically focused mass audiences into a huge number of isolated issue publics. Within established national public spheres, the online debates of web users only promote political communication, when news groups crystallize around the focal points of the quality press, for example, national newspapers and political magazines (Habermas, 2006: 423).

His speech was regarded by many Habermasians, such as Howard Rheingold (2007) and Axel Bruns (2007), as rather unsatisfying, especially when he defended the existence of media professionals and even the media elite, arguing that they are essential for the proper operation of the public sphere. Rheingold's view is that 'Habermas does not understand the Internet, the implications and the phenomenon he is critiquing':

> Habermas, a man whose theory of communicative action places high priority on precision of communication describes Internet discourse as a series of chat rooms, which is a telltale that he doesn't understand the phenomenon he is describing. Certainly, the Internet hosts chat rooms, many of which are the site of political discussion of varying degrees of rationality and civility. But as millions of people know, there are mailing lists, wiki talk pages, blogs and blog comments, and message boards as well. What I wish Habermas had said, since he clearly does not understand a phenomenon that is central to the applicability of his theory in the 21st century, is I leave that work to younger scholars (Rheingold, 2007: 10).

Although Habermas's work on the bourgeois public sphere – including his view on the Internet as a public sphere – has received a lot of criticism, many theorists have used most of his ideas to link the Internet as a public sphere. This research also argues for the Internet as a public sphere in its examination of Facebook users and Nkandla. Habermas's public sphere has developed into a networked public sphere, with the Internet having the potential for being an expansive and a more inclusive public sphere. His three criteria (disregarding status, common concern and inclusivity) for a public sphere to exist are at least to some extent adhered to within the Internet.

3.3. THE NETWORK SOCIETY

In contemporary communication, the Internet has been heralded by many theorists as arguably the most important development to have produced a global public sphere to enable people, in theory, to have direct access to a global forum without mediation, selection or censorship to their arguments and expression (Papacharissi, 2002; Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001; Rheingold, 2007;

Bruns, 2007; Benkler, 2006). This research uses the work of Yochai Benkler (2006) as the main theorist, based on the context of his networked public sphere, because it relates more to this research in the sense that Facebook offers a more public and 'democratic' space to those South African publics with access, which enables them to communicate their observations and their viewpoints on Nkandla to many others without the control of media owners. In addition, it is not as easily corruptible by money as are the mass media.

In this research, Facebook has also shown that it provides the South African publics with access, freedom of speech, especially that of a politically critical nature, which can be seen in discussions on Nkandla. The networked public sphere theoretical framework draws on the premise that low-cost networked technologies provide individuals a space to interact with their democracy and to experience their roles as publics in participating in political activities and that this applies not only to the sharing of information and opinion, but also to engaging in communities and in collective action. Using social media tools, individuals are free to observe, report, question and debate, not only in principle, but in actual capability. Networked public spheres also serve as watchdogs over society on a peer-production model. Although the Internet and social media can be censored or even shut down in some cases, it has still proven harder for governments to control communications, due to the highly distributed networked architecture; hence, it provides a distinguished set of potential benefits as a public sphere (Benkler, 2007).

Benkler's contributions on the networked public sphere have made his fellow theorists, such as Rheingold (2007), recommend him as the leader of a new post-Habermasian era of research on the Internet. Through his literature, Benkler has contributed to the new knowledge about the Internet as a public sphere, particularly in his work on the unified public sphere (Geiger, 2009). What differentiates Benkler from most previous readers of Habermas is his acknowledgement of the role of the public sphere in facilitating collective will/opinion formation between the otherwise incommensurable life worlds or discourse communities (Geiger, 2009: 18). His book, The *Wealth of Networks* (2007), has been characterised as taking up the Habermasian lineage in a new, digital age (Geiger, 2009). Benkler's re-forming of the Habermasian public sphere into the networked public sphere is based on what he terms 'coordinate effects', the spontaneously-emergent macro-properties a network exhibits simply due to the ability of any user to interact with any other user. Benkler's key argument is that the mass-mediated public sphere must give

way to the networked public sphere (one mediated through computer networks instead of the modern media forms of newspaper and television); the reason being that the mass mediated public sphere has systematically failed to provide people with an authentic, democratic space (Benkler, 2006).

> Filtering, accreditation, synthesis, and salience are created through a system of peer review by information affinity groups, topical or interest based. These groups filter the observations and opinions of an enormous range of people, and transmit those that pass local peer review to broader groups and ultimately to the polity more broadly, without recourse to market-based points of control over the information flow. Intense interest and engagement by small groups that share common concerns, rather than lowest-common denominator interest in wide groups that are largely alienated from each other, is what draws attention to statements and makes them more visible. This makes the emerging networked public sphere more responsive to intensely held concerns of a much wider swath of the population than the mass media were capable of seeing, and creates a communications process that is more resistant to corruption by money (ibid: 242).

Seemingly, one of the key features of the public sphere from a limited view of the Habermasian vision of society could certainly be achieved through the Internet's transportation of personal stories about the effects of politics from the people's opinion in their life world to the political system (Geiger, 2009). Additionally, that the Internet has produced a significant number of spaces that enable non-coercive discourse is not sufficient; Benkler is also one of the first to seriously tackle the issue of the synthesis of public opinion across the entire web (ibid: 18). Benkler sees the 'emergence of low-cost networked technologies, chiefly the Internet, as ushering in an entirely new type of networked public sphere with far-reaching implications' (Benkler, 2006: 270).

According to Benkler, with a networked public sphere, individuals are provided a space to interact with their democracy and experience their roles as publics. Using social media-based tools, everyone with access is free to observe, report, question and debate, not only in principle, but in actual capability (ibid: 272). Additionally, a networked public sphere serves as a watchdog over society on a peer-production model (ibid: 265). Thus, Benkler's networked public sphere could perhaps be best understood as distinct to the previously mass-mediated public sphere. The highly distributed networked architecture of the Internet makes it harder to be controlled by the government, as opposed to that of traditional media (ibid: 266). Since the initial publication of Benkler's book in 2005, it has quickly become the *de facto* theoretical text for those celebrating the demise of the mass media at the hands of the Internet.

A number of theorists, including Rheingold (2007) and Bruns (2007), have cited Benkler's work in their refutations of Habermas's 2006 criticisms of the Internet. Benkler's view is shared by Castells (2009), who calls the society that we live in the network society. Castells argues that the network society is characterised by mass self-communication, which he defines as 'a new form of interactive communication, characterised by the capacity of sending multiple messages to multiple receiver social movements having a greater chance to enter the public sphere due to its autonomy from the mainstream media and its horizontal structure' (Castells, 2009: 55). Social movements can distribute their images and messages which can be disseminated via multiple outlets, ranging from social media to the mainstream media by means of mass self-communication. This way, social and political change can be endorsed by social movements and insurgent politics, even 'if they start from a subordinate position in institutional power, financial resources or symbolic legitimacy' (Castells, 2009: 302). Although Facebook is not free from certain factors that cost access such as market commodisation, the South African publics with access are able to use Facebook and freely discuss the *Nkandlagate* saga, as Facebook is free from South African government censorship.

Although some critical theorists like Lincoln Dahlberg (2001) have some reservations about the Internet's capabilities of having the full potential of a public sphere, they agree that the role played by the Internet is facilitating more open inter-discursive contestation (Dahlberg, 2007: 841). In support of this view, Dahlberg gives an example of the Minnesota e-Democracy (www.e-democracy. org)[60] project which attempted to facilitate online debate between diverse voices. The Minnesota e-Democracy achieved its rationalist consensus-orientated deliberative model by structuring a rational form of deliberation through its rules, management and design. This online achievement is behind cyber activist or 'hacktivist' methods, which

> …bring excluded discourse to attention in the 'mainstream' public sphere, methods including email spamming, denial of service attacks on Internet servers, site defacements that leave behind protest messages and parody sites diverting attention to counter-discursive spaces. These actions enable exclusions of dominant discourse to be confronted in ways that are not ignored as easily as 'reasonable' discussion can be. Such activism is seen largely as illegitimate ('partisan' and 'unreasonable') by consensus-oriented deliberate democrats (Dahlberg, 2009: 841)

[60] The Minnesota E-Democracy is a project setup in 1994 which 'has helped foster an "online interactive public sphere" where people deliberate upon issues relating to Minnesota politics' (Dahlberg, 2001).

In South Africa, characterised by social-economic inequalities which are the basis for the digital divide that create exclusions and the focus of this research, the Internet becomes a public sphere due to its capability to allow many people to use it. Many people – such as citizen journalists, web-based interest groups and other organisations – use the mass communication medium to explore and use the information available on the Internet. These groups are often ignored by mainstream media and 'the Internet thus reinforces the idea that new media can open up new channels of communication and instigate new forms of public discourse and ultimately public opinion' (Debatim, 2008: 65-66). It is for such Internet capabilities that almost all opposition parties in South Africa are able to make their voices heard by their supporters (Freedom House, 2015). Social media has the potential to form a public sphere for the dissemination of counter hegemonic discourse, or to mobilise public opinion outside the centralised authoritative state control.

However, in South Africa mass media continues to play a central role in the public sphere, as print and broadcast media still enjoy large audiences. Furthermore, mass media have also embraced the networked media phenomenon, not just by delivering news through new media channels, but also having large media corporations controlling many of the most popular social media platforms (Salanova, 2012). Certainly, Benkler's networked public sphere, which is more related to this research, remains a critical alternative space for massive public discourse; hence presenting significant improvements over one dominated by commercial mass media. Because of the dual nature in which the multiplicity of autonomous discursive collectives is united and synthesised by uncoordinated coordinate effects, the Internet has allowed the citizenry to perform the only task that matters in such a conception of the Habermasian public sphere: giving publics a space to form their own opinions through mutual discourse, with little or no coercion or manipulation by the corporate capital (Benkler, 2006). In the specific case of *Nkandlagate,* this research uses Benkler's theoretical concepts to examine how South Africans with access to internet have demonstrated their democratic rights on Facebook as a networked public sphere to articulate their views based on what the ruling ANC and the major opposition EFF are saying concerning *Nkandlagate.*

3.4. CONCEPTS USED IN THIS RESEARCH

Benkler (2006) portrays the networked public sphere as an online space where members of society can cooperate, present political opinions and collectively serve as watchdogs over society; all through an online, cooperative, peer-produced model that is less subject to state authority than the traditional media. Ideally, the networked public sphere is 'a system where anyone can participate and where a system of collective filtration highlights issues of greatest concern and that warrant collective action or recognition' (Alexanyan et al., 2012: 6). This system allows for a shift towards more bottom-up than top-down agenda setting.

3.4.1. Democracy

Amy Troolin[61] defines democracy as the type of government or political system ruled by publics. In a democracy, people who are members of a society (publics) hold some level of power and authority and they actively participate in the political or decision-making process of their government. Democracy has been selected as a concept to look at closely in this research and it concerns the freedom that people have in order to participate in political matters relating to party politics or a political system as determined by the voting public, via the Internet; in this case Facebook. Democracy using the Internet is what is also termed as 'electronic democracy' (Street, 2001: 214). Advocates of electronic democracy argue that the 'Internet stimulates the growth of macro public spheres', since one segment of the world population uses the Internet to 'generate controversies' (Keane, 2000: 67) about matters of common concern with other members of the virtual community. The Internet has contributed to greater knowledge and equality for those with access (Street, 2001: 217). This research will look at Facebook as providing the forum for discussion or interaction between political parties and publics. Using Facebook, publics can exercise their vote, deliberate on public policy or participate directly' (ibid: 218). Keane (2000: 67) suggests that websites like Facebook provide infrastructure for deliberation, which may eventually lead to real actions. This research uses Benkler's networked public sphere to make some findings regarding democracy and public sphere.

[61] Amy has MA degrees in History, English, and Theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville. She has taught college English and religious education classes, and written a lot on English, Literature, Language Art and marketing. She currently works as a freelance writer.

3.4.2. Networked public sphere

This research focuses on Facebook as a networked public sphere due to its highly developed modes of computer-mediated communication. As of the fourth quarter of 2015, Facebook had 1.59 billion monthly active users globally, according to the Facebook 2015 Report. Also, 968 million people logged onto Facebook daily in June 2015, which represents a 17% increase over a year. A total of 1.3 million pieces of content are shared on Facebook by people every minute of every day. Among social media networks, Facebook is the most popular and influential social networking website in South Africa, with 12 million monthly active users (those which have logged in to Facebook during the last 30 days) – according to Facebook 2015 First Quarter Reports 2015 results (Facebook, 2015). The most popular Facebook activity is instant messaging; hence, these statistics represent Facebook as a contributor to a healthy public sphere. In this research, Facebook is viewed in a positive light as the reviver of the public sphere, since it enables networks of individuals from the 'local' to participate in a network of the 'global', where everyone with access functions as a multitude without such boundaries as race, age, class and gender. Facebook in South Africa will also be discussed in this research as 'a social space in which speakers may express their views to others and who in turn respond to them and raise their own opinions and concerns' (Bohman 2004: 133). It could be suggested that the political engagement of South African publics through Facebook's computer-mediated communication in this research reveals that there has been a revival of the public sphere online where the data about Nkandla is scrutinised.

3.4.3. Watchdog

The concept of watchdog in relation to the media concerns how the media is supposed to serve as a controller of powerful sectors of society, including leaders within the private and public domains (Forbes, 2005). Media are considered a 'fourth estate' and as a powerful 'watchdog', which is used for revealing mistreatments of state authority; in particular, protecting the democratic and constitutional rights of publics (Stone & O'Donnell, 1997). Journalists are expected by the general public to guard the public interest and to protect it from incompetence, corruption and misinformation. However, although the media often promotes transparency, especially in autocracies, journalists often face serious constraints and obstacles in this regard due to lack of editorial independence. Critics of mass media (newspapers, radio, TV) argue that

the mass media have usually worked under certain kinds of influence, such as the government or advertisers, and hence the available empirical evidence suggests that they have been unable to fully fulfill their watchdog role. This is because the mass media is more easily censored and controlled than the Internet, although under the same influences. Several examples are illustrated in this research about how publics have come together online to push back against abuses of the state or powerful corporate interests. This research also identifies how Facebook is being used by South African publics in fulfilling the watchdog role to address problems of common concerns, such as *Nkandlagate.* This research argues that the South African publics with access to internet and journalists are now playing more of a watchdog role than before through the opportunities which Facebook presents.

3.4.4. Public opinion

In political science, the concept of public opinion refers to the aggregate of public attitudes or beliefs about government and its political systems (Bianco & Canon, 2013). The term was introduced by James Madison: a democratic government needs to have strong and knowledgeable publics who hold educated opinions that could be shared and expressed (ibid). Active, knowledgeable publics could then participate in their government while also informing others of current issues. Public opinion is considered to be the factor that guides an indirect democratic government and is considered a dynamic part of today's democratic government; it has the power and influence to shape the government in new ways. This research deploys the concepts by Habermas and Benkler to discuss how Facebook enabled a public sphere through public discussions, debates and sharing opinions on *Nkandlagate.*

3.5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Benkler's networked public suits this research well, because Facebook as a public sphere in South Africa shows a shift from a mass-media public sphere controlled by a small number of commercial markets to a forum that is accessible to and generated by individuals who are educated and well-to-do, increasing freedom. These individuals enjoy participating in creating information and knowledge on *Nkandlagate.* The South African publics with access to internet have made use of the Facebook networked public sphere to communicate their

observations and viewpoints on Nkandla to many others without any hindrances. On Facebook, the South African publics have freedom of speech of a politically-critical nature, as can be seen through their discussions on *Nkandlagate.*

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

This study takes the form of qualitative research design. Qualitative research, also referred to as interpretivism, is a broad research method approach to the study of social action (Babbie & Mouton: 2001). Hence, qualitative research is also referred to as research that is interpretative and that constructs qualitative aspects of communication experiences (Du Plooy, 2009: 30). The qualitative research method differs from quantitative research in terms of its approach to the setting, aims of the research, research strategy and notion of objectivity.

This method was chosen because the aim of this research is to study human beings from the perspective of social actors. In this research, the researcher was interested in studying human beings from the perspective of social actors with the primary goal of understanding rather than explaining human behaviour (Babbie & Mouton: 2001). The qualitative tradition in media 'explores the ways that people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings through language, sound, imagery, personal style and social rituals' (Deacon et al., 2007: 5).

Using the qualitative method, the researcher was able to study events as they occurred and was able to understand why and how members of the South African publics were engaging themselves in the manner they did on posts made by politicians on Facebook pages about the *Nkandlagate*, rather than just reconstructing the events (Babbie & Mouton: 2001). Qualitative research is especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys. The method implies taking an insider approach to participation in the life and culture of respondent and researcher in the joint construction of subjective data (Henn et al., 2005).

Qualitative research enables one to acquire in-depth information pertaining to a topic under investigation, especially in inductive reasoning (Du Plooy, 2009: 33). Qualitative research also assisted the researcher in ascertaining consistency and determining popular belief about

Facebook being a public sphere which has, to some extent, contributed to democracy through freedom of speech (ibid: 22). Qualitative research uses the strategy of analytic inductive method in which theory is generated from the data and its explanation is achieved through the description of social meanings which are interpretive (Henn et al., 2005).

The main focus of this research was to understand social actions in terms of specific context, rather than attempt to generalise to the universal; an approach commonly used in quantitative research (ibid). Using qualitative research methodology, this research has been able to provide thick, rich and detailed descriptions of specific events regarding *Nkandlagate* discussions that were taking place on Facebook. This research was accomplished using critical discourse analysis by exploring qualitative aspects of the kinds of *Nkandlagate* discursive statements made on Facebook.

4.2. SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

This research is concerned with a specific issue: *Nkandlagate*. Therefore, purposive sampling, also known as selective or judgmental sampling, has been used based on the Facebook discussions on *Nkandlagate* in 2015. Purposeful sampling is used when a researcher needs to identify and select information cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Tongco, 2007). Purposefully, two Facebook pages were selected: those of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC is the ruling party to which the President, who is accused as the major beneficiary of *Nkandlagate*, belongs; and the Economic Freedom Fighters is one of the most influential opposition parties in South Africa, which has been at the forefront in fighting President Jacob Zuma and his administration around corruption, particularly surrounding the *Nkandlagate.* The EFF also facilitated demonstrations countrywide against the Zuma administration to indicate their' dissatisfaction over the decision that Zuma was not going to pay back the money spent on his Nkandla residence renovations.

Three posts were selected from each Facebook page, based on their validity on the topic in question and their popularity which was judged by how many people liked, shared and commented on the posts. From each post, 10 comments were selected for analysis. Their

selection was also based on their popularity, depending on how many people liked these comments. Specific extracts from the 10 comments were used for the analysis based on their different descriptive interpretations. Age group was not considered in this research, as it is difficult to determine age for each Facebook user, although the age group within which the most users in South Africa reside starts from 13, according to the study on gender balance by Fuseware and World Wide Worx (2015). Gender and race were also not considered in this research, as this research's focus is on the South African publics in general, provided they were Facebook users and were able to comment on the posts in question. Given South Africa's political economy, these attributes are crucial in determining who is being studied and thus also their social and economic positionality which, in turn, fundamentally shaped ideological and discursive 'location'.

It should be noted that this research is not fully representative of all members of the South African publics; it is just aimed at giving a snapshot on how Facebook could be used in controversial issues affecting publics. It is also worth noting that this research concentrated on what the two political parties were only posting on Facebook, and not in other modes of their communication. Facebook has been chosen for its flexibility in extracting data and for the fact that it is the top social media platform currently used by most South Africans as stated by the Facebook First Quarter 2015 report and the *We are Social* (2015) report. In addition, Facebook, as part of social media, has enabled people to express their views freely without stiff restrictions as would have been the case with traditional media that can be restricted by government control of content.

4.3. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This research made use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a methodological approach. CDA offers a theoretical framework for the study of social issues through analysis of discourse**.** **'**Discourse' is a popular term that is used in a variety of ways and in various contexts, one of which is social studies (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). The methodology was chosen owing to social media – the main source of data in this research – being a discursive system. Discursive systems encompass multiple views, also known as universes of discourse that manifest in

communicative acts inside social media, within which actors negotiate shared meanings through dialogue and interpretation (Strauss et al., 1964). Social media is structured in such a way that it allows for dialogue or conversation between the writers and the readers, which is not the case with traditional media or even websites, since the one who updates the sites may not interact with those who read items on the website (Dickey & Lewis, 2010: 140). It is through these dialogic exchanges that discourse actions such as relationship building, social situation development and power imbalances can potentially affect or be catalysts to social issues.

Social movements are examples of social issues influenced or initiated by the discourse within and/or the structure of social media with a goal to empower the weak. This empowerment to textual discourse has been enabled by social media among its participants, with the most recent and recognised one being the Egyptian revolution. By engaging in discourse through text on Facebook, people were able to organise protests to the extent of shaking the government until it 'shut down the Internet and cell phone networks across the country' (Nelson, 2012: 21). The case of the South African *Nkandlagate* demonstrations which took place in August 2015, as described earlier in this research, is another example of social movements. The South African publics, through contentious performances, displays and campaigns, made collective claims on the ANC that Zuma must pay back the money spent in the renovations of his Nkandla residence. Social media, in this case Facebook, became one of the tools used by those who had access to maintain sustained challenges against Zuma. When this research was being completed, Zuma was ordered by the South African Constitutional Court to pay back the money. Thus, as Frederick Taylor (1856-1915) states, words by their descriptions can form reality.

There are several approaches to CDA, including Michel Foucault's (1970) approach, Jürgen Habermas's (1984) approach and Norman Fairclough's (1989) approach. However, due to its flexibility as a CDA approach, this research uses Fairclough's approach in providing multiple points of analytic entry. The most important thing about Fairclough's approach is that it enables one to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositioning, their sequencing and their layout.

Fairclough's (1989) work in the early to mid-1990s was focused on describing a method for analysing discourse. Initially, Fairclough (1989; 1992a; 1995c) identified his approach to a

'critical language study', a study of language in which he reviewed a range of mainstream approaches, including linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, conversation analysis and discourse analysis. His argument was that although all of these areas had something to offer language study, they also displayed limitations for a critical perspective (Fairclough, 1989; 1995c). He pointed out criticisms such as positivist aspects of sociolinguistics, the individualism promoted in pragmatics and disregarding context in conversation analysis. In his attempt to address these shortfalls, he cited his approach as an alternative orientation as opposed to just another method of studying language discourse (Fairclough, 1989: 10), which he named a social theory of discourse (Fairclough, 1992a: 92). This was aimed at bringing together linguistically-oriented discourse analysis and social and political thought relevant to discourse and language. According to Fairclough (1989), a close analysis of language contributed to understandings about power relations and ideology in discourse.

However, during the early 1990s, Fairclough (1992a: 1) developed a 'method of language analysis' which is both theoretically adequate and practically usable. Fairclough's work offers methodological advice for undertaking CDA, although he termed it a guide and not a blueprint, and claimed it to be prescriptive (Fairclough, 1989: 110). Fairclough's (1989; 1995) model for CDA comprises three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse which have been presented by Hilary Janks (1996) in her article *Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool.* These processes are:

1) The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts);
2) The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/ speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects;
3) The socio-historical conditions which govern these processes.

Each of these dimensions, according to Fairclough, requires a different kind of analysis:

1) Text analysis (description);
2) Processing analysis (interpretation);
3) Social analysis (explanation).

It does not matter which kind of analysis one begins with, as long as in the end they are all included and are shown to be mutually explanatory. It is in the interconnections that the analyst finds the interesting patterns and disjunctions that need to be described, interpreted and explained.

Therefore, CDA is the most appropriate method to analyse the discussions about *Nkandlagate* that were taking place on Facebook political party pages.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. ANALYSING THE TEXTS

This research uses unedited text of the posts and comments on Facebook. One posting is analysed for the sake of brevity. In the context of this study, the research uses four discursive genre types: 1) Corporate discursive genre (discourses that imply mutual agreement); 2) Pragmatism discursive (discourses indicating practical considerations); 3) Adversary discursive (these refer to disagreeing views) and 4) detachment discursive (which refer to neutral discursive genres).

POST ONE

The first three posts to be analysed will be those of the EFF[62] Facebook pages.

The first post was posted on 6 July and attracted 141 Likes, 50 Comments and 24 Shares.

EXTRACTS FROM THE POST:

EFF STATEMENT ON CONTINUING PATHOLOGICAL LIES BY NATHI NHLEKO IN DEFENCE OF NKANDLA CORRUPTION

> *[The Minister has lied about cattle kraals and chicken runs being 'security features'. He has lied about the total cost of security features in Nkandla being less than they actually are. He has lied about the Public Protector not finding that government built any houses for President Zuma and his family. He has lied about not knowing why and who approved the construction of the village consisting of 21 three-bedroomed houses at the Nkandla compound at an over-inflated cost of R6.5 million each. The Minister has committed his office and the police ministry to pathological lies and the defence of corruption instead of*

[62] Economic Freedom Fighters Facebook page. (2015). [Online]. Available: https://www.facebook.com/economicfreedomstruggle/ [02/12/2015].

upholding the rule of law and ensuring that crooks like President Zuma are brought to book].

[Nhleko in defending multimillion Rand corruption in Nkandla claimed that a so-called 'firepool' was also constructed at the private residence of the former President Nelson Mandela in Qunu. The Mandela granddaughters have dismissed Nhleko's utterances as pure lies…]

5.1.1. Analysis 1: Post

The descriptions derived from the first EFF post include: Deception, truthfulness and determination. In this case, deception means relaying information to people that is not true in a way that would make them believe it as true for personal gain. Truthfulness means providing information to justify something after some enquiries. Determination means making a firm decision to make sure that the problem in question is resolved.

The EFF feels that Zuma's administration has been deceiving South African publics through their numerous lies pertaining to the Nkandla saga, including the cattle kraals and chicken runs being security features, total cost of security features, the Public Protector's findings, being unaware of reasons and those responsible for the approval of the Nkandla construction, as well as lying and defending corruption instead of protecting its culprit; namely President Zuma.

In their statement, there is seemingly – although non-empirical – truthful information through their confirmation with Mandela's grandchildren that Nhleko's allegation that a firepool was also constructed at the private residence of the former President Nelson Mandela in Qunu was a lie.

The EFF is determined not to rest until Zuma pays back every cent he spent on the renovation of Nkandla, by consistently reminding Zuma about it wherever the EFF party officials meet him. Minister Nhlanhla is being urged by the EFF to assist Zuma in paying back the money.

In their speech, the EFF seem to be fighting for a better South Africa in which government officials should refrain from corruption and lies. #Zuma must pay back the money indicates a pragmatism genre type of discourse.

By disseminating information on Facebook about the Nkandla saga which concerns the ruling South African government, the EFF indicate a direct form of democracy (Maduz, 2010: 1). The EFF is directly and actively participating in the Nkandla political issue and making their stand known to the South African publics that Zuma must pay back the money. In this case, the EFF is engaging in participatory journalism (Bowman & Willis, 2003) which entails the use of information technologies to both empower individual citizens and promote democratic ideals through the spread of information (Exoo, 2010). There is a possibility of 'electronic democracy' (Street, 2001: 214) as demonstrated by the EFF, because Facebook is free from strong South African government regulations (Exoo, 2010). From their post, the EFF are also seen as a watchdog for the South African publics (Zhao, 1998), to some extent replacing the role of traditional media as in Africa traditional media are said to be failing to investigate the financial activities of large companies and governments (ibid). African journalists have found it difficult to undertake evocative long form investigative reporting due to commercial adverts and government propaganda (Rodrigues & Schiffin, 2015: 124). By informing the South African publics on Facebook about issues surrounding *Nkandlagate,* including all the ongoing government lies pertaining to Nkandla expenditures, the EFF, from this research's point of view, is seen to be playing a watchdog role although some might look at it as playing party politics taking advantage of social media as a 'new' tool. On the other hand, the EFF uses Facebook to disseminate information because Facebook offers a more public and democratic space that is easily accessible to South African publics with access to Facebook. In this case, Facebook has to some extent, although not fully, solved the problem of having limited political knowledge for ordinary South African citizens with access to Facebook, which has been hindering their capacity to get involved in the process of deliberation (Street, 2001: 217) as the government cannot control the flow information on Facebook (Benkler, 2006).

EXTRACTS IN RESPONSE TO THE EFF POST BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLICS

> *[He must PAY BACK THE MONEY! That has benefited unduly, South Africa is suffering from high rate of unemployment and is also suffering to pay for young people out there to enfeather their studies. but Zuma, Nhleko they should brought to book.]*

[Where ever we meet him we gonna shout pay back the money! On the street, shebeen, outside the country and even in the rallies of the ANC, wil shout pay back the money!]

[I just saw zuma's head entering te toilet door as i was peeing,,,…' 'The buttocks defence force is running out of ammunition….Now all they have is their bums]
[he will not pay]

5.1.2. Analysis 2: Comments

Descriptions established from the comments made to the above post include: disquiet, willpower and indecency. Disquiet in this case means a feeling of worry or unease. Willpower in this case is the same as to be determined, as discussed above. Indecency means using inappropriate words to explain a situation or describe someone.

The South African publics' comments indicate South African publics' disquiet about the current poor status of their country with a high rate of unemployment and a poor education system. South African publics are demonstrating their willpower to make sure that Zuma must pay back the money at all costs. They are prepared to shout at him to pay back the money wherever they meet him, be it on the street, in shebeens or at rallies. While there is a common concern about Zuma's maladministration activities in South Africa, some of the South African publics show signs of indecency in their approach to try and rectify the problem; for example, statements like, *'I just saw zuma's head entering te toilet door as i was peeing,,,…the buttocks defence force is running out of ammunition….Now all they have is their bums'*. The words used in this statement, such as buttocks and bums, are not appropriate because they are not in line with what needs to be discussed pertaining to *Nkandlagate.*

There are three types of discursive genres in the comments made: 'cooperative' discourse: first, from their comments, most of the South African publics mutually agree that Zuma must pay back the money. This is also a 'pragmatism' type of discourse. There are also some 'detachment' forms of discourse in the comments which show neutrality; for example, *'he will not pay'.* In this case, it is not clear whether the writer supports the views of the EFF or the ANC. It is difficult to know the reason behind the above statement – whether 'he will not pay' is due to Zuma's adamancy not to pay, or that he is not supposed to pay back the money. However, there is a

mutual agreement with the EFF post by the South African publics on Facebook that Zuma must pay back the money.

With Facebook, South African publics with access to Facebook are able to participate in controversial political matters affecting their country. There is an indication that Facebook provides infrastructure for deliberation, which may eventually lead to real actions (Keane, 2000: 67). The people who are information contributors might not be aware of journalistic values; hence the use of indecent words as seen in the comments. As seen in the above comments, Facebook is helpful in the creation of knowledgeable South African publics through public discussions, debates and sharing opinions on *Nkandlagate.* There is a public attitude or belief about Zuma's maladministration of the South African government (Bianco & Canon, 2013). The public opinion by the South African publics is that Zuma must pay back the money. Facebook also provides the South African publics with access to Facebook, a social space where they are able to discuss, share and develop opinions on political issues (Benkler, 2006), free from the government control.

POST TWO

The EFF's second post was made on 4 October 2015, with 350 Likes, 90 Comments and 75 Shares.

EXTRACTS FROM THE POST

EFF WELCOMES THE CONCOURT DECISION TO HAVE PUBLIC PROTECTOR JOIN THE PAY BACK THE MONEY CASE

> *[The EFF welcomes the Constitutional Court decision to have the Public Protector join in on the EFF case to have Zuma #PayBackTheMoney. This decision is significant…]*
>
> *[The EFF's prayer to the constitutional court is simple. The prayer is that Zuma must be ordered to #PayBackTheMoney improperly used in the upgrade of his home in Nkandla. This case will restore the dignity and respectability to the office of the Public Protector]*

[Zuma has done everything in his power to avoid paying back the money. This includes using ministers like Nhleko to fabricate a path out of the responsibility to pay]

[and many who sought to raise it in parliament and allowed his ministers to also attack all who raise it, including the office of the Public Protector]

[The judges ask direct question and seek direct answers; when they say when you are paying back the money, they do not expect you to say who must pay it. They say this because they would have already concluded that person they ask the question, must pay]

[The EFF calls on all South Africans to also throw their support in this historic fight against a corrupt president who has no regard for public resources]

[The struggle against the abuse of state resources and corruption by politicians, their families and friends will indeed be advanced by a thousand steps]

5.1.3. Analysis 3: Post

The main descriptions identified in the second post include: Satisfaction, patriotism, obstinacy, honesty, humor, persuasion and determination. Satisfaction here means having a fulfillment on one's wishes or expectations and the pleasure derived from this. Patriotism in this case means demonstrating vigorous support for one's country. Obstinacy means being stubborn not wanting to listen to other people's views. Honesty means truthfulness. Humor means something amusing. Persuasion means to induce someone to do something through reasoning or argument.

The EFF is satisfied by the Constitutional Court's decision to have the Public Protector join in the EFF case in attempting to make Zuma pay back the money. In their determination to have Zuma pay back the money, the EFF have gone to the extent of using prayers for the Constitutional Court to order Zuma to pay back the money. It is the EFF's wish to have a South Africa in which the public Protector's Office is respected by the government and able to operate independently; this could be achieved by the Constitutional Court ordering Zuma to pay back the money.

In their communication, the EFF indicated that Zuma is a stubborn president, as he is trying everything not to respond to the people's outcry to pay back the money, including fabrication of

stories surrounding the Nkandla issue by using ministers like Nhleko and also attacking those who raise the issue in parliament, not sparing the Public Protector's office. With the above justifications on the said strategies used by Zuma in order not to pay back the money, the EFF seem to be providing truthful information to the South African publics.

In their post, the EFF somehow takes a humorous approach; for example, by saying: '*The judges ask direct question and seek direct answers; when they say when you are paying back the money, they do not expect you to say who must pay it. They say this because they would have already concluded that person they ask the question, must pay'.*

The EFF speech is seemingly persuading South African publics to unite in the fight against Zuma they are calling for all South Africans to unite in the fight against corruption. To show their determination that they will not give up on Zuma, further steps will be take until he pays that money back. The EFF is basically requesting the Constitution Court to give orders to Zuma to #PayBackTheMoney which was improperly used in the upgrade of his home in Nkandla. The pragmatism discourse part of this post, as addressed by the EFF, is that Zuma must pay back the money, as he would be instructed to do so by the court. The EFF is again playing its watchdog role (Zhao, 1998) to make sure that the South African government operates in accordance with the Constitution. There should be no corruption amongst government officials and the misused public funds must be paid back. According to the South African Constitution, the Public Protector's office should operate in favour of the needs of the South African publics by exposing all corruption by the government.

As the opposition parties like the EFF are able to air their views about *Nkandlagate* on Facebook and share them to the South African publics, it indicates freedom of expression that the networked public sphere has brought to the South African publics in order to participate in political matters without necessarily being threatened by the government (Street, 2001; Benkler, 2006). This is different from other vehicles such as traditional media, as these are mostly used by governments of countries to maintain a monopoly on public conversations.

EXTRACTS IN RESPONSE TO THE EFF's SECOND POST BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLICS

[I respect our judicial system, it was very clear to everyone that public protector's office was under attack because of the findings she and her office made against mr Zuma on the nkanda scandal, they tried all things under the sun to weaken that office, big up to the public protector and her team for not succumbing to the ANC and their tricks]

[We are the only party who speak the truth].

[The majority in parliament, point of orders, bouncers, presiding officers etc. cannot protect him this time....]

[Keep up the good work guys to hold executive to account….] [I smell victory in the forthcoming case of the pay back money as per PP report in Concourt in February next year…]

[JZmustfall…]

[…..I must tell you straight that you guys are champions. You are doing more than excellent job. Big up to you guys]

[…all this is done by the very same ruling party who sings transparency...mxm!!!pay back the money....]

5.1.4. Analysis 4: Comments

This research identified these descriptions from the above comments: Contentment, optimism and grit. Contentment means expressing happiness and satisfaction. Optimism here means being hopeful and confident about the future. Grit means showing courage or determination.

South African publics indicate a sense of contentment with regard to their country's judicial system. They are pleased with the judicial system for their judgment towards the Public Protector, as they are aware how her office has been under attack by the ANC after its findings against Zuma and are in support of Madonsela for her stand against Zuma's corruption activities. Meanwhile, some EFF members proudly feel that they are the only truthful party. South African

publics on Facebook are full of expectations that in court Zuma would have to appear alone where there would be no ANC officials and bouncers to defend him; he would then be in a better position to explain himself to the general public regarding *Nkandlagate.* Some of them are very optimistic about victory coming their way in February, following their outcry over Zuma and *Nkandlagate*. Others really want Zuma out of the way. They are looking forward to Zuma's downfall. Some South Africa publics are expressing disappointment, as it is ironic to see that this is happening to a party that preaches transparency. Through the diversity of views offered on these comments by various South Africans, there is the universal determination that Zuma must pay back the money.

The two identified discursive genres in these comments are: cooperative discourse – most South African publics are not amused about the corruption taking place in the ANC, particularly on the expenditure of taxpayers' money for the renovation of Nkandla residence – and pragmatism discourse – their opinion is that Zuma must face the court and pay back their money. With the freedom of participation on Facebook, it is very difficult for the ANC as a ruling government to clarify themselves and convince South Africans that they are not in the wrong, especially having the opposition EFF party there as watchdogs, disseminating information to have their part heard to justify how poorly the ANC is conducting itself as a ruling party. This is where democracy in the networked public sphere benefits citizens. Information filtration is exclusively in their hands and they can use their subjective judgment to know who is speaking the truth and who is not and make informed decisions. Using Benkler's argument, it would seem that the ANC are finding it difficult to control information flow from their opponents on Facebook, a characteristic that makes networked public sphere a true alternative public sphere in a democratic world.

POST THREE

This post was written on 13 October, attracting 171 Likes, 54 Comments and 46 Shares.

EXTRACTS FROM THE POST:

EFF STATEMENT ON ACCUSATIONS THAT PUBLIC PROTECTOR IS PARTIAL IN JOINING PAY BACK THE MONEY CASE

[The EFF condemns the ANC's lazy logic that the Public Protector's decision to join the #PayBackTheMoney case means that she is not impartial… The Public Protector has not joined the EFF, her office is not taking a membership of the EFF. The Public Protector is joining a court case, a legal matter that finds its genesis from her report, investigation and remedial action]

[We call upon South Africans to also join in by supporting this case, because it is the case seeking to recover the money belonging to the people]

[There is no point of order, parliamentary ad hoc committee or bouncers who can stop Zuma from facing the truth that he must with speed, pay back the money that was unduly spent in his private home in Nkandla]

5.1.5. Analysis 5: Post

The descriptions identified in this research for the above posts are: Truthfulness, persuasion, determination and patriotism.

The EFF states that, although the Public Protector joined the EFF court case against *Nkandlagate,* this does not make her a member of the EFF. This is seen in their statement. The EFF is persuading all South Africans to join in the fight of *Nkandlagate* by telling them that the spent money that needs to be recovered belongs to them. The EFF is determined that Zuma will have to face the truth without anyone or anything to protect him. The EFF is of the opinion that Zuma must pay back the money immediately.

The pragmatism discourse in this post is that Zuma must pay back the money. The EFF is using Facebook strategies to express their opinions; hence, ideally exerting influence in relation to the South African political and economic management over *Nkandlagate.* This is part of direct democracy (Maduz, 2010: 1). Although traditional media has always kept track of the government's corruption charges, here the EFF is seen to continue persuading the government to pay back the money and are informing the South African publics on the *Nkandlagate* updates. As watchdogs, the EFF is telling the Zuma administration that they are alert to whatever the government is doing that might divert the EFF demands that Zuma should pay back the money. With this post on the EFF Facebook page, most South African publics are aware that they can all

join in the fight against corruption without fear, more than ever before. This is in tandem with Benkler's theory of the networked public sphere.

PUBLIC COMMENTS MADE ON THE EFF's THIRD POST BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLICS

[We need that money he must pay it back we knw that the ANC will defend him coz they knw if the president is going down they also going down]

[we are aware of their tricks and we are focused on the issue not the side issues which the Anc wish to achieve.....we are now familiar with their tactics and is no longer holding water any more]

[Come 09 February, Zuma will be appearing in the court of law over his scandal for the first time since he became the State President]

[this problem is not for EFF they must stop thinking like animals this matter is for all south Africa. He also said he is going to fight corruption (NGC) he must lead by example]

[Remind me again why i ever voted for the ANC]

[Zuma must pay back the money]

5.1.6. Analysis 6: Comments

This research identified the following descriptions from the above comments: Sagaciousness, sanguinity, devotion, remorseful and fortitude. Sagaciousness in this case means judging the situation to make a good decision. Sanguinity means optimism. Devotion means patriotism. Remorseful means to feel sorry or regretting. Fortitude is same as determination.

The South African publics are wise to note that Zuma's followers are protecting him – they are aware of the consequences once Zuma leaves, as they would have to follow suit. Nevertheless, the money needs to be paid back. South African publics are also saying that they are more knowledgeable about all the ANC tricks to try and fool them and that they are wise enough not to fall for such tricks. There is an indication of hope and confidence amongst South African publics

that on 9 February, Zuma will definitely appear before the law over *Nkandlagate* for the first time since he became the State President.

South African publics on Facebook are very concerned about what goes on in their country; to them the Nkandla problem is not an EFF problem as the ANC is stating, but it is a common concern amongst South African publics. Besides, Zuma promised South African publics that he would fight corruption and he must stick to his word. Others are even regretting that they voted for the ANC in the first place. There is still a determination by South African publics that Zuma must pay back their money. This shows a pragmatism type of discourse. Most of the South African publics are against the conduct of Zuma's administration and are in support of the EFF's steps to take Zuma to court in order for him to pay back the money, an indication of a cooperative form of discourse.

The Internet facilitates democratic discourse and civic culture to a wider range of citizens (Dahlgren, 2005). A diverse range of information providers is essential for a democratic society to enable viewers, readers and listeners to receive a broad spectrum of information that is not tightly controlled, biased and filtered (Golding & Murdock, 2000). In this regard, most South African publics on Facebook are able to give their views about how they feel about the ongoing Nkandla saga and most of them are able to learn more from what others are saying on *Nkandlagate*. In this regard, South African publics with access to Facebook are aware of exactly what is going on in their country through sharing different views on Facebook.

PUBLIC COMMENTS MADE ON THE ANC FACEBOOK PAGE[63]

POST ONE

The post was made on 6 August 2015, attracting 227 Likes, 102, Comments and 31 Shares.

[63] ANC Facebook page (2015). [Online]. Available: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1042356492455861&id=277018335656351 [02/12/2015].

EXTRACTS FROM THE POST:

FINALISATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

> *[The police minister's report, in particular, gives a thorough and accurate picture of the state of affairs regarding the upgrades at Nkandla and was helpful during the course of the committee's in loco inspection. Contrary to the opposition political posturing, the report of the police minister was never intended as a replacement for any other investigative report on Nkandla]*
>
> *[The ad hoc committee found in its report that South Africans were misled about the so-called opulence at the private residence of the President and that there was a gross exaggeration of the scope, scale and cost of the project]*
>
> *[The EFF's decision to take the matter relating to the Nkandla security upgrades to the Constitutional Court is a right that any person or party enjoys under our constitution…We are hopeful that contesting the matter in Court would do them good, as Courts make judgment on the basis of facts, evidence and cogent legal arguments]*
>
> *[The minority report of the opposition does not only undermine the thorough work that the committee had undertaken, it also undermines the contribution they made during the process. The report, for instance, contradicts the frank contributions they made following the inspection visit at the private residence of the President]*.
>
> *[those responsible for deviation from the PFMA should be held accountable and the money must be recovered from those found guilty of these transgressions]*
>
> *[Measures must be taken by government to ensure that this does not repeat itself as it makes mockery of public prescripts when regulations are by-passed with almost impunity. We call on swift action to ensure full accountability by those implicated]*.

5.1.7. Analysis 7: Post

The descriptions that were identified on this post are: Persuasion, defensive and blame-shifting. Defensive as used in this research means to be very anxious to challenge or avoid criticism. Blame-shifting means a tactic to push fault on another person other than oneself.

The ANC sounds convincing when explaining that the police minister's report gives a thorough and accurate picture of the Nkandla expenditure and that the report was not meant to replace any other investigations as stipulated by opposition political party, but rather to provide a full account of the implementation of the recommendations of the previous ad hoc committee. In their persuasive speech, the ANC are trying to convince South African publics that the ad hoc committee feels that South Africans were misled about the every detail of the *Nkandlagate*, including the involved funds, scope and scales. In addition, the ANC are saying that the ANC South African publics should not rely on the findings of the minority report as it not accurate and undermines the ad hoc contributions. In their speech, the ANC defended themselves by seeming to agree with the EFF decision to take the Nkandla case to the Constitutional Court, as it is in line with the South African Constitution which is supposed to be enjoyed by all South Africans. They go on to convince the South African general public that they are aware that courts make judgments on the basis of facts, evidence and cogent legal arguments. It is also seen in their speech that the ANC is shifting the blame to other people other than Zuma himself; for example, the blame goes to those that are said to be '*responsible for deviation from the PFMA'*.

In their post, the ANC are persuading South African publics by using pragmatism discourses, as in the above statement, and trying to change their minds and convince them that the ANC are a responsible government and that Zuma is not in the wrong – as is being portrayed by the opposition parties. Other pragmatism discourses used in their post include calling for measures by the government to ensure that the situation regarding corruption does not repeat itself.

The ANC's defensive mechanism using Facebook is aimed at convincing the South African publics and to divert them from the negative perception they have towards them as a corrupt government. The ANC does not want to lose their voters.

COMMENTS BY THE PUBLICS TO THE ANC POST

[The next election am not gona vote for ANC ....]

[We might be poor but we are not stupid..... Stop insulting our intelligence…]

[…what a corrupt ANC.. Corrupt and selfish Crooks only!!!!...]

[In your foolish statement, you are trying by all means not to mention the #PublicProtector Report. How was the general public misled and who misled it? On what basis are you nullifying the recommendations of the Public Protector?]

[A demon was formed in a form of public protector to destroy our loved ANC and President…]

[In the event that the ad Hoc committee sugests that President Zuma is supposed to pay back some of the money, we are prepared to pay R2,50 each bearing in mind that we are over a million and some unaudited supporters]

[Viva President Zuma viva…no weapon formed against ANC shall prosper That Zuma should not pay back the money, and 'EFF must go to Hell! They lack law knowledge…]

[Thuli Madonsela is an ANC loyal cadre]

[Even the most benevolent of governments are made up of people with all the propensities for human failings. The rule of law as we understand it consists in the set of conventions and arrangements that ensure that it is not left to the whims of individual rulers to decide on what is good for the populace. The administrative conduct of government and authorities are subject to scrutiny of independent organs. This is an essential element of good governance that we have sought to have built into our new constitutional order]

5.1.8 Analysis 8: Comments

This research identified these descriptions for the above comments: Sagaciousness, arrogance, loyalty, indecency and detachment. Arrogance in this research means having an exaggerated sense of one's own importance or abilities. Loyalty means being supportive and being proud of a feeling of belonging. Detachment means being neutral, failing to clearly show which side of the argument one is.

Some of the South African publics on Facebook have lost hope in the ANC and are promising to be wiser in the next general elections and not to vote for the party. Some of them are trying to make the ANC see sense by saying that although they may be poor, the party should not think they are fools and have their intelligence insulted. To some South African publics, the ANC is

full of corrupt, selfish and crooked people and therefore the party cannot be trusted. Some South Africa publics feel that the ANC are fools in their reasoning; for example, by questioning whether the ANC were misled by the Public Protector's reporter. While some South African publics on Facebook look at Madonsela as a Good Samaritan to their problem, others, especially ANC members, describe her as 'a demon', an evil woman who is there to destroy President Zuma and his ANC. Some ANC members are being arrogant and feel that being part of the majority, they can volunteer to pay the money which was spent on the Nkandla residence. They can square the debts by just having each member contribute R2.50. However, this is a wrong opinion as not all ANC members would be willing to contribute a cent to save Zuma from his corruption charges. Therefore, this view is not practical.

There is also an indication of party and personal loyalty from the South African publics who are seemingly ANC supporters; they are calling for the EFF to go to hell with their lack of knowledge on laws and saying that whatever plans the EFF and others are planning against Zuma shall fail. They are implying that Zuma will not have to pay back the money – corrupt or not, Zuma remains their President.

While most of the comments made enable one to figure out on which side the writer belongs, the writer's preference is difficult to determine in some comments; for example: '*Thuli Madonsela is an ANC loyal cadre'.* In this case, it is difficult to say whether the writer is on the side of the EFF or the ANC. Another example is a comment about Nelson Mandela. The two comments are therefore detachment discursive. In their comments on this post, the majority of South African publics on Facebook show negative views about the ANC post. They still believe that the ANC is an irresponsible government full of lies. This is an adversary type of discourse.

There is evidence of participatory democracy as seen in the discussion. Everyone in South Africa with access to Facebook has an opportunity to contribute meaningfully (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004) their true opinion over *Nkandlagate,* either from the ANC side, the EFF side or even neutrally. Facebook has indeed provided an alternative space for political discourse between South African publics' communication and interaction between politicians and the public (Salanova, 2012; Benkler, 2006). The traditional one-way communication of what mass media believes needs to be set on public agenda has been downplayed by the higher degree of freedom provided by social media in news selection. In this case, if it was not for Facebook, the ANC

could have used any traditional media, giving very limited chance for public's contributions. However, as seen in the discussions, opposition members are able to comment without fear which is an indication of participatory democracy made possible by networked public sphere.

POST TWO

The post was written on 19 August, with 242 Likes, 106 Comments and 37 Shares.

EXTRACTS FROM THE POST:

ANC STATEMENT ON THE ADHOC COMMITTE ON NKANDLA REPORT

> *[The African National Congress welcomes the conclusion of the work of the Adhoc Committee on Nkandla report which has diligently and thoroughly carried its task to conclusion. We also welcome the findings and recommendations regarding the reckless and rampant corruption by government officials and contractors]*
>
> *[It is our view that this matter must be given urgent attention to ensure that those responsible for this corruption should be held accountable for their wrong doing. We call law enforcement agencies and affected departments to act decisively]*
>
> *[Measures must be taken by government to ensure that this does not repeat itself as it makes mockery of public prescripts when regulations are by-passed with almost impunity. We call on swift action to ensure full accountability by those implicated]*

5.1.9. Analysis 9: Post

Descriptions that were identified in this post are: Coaxing and blame-shifting. Coaxing means persuasion.

The ANC is trying to convince the South African public that the ad hoc committee on Nkandla report diligently and thoroughly carried out its task to conclusion, with which it is satisfied. It goes further to suggest that the ANC is equally against corruption and that the law should be exercised to bring to book all those involved in corruption to avoid repetition. It should be noted in ANC speeches that Zuma is being excluded from being a culprit. The ANC seems to be

shifting blame to government officials and contractors, rather than to Zuma himself. A number of pragmatic discourses have also been used in their speeches, including comments that the Nkandla matter should be given urgent attention, those responsible for the corruption should be dealt with accordingly and the law enforcement agencies and affected departments should act decisively. Here again, Facebook is being used by the ANC for defensive purposes in order for them to be cleared from the Nkandla corruption charges. The aim is not to lose voters.

COMMENTS BY THE PUBLICS TO THE ANC POST

[…we have been subjected to humiliation from this person and we on the ground are suffering as we have to answer to this gemorse of Nkandla. Please comrades. ...lets stop this and resort the ANC values that liberated this country]

[…the people who truly love the ANC are deeply hurt by the damage done by Zuma's lapdogs who are hellbent on covering up his corrupt activities]

[Well done ANC, you have successfully destroyed the democracy of South Africa which was written in the blood of those who fought hard for many decades and died for it.... Well done!!!]

[They ANC says they support the report of police minister Nathi Nhleko and its recommendations, it also says swift actions must be taken against all those who are involved in the Nkandla saga. The same ANC rejects the Public Protectors report the report that is clear and its recommendations, and endoses the report of a Cabinet Minister undermining the report of a chapter 9 institution. The ANC contradicts itself in this matter. think voter must be sobber in their mind when they are voting]

[LOL... The ANC is a joke. No intergrity whatsoever. Just dugging this great organization deeper and deeper into a hole. Losing more and more support. Why don't you just get rid of all the rotten apples and try and restore your credibilty with the people which you are ripping off]

[We call on swift action to ensure full accountability by those implicated.' Why does this exclude Zuma who was implicated by Madonsela]

[We must protect our President against Draculars]

5.1.10. Analysis 10: Comments

In the above comments, the identified descriptions are: Patriotism, sagaciousness and loyalty.

There is an indication that while some of the South African publics on Facebook might love the party, they are not happy with Zuma's corruption stories. Zuma's corruption activities have subjected all ANC supporters to humiliation and are calling for the rest of the ANC members to rectify the problem in order to restore the once respected ANC. The ANC has done a lot of damage to the party's reputation and it is so painful to some ANC supporters to see how some party officials are shielding Zuma. Some South African publics are crying 'foul', seeing how Zuma has destroyed the South African democracy that has cost many South Africans' lives. The ANC reasoning capacity is questionable to some of the South African publics. They see the party contradicting itself in its speeches and in the next elections they will be wiser about whom to vote for. Some South African publics wonder how some ANC officials are allowing one person to destroy the reputation of such a big and good party. They therefore lack integrity, because they could have just removed Zuma and all who are involved in corruption activities in the ANC (rotten apples) in order for the party to regain its credibility. Some South African publics are questioning why Zuma should be immune to Madonsela's report. Others still show loyalty to President Zuma and feel that Zuma should be protected from being attacked.

There are cooperative and adversary discourses in these comments. Cooperative discourse is where most of the South African publics, whether EFF, ANC or just ordinary citizens do not condone corruption activities by the Zuma's administration**.** The adversary discourse is that South African publics show disagreement with the ANC views in this post.

South African publics have proven their democratic rights in their discussions on Facebook pertaining *Nkandlagate* through the networked public sphere. As seen in the discussions, on the ANC page, Facebook has to a large extent indicated the potential to challenge sovereign power. Facebook has provided South African publics a public sphere from which they have a chance to interpret whatever message is sent across to them. Facebook has brought about direct democracy in which South African publics are able to contest the ruling party's regime even on their page without any fear and hindrances**.**

POST THREE

This post was made on 19 August 2015, attracting 284 Likes, 140 Comments and 35 Shares.

BELOW ARE THE EXTRACTS FROM THE POST:

THE DA'S DECISION TO APPROACH THE COURT ON NKANDLA MATTER

> *[We know too well that Courts and police stations have now become fashionable places for media theatrics, where opposition parties attract a certain degree of media attention on the door steps of the Courts and police stations than they would in their offices]*
> *[…our focus as the Majority Party in this institution is now on ensuring that important recommendations passed by Parliament yesterday are implemented by the executive]*

5.1.11. Analysis 11: Post

The descriptions that are identified in this post are: Inducement and egoism. Inducement means persuasion. Egoism means an excessive or exaggerated sense of self-importance.

The ANC is trying to convince South African publics that the opposition parties seek nothing but media fame in their approach to resolving the Nkandla saga through courts and police stations. The ANC is displaying selfish characteristics (egoism) in their speech; as long as they are in the majority as a party, they don't care about the concerns of the EFF or the DA on the Nkandla issue. What is important to them is to make sure that whatever was discussed in parliament on *Nkandlagate* is implemented by the executive. Their speech indicates pragmatic discourse; namely, they will practically implement all the recommendations that were passed by parliament. Usman (2015) states that Facebook could sometimes be misused by the politicians; the advantage of a network public sphere which could also be regarded as a challenge is that depending on the levels of control of Facebook pages, everyone with access to Facebook could post anything they wish, regardless of who is going to be happy about it, or not. As can be seen in their post, it is clear that the ANC takes advantage of their majority party status to act however they please, regardless of what opposition parties think or do.

COMMENTS BY THE PUBLICS TO THE ABOVE ANC POST

[It is not a matter of who's more trustworthy than the other but of facts. Money was misused, corruption occured and possibly money laundering too… Now that we all know and AGREE that money was misused and Inflated in the Security upgrades in Nkandla, shouldn't we be focusing on finding those who committed this crime using President Zuma's private residence to enrich themselves and subject them to the rule of law]

[Is the substitution of the report of the public protector legitimate and constitutional? We won't be fooled by ANC majority in parliament]

[Have ya noticed in Parliament yesterday after the report was adopted that all the majority party's benches were empty…. and then ya write this article telling us that the opposition failed to persuade Parliament, are ya in ya right mind? Because the whole process was done and concluded in Luthuli House others are straying along the games played by ANC, the formation of those committees, decisions, adoption and voting for those reports were designed by Luthuli House, so WHO ARE YOU FOOLING ANC???!!!!]

[ANC has became a disgrace under Zuma's leadership, I will never vote for this party again]

[Every year ppl threatning the ANC that they will not vote for ANC but the ANC win & next comming elections the ANC is going to win again]

[I am dissapointed by ANC on the Nkandla issue, we love our movement but how leaders protect corruption hurt us]

[All I have seen is the over reliance to Thuli Madonsela's report to the three reports that we have had thus far. It like the Editor of the Citizen said 'Some people just hate Zuma.' So I hope they will excuse us when we of the Ruling Party do what the ruling party should do govern to their best ability…]

5.1.12. Analysis 12: Comments

The descriptions in the above comments, as identified in this research, are: Sagaciousness, persuasion, patriotism, optimism and loyalty.

To some South African publics on Facebook, whether it is through Madonsela's report or the ad hoc committee's report, what matters is that there was corruption taking place and whoever is involved in the Nkandla corruption should be liable to pay back the money. While the ANC thinks that being the majority party in parliament is a way of convincing the South African publics that they are untouchable, some South African publics say that they won't be intimidated by numbers and refuse to be fooled by the ANC – they say that the opposition party did not pursue the matter in the report, as most of the ANC members of parliament were absent, having already decided everything at Luthuli House. Others are questioning the constitutional legitimacy in substituting the Public Protector's report with the Police Minister's report. In this they still refuse to be fooled by ANC majority status in parliament. To some South African publics, there will be no more voting for the ANC, as the party has become a disgrace under Zuma's leadership therefore do not deserve to be revote into power. Some of the ANC supporters are disappointed with their leaders who seem to defend corruption in the party. Some South Africans are very optimistic about the ANC winning the next elections, regardless of Zuma's involvement in *Nkandlagate,* because winning elections by the ANC has always been the case regardless of negative perceptions from people. This implies that it is just habitual for South African publics to complain and probably promise not to vote for ANC anymore, but in practice it does not happen. Some ANC supporters feel that the over-reliance on Madonsela's report, rather than the ad hoc report, indicates their hatred towards Zuma, and that the ANC should just do what the ruling party needs to do in governing to the best of their ability.

The comments on the ANC post show two discursive genres: Adversary and pragmatism. Adversary discourse is that most South African publics have opposing views to the ANC post. They do not agree with whatever information ANC is relaying to them on Facebook. Pragmatism discourse is not to vote for the ANC in the next general election. Since the networked public sphere has created a space (Facebook) on which South African publics can hear a diversity of views from different politicians, including views from the opposition parties and with the interpretation of messages vested in their hands, they are able to filter the information they read by themselves and pick which makes more sense to them. This capability of Facebook is what makes it difficult for the ANC party to have its views on Nkandla taken seriously by the majority of South African publics with access to Facebook. To most South African publics, Zuma is a disgrace in the ANC.

5.2. CONCLUSION

Although the digital divide is a major problem in South Africa, this research has shown that Facebook is proving to be a public network as per the theory of Benkler. The networked public sphere demonstrates in this research a shift from a traditional media public sphere controlled by a small number of commercial markets to a forum that is accessible to and generated by individuals, offering an increase in individuals' freedom to enjoy participating in the creation of information and knowledge. An objective forum, almost free from state control or any authority of rank and status – referred to by Habermas as the purpose of a public sphere – should be one regardless of status. Benkler's networked public sphere has enabled what Habermas refers to as inclusivity, whereby groups previously excluded from discussions and debates are now inclusive; therefore, most South African publics with access to Facebook, including opposition members, are able to participate in the *Nkandlagate* discussions. As per Benkler's argument through the networked public sphere of Facebook, many South African publics are able to communicate their observations and their viewpoints on Nkandla to many others in a way that cannot be controlled by the ANC. Facebook promotes freedom of speech of a politically critical nature, as seen in the *Nkandlagate* discussions. This indicates the power of networked public sphere as stipulated by Benkler, differentiating it from the past Habermas bourgeois public sphere.

As shown in this research, most South African publics with access to Facebook are against Zuma's corruptive government associated with *Nkandlagate* and there is a public opinion that Zuma must pay back the money that was unjustifiably spent in the renovations of his Nkandla residence. Due to the direct democracy brought by the networked public sphere, South African publics appear to be free to express their views both on the EFF opposition Facebook page and the ruling ANC Facebook page; be it opposing or agreeing. This research has been an eye-opener in that, apart from Facebook being used by political parties for campaigning, Facebook could also be used by politicians to try to clean up the self-created mess made by the ANC over *Nkandlagate.* As indicated in this research, ANC government officials are trying their best to blackmail South African publics by using all sorts of lies in order to regain their dignity. However, according to most South African publics, they are using the wrong strategy. The best strategy that could help them achieve what they are looking for is the removal of Zuma from the ANC party. In this case, there are certain things that could not be achieved by the networked

public sphere alone; for example, in this case, the ANC trying to convince the South African publics using Facebook that Zuma and ANC are not in the wrong in as far as *Nkandlagate* is concerned.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

Participatory democracy in action, freedom of expression in South Africa, the networked public sphere (but not the bourgeois public sphere), public opinion and watchdog? What is the reality?

This chapter sums up all the arguments that the networked public sphere provides a distinguished set of potential benefits over traditional media, as it is harder for governments to control communications due to the highly distributed networked architecture of the Internet (Benkler, 2006: 266).

In trying to answer the research question how South African publics engaged in the social media platform, Facebook, over *Nkandlagate* in 2015 using critical discourse analysis guided by Benkler's networked public sphere, this research argues that discourse practices through which publics create texts and consume them are regarded as an important form of social practice which contributes to the constitution of the social world including social identities and social relations (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002: 61). It follows that how the South African publics engage in the Nkandla discussion through the research's descriptions, interpretation and explanation indicates their political social practices. The research discusses the five concepts mentioned above, through which the political social practices by the South African publics are expressed or indicated through their participation on the *Nkandlagate* discussions on Facebook.

6.1. PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

With Facebook, South African publics appear to exercise their democratic rights to enable them to participate in controversial political matters affecting their country. There is an indication that Facebook provides infrastructure for deliberation, which may eventually lead to real actions (Keane, 2000: 67). Most of the South African publics using Facebook may be wiser when they next vote – according to the information they have acquired about the Zuma's maladministration through the EFF on Facebook – and not vote for Zuma. However, participatory democracy, as

indicated by Bowman & Wills (2003), has brought about the challenge of ethical standards. The people who are information contributors might not be aware of journalistic values which are at least practised in other forms of media although not consistently; hence the use of indecent words.

On the other hand, ruling political parties are also seen to further exercise their democracy by adapting to more individualised and direct forms of political participation (Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 2002; Bang, 2003; Bennett, 2008; Dalton), as is the case with the ANC in this research.

As seen in the discussion, there is evidence of participatory democracy in this research. Everyone in South Africa with access to Facebook has an opportunity to contribute meaningfully (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004); from the ANC or EFF sides, and even neutrally.

6.2. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

As seen from the posts, the EFF is free to exclusively express itself on how it feels about Zuma's government in relation to *Nkandlagate*, and every action taken by Zuma's administration to try and disassociate itself from *Nkandlagate* has been exposed by the EFF without any fear of the ANC, the ruling government. Likewise, South African publics are seen to speak freely whatever their views are, whether opposing or not, whether on the EFF Facebook page or the ANC page and in whatever manner they wish. Mostly, it was seen on the ANC page how South Africa publics were freely critiquing President Zuma and his government officials on their corrupt ways of ruling South Africa, regarding Nkandla in particular. This tallies with Benkler's theories of the networked public in which everyone with Internet access has the freedom of expression on networked public spheres like Facebook.

6.3. THE NETWORKD PUBLIC SPHERE, BUT NOT THE BOURGEOIS PUBLIC SPHERE

The EFF uses Facebook to disseminate information because Facebook offers a more public and democratic space that is easily accessible to South African publics. For some South African

citizens, Facebook has contributed to the lessening of the problem of having limited political knowledge, which has been hindering their capacity to get involved in the process of deliberation (Street, 2001: 217). This has been possible due to the South African government's incapability to control the flow information on Facebook (Benkler, 2006).

For some ordinary members of the South African publics, Facebook has provided a social space where they are able to discuss, share and develop opinions on political issues (Benkler, 2006), as seen in the case of *Nkandlagate*. Hence, in this case, the Facebook networked public sphere is a contributor to a healthy public sphere. With Facebook, it is very difficult for the ANC as a ruling government to clarify its party and convince South Africans that they are not in the wrong, especially having the opposition party, the EFF, present as watchdogs disseminating information to justify how ANC is conducting itself as a ruling party. This is where democracy in the networked public sphere benefits citizens; information filtration is exclusively in their hands and they can use their subjective judgment to know who is speaking the truth and who is not and make informed decisions.

As Benkler stated, the networked public sphere is hard to control or censor by powerful states, although not impossible. As seen in this research, the ANC is not controlling information flow against the party from the EFF, a characteristic that makes the networked public sphere a better alternative public sphere in a democratic world. Internet facilitates democratic discourse and civic culture to a wider range of citizens (Dahlgren, 2005) as there are many information sharing strategies. A diverse range of information providers is essential for a democratic society in order to enable viewers, readers and listeners to receive a broad spectrum of information from varying sources (Golding & Murdock, 2000). In this regard, most South African publics are able to give their views on Facebook and say how they feel about the ongoing Nkandla saga. Most of them are able to learn more from what others are saying on Facebook pertaining to *Nkandlagate.* In this regard, South Africa publics are aware of what is going on in their country.

6.4. PUBLIC OPINION

Facebook is helpful in the creation of knowledgeable South African publics, as seen with the Nkandla saga through public discussions, debates and sharing opinions on *Nkandlagate.* The

direct democracy enabled by the networked public sphere has benefitted South African publics by allowing them to freely create and consume information from many others, from both the ruling and the opposition parties' Facebook pages. This enabled them to gather enough information to help them formulate common views. There is a common public attitude or belief by those South African publics on Facebook about Zuma's maladministration of the South African government (Bianco & Canon, 2013). In this research, most of the South African publics with access to Facebook seem to be against Zuma's corrupt government and its involvement with *Nkandlagate* and there is a public opinion by most Facebook comments that Zuma must pay back the money that was unjustifiably spent in the renovations of his Nkandla residence.

6.5. WATCHDOG

Traditional media's ability to conduct investigative reporting and act as a public watchdog has been eroded by commercial adverts and government propaganda (Zhao, 1998). In most African countries, journalists have found it difficult to undertake evocative long form investigative reporting to expose the environmental, economic and societal effects brought about by these sectors (Rodrigues & Schiffin, 2015: 124). Facebook, being used by the South African publics in checking what the ANC are doing wrong, indicates some watchdog role being played. It is only proper for the South African government, according to the South African publics on Facebook, to operate in accordance with the Constitution. There should be no corruption amongst government officials and the misused public funds must be paid back. The Public Protector's office should operate in the interests of the needs of the South African publics by exposing all the corruptions against the government.

6.6. WHAT IS THE REALITY?

This research has been an eye-opener in that, although many political parties have been able to achieve their political agenda using Facebook – namely, increasing their number of voters (as with Obama's 2008 election victory in the US, DA and EFF in South Africa) – there are certain political agendas that could not be achieved through the use of Facebook. According to this

research, ANC government officials appear to be blackmailing South African publics by using all sorts of lies to manipulate South African publics' views that the ANC and President Zuma are not in the wrong in the Nkandla saga, but rather some government officials and contractors of the Nkandla residence are guilty. However, this dissertation has shown that due to increasing participatory democracy in the public spheres, in which there is some diversity of information, the ANC is not completely successful with its agenda.

In this scenario, this research could conclude that there are some political agendas that are not achievable through the networked public sphere. According to most South African publics and social media posts in evidence, in order for the ANC party to regain its once lost dignity, Zuma must be removed from the party.

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APPENDICES

ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

FIRST POST

EFF STATEMENT ON CONTINUING PATHOLOGICAL LIES BY NATHI NHLEKO IN DEFENCE OF NKANDLA CORRUPTION (6 July 2015)

The Economic Freedom Fighters notes desperate utterances by the Minister of Police, Nathi Nhleko, before the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF). Nhleko in defending multimillion Rand corruption in Nkandla claimed that a so-called "firepool" was also constructed at private residence of the former President Nelson Mandela in Qunu. The Mandela granddaughters have dismissed Nhleko's utterances as pure lies.

The Minister has lied about cattle kraals and chicken runs being "security features". He has lied about the total cost of security features in Nkandla being less than they actually are. He has lied about the Public Protector not finding that government built any houses for President Zuma and his family. He has lied about not knowing why and who approved the construction of the village consisting of 21 three-bedroomed houses at the Nkandla compound at an over-inflated cost of R6.5 million each. The Minister has committed his office and the police ministry to pathological lies and the defence of corruption instead of upholding the rule of law and ensuring that crooks like President Zuma are brought to book.

The EFF further notes absurd utterances by Nhleko that his recent report and low-quality bioscope, where he exonerated President Zuma from any financial liability for non-security features in Nkandla, was not in compliance or intended to comply with the remedial action of the Public Protector. The Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, in her report "Secure in Comfort" requested the Minister of Police to ensure that no further security measures are installed in Nkandla. Nhleko has arrogantly reported that "more money" still needs to be spent in Nkandla on imaginary security features. The EFF condemns this brazen abuse of public funds for the indulgence of one man on whom we are already wasting spending obscene amount of money.

The EFF further notes that resolution of the Alliance Summit where the ANC, Cosatu, the SACP and SANCO have resolved that Jacob Zuma will not pay back any money for upgrades he

unduly and unlawfully benefited from. The remarks by Gwede Mantashe that the Nkandla issue will disappear with the end of Zuma's term of office are delusional.

The EFF wishes to reiterate that Zuma will PAY BACK THE MONEY! The EFF will not rest until every cent that Zuma has unduly and unlawfully benefited from is paid back. The EFF will not rest until Zuma is charged and prosecuted for unlawfully benefiting from upgrades at his Nkandla compound.

Wherever Zuma appears in the presence of the EFF, be it in public places or in Parliament, he shall be asked to PAY BACK THE MONEY. This commitment to holding Zuma and his executive accountable is consistent with the EFF commitment to combating corruption.

The Public Protector has requested National Treasury to assist President Zuma in determining a reasonable amount he must pay back. The EFF urges Minister Nhlanhla Nene to immediately comply with the remedial action of the Public Protector and assist Zuma in paying back the money including National Treasury in meeting its target of R1.1 trillion of revenue.

COMMENTS

1. He must PAY BACK THE MONEY! That has benefited unduly, South Africa is suffering from high rate of unemployment and is also suffering to pay for young people out there to enfeather their studies. but Zuma, Nhleko they should brought to book. and for that useless Gwede should be call to order. I hope we will come to an end with this, we can't allow Zuma to walk freely he MUST PAY BACK THE MONEY!!! Fighters
2. So #DA invoicing was correct all along! #paybackthemoney
3. Where ever we meet him we gonna shout pay back the money! On the street, shebeen, outside the country and even in the rallies of the ANC, wil shout pay back the money!
4. Mina nje im confused. in terms of which Act, policy or regulation did Nhleko rely on. and seeing that the executive is now investigating themselves. we should rather close down the chapter 9 institutions because everytime they make findings the executive "reviews' them. so rather close them down.
5. i just saw zuma's head entering te toilet door as i was peeing,,,,now i m waiting for him on his door, gues wt i m gona tel him!

6. I am shocked that EFF is not aware that Gwede requested ANC to pay the unduly benefits of Nkandla on behalf of Zuma, the point which wasn short down as "political risk"
7. Has Nhleko not embarrassed himself enough in front of everybody with that award winning comedy of his? Now his shallow mind found it appropriate to drag Madiba(may his soul rest in peace) into his funny games. The buttocks defence force is running out of ammunition. The Nhleko movie must have been the last weapon in their arsenal. Now all they have is their bums. Its a checkmate. Paybackthemoney.
8. he must pay back the back money
9. he will not pay
10. #pay_back_what_u_owe_us Rihana singing alng fighters

SECOND POST

EFF WELCOMES THE CONCOURT DECISION TO HAVE PUBLIC PROTECTOR JOIN THE PAY BACK THE MONEY CASE (6 October 2015)

The EFF welcomes the Constitutional Court decision to have the Public Protector join in on the EFF case to have Zuma #PayBackTheMoney. This decision is significant because the powers of the Public Protector have been ridiculed and challenged by many in government, including by Zuma himself. The court is therefore affording the Public Protector not only an opportunity to clarify her powers in relation to the office of the president, but also to properly explain her remedial actions against Zuma.

The EFF's prayer to the constitutional court is simple. The prayer is that Zuma must be ordered to #PayBackTheMoney improperly used in the upgrade of his home in Nkandla. This case will restore the dignity and respectability to the office of the Public Protector because many who steal and abuse state resources in government no longer hold the work of the Public Protector in high esteem because they think that they can get away with it like Zuma.

Zuma has done everything in his power to avoid paying back the money. This includes using ministers like Nhleko to fabricate a path out of the responsibility to pay. He has also stood in parliament and lied, saying the money used in Nkandla was from a bank loan when it was not.

Zuma has lied about the Nkandla matter, ridiculed it and many who sought to raise it in parliament and allowed his ministers to also attack all who raise it, including the office of the Public Protector.

It is no secret that parliament went to the extent of institutionalizing violence in the form of bouncers to protect Zuma from dealing with the question of #PayBackTheMoney. Fortunately, there are no bouncers, ministers, or preceding officers with their draconian speaker, to protect him from answering properly at the ConCourt. The judges ask direct question and seek direct answers; when they say when are you paying back the money, they do not expect you to say who must pay it. They say this because they would have already concluded that person they ask the question, must pay.

The decision to allow the Public Protector to join makes this matter now officially of public interest as the Public Protector constitutionally represents all of the South African public regardless of their creed, party affiliation and class. The struggle against the abuse of state resources and corruption by politicians, their families and friends will indeed be advanced by a thousand steps. The EFF calls on all South Africans to also throw their support in this historic fight against a corrupt president who has no regard for public resources.

COMMENTS

1. I respect our judicial system,it was very clear to everyone that public protector's office was under attack because of the findings she and her office made against mr Zuma on the nkanda scandal,they tried all things under the sun to weaken that office,big up to the public protector and her team for not succumbing to the ANC and their tricks.
2. We are the only party who speak the truth. Also we are government in waiting. Forward eff forward.
3. #JZmustfall, he will be scared after today's case.
4. The majority in parliament, point of orders, bouncers, presiding officers etc. cannot protect him this time....Lebelo leya fela, thotha e sale...
5. After zuma pay the money he must explain why he fail to protect the public founds . #ZOMAmustFALL

6. I'm wondering what's ringing in the heads of all those puppets who screamed how zuma ddnt benefits unduly as per "P/P" findings,I'm wondering what's ringing in the head of thulas nxesi if he has one,I'm wondering what's happening to former minister of justice &COD,imagine the press conference where the findings of P/P led to these puppets suggestion laying criminal charges against her and her office...its a sad day south africa that all this is done by the very same ruling party who sings transparency...mxm!!!pay back the money"asijiki....
7. The SCA judgement today is the landmark judgement and also eye-opener to the constitutional democracy that this country is subscribed into and also to Jacob Zuma and his stooges who vehemently objected to the powers vested to PP by the constitution in terms of remedial actions.I wonder what Mathole,Doris Dlakude,Nkhensani Kubayi etc will say as the EFF has been exonerated by 5 judges in the SCA about the powers of the PP.Keep up the good work guys to hold executive to account.I smell victory in the forthcoming case of the pay back money as per PP report in Concourt in February next year.It will be a walkover.
8. Fight against the EFF legal eagles at your own peril. We will expose you.
9. Eish, I don't wish to be the number 1 right now....the only thing he should be thinking of is the admission of guilt(to pay back the money) and his fitness to hold the office being questioned.
10. Mbuyiseni I must tell you straight that you guys are champions. You are doing more than excellent job. Big up to you guys

THIRD POST

EFF STATEMENT ON ACCUSATIONS THAT PUBLIC PROTECTOR IS PARTIAL IN JOINING PAY BACK THE MONEY CASE (13 October 2015)

The EFF condemns the ANC's lazy logic that the Public Protector's decision to join the #PayBakcTheMoney case means that she is not impartial. This logic distorts the basic conception of our democracy and the place of the Public Protector in it. Above all institutions, the Public Protector is the first and most important defender of her office. When her office is under attack, she is expected to do everything in her power to protect it.

It is a matter of public record that the very ANC in parliament not only attacked and ridiculed the office of the Public Protector, they have also denied her the opportunity to represent her office in all ad-hoc committees that dealt with the Nkandla corruption. After closing all parliament doors, the ANC now wants to also block the Public Protector from entering the doors of our courts.

The Public Protector has not joined the EFF, her office is not taking a membership of the EFF. The Public Protector is joining a court case, a legal matter that finds its genesis from her report, investigation and remedial action. The DA or any other political party, including the ANC, can also join and when they do so it does not make them members of the EFF.

We call upon South Africans to also join in by supporting this case, because it is the case seeking to recover the money belonging to the people. The ANC is trying to deter our focus from the main question, a question they have collapsed through parliamentary rules in order to shut it down and bury it. This is the question of when is Zuma going to pay back the money.

The ANC is speaking under suffocation because they can see the writing on the wall. There is no point of order, parliamentary ad hoc committee or bouncers who can stop Zuma from facing the truth that he must with speed, pay back the money that was unduly spent in his private home in Nkandla

COMMENTS

1. We need that money he must pay it back we knw that the ANC will defend him coz they knw if the president is going down they also going down coz the whole cabinet of the ANC is corrupt,now is the time asijiki EFF phambili maqabane
2. Come 09 February ,Zuma will be appearing in the court of law over his scandal for the first time since he became the State President.This has been made possible by the EFF.
3. He is going to pay there are no bouncers in court ethanda engathandi this problem is not for EFF they must stop thinking like animals this matter is for all south Africa. He also said he is going to fight corruption (NGC) he must lead by example
4. ANC is afraid of the EFF in many fronts ... unfortunate utterances by ANC confirms their discomfort on the existence of EFF and uncompromising Integrity by PP ... ANC is afraid and shaking .....

5. Diz sister s'dumo is confused hw can he blame the anc for labour brokers while he is serving under their executive he is dangerous nd playing double agenda
6. Remind me again why i ever voted for the ANC. What is even more worrying is the silence of those still has little bit of integrity. Finger-pointing PP is just a desperate move which shows unconsciously incompetent this gang is. Forward Eff.
7. When ANC was attempting to suffocate the PP on the Nkandla issue, why didn't ANC MP's(women) not use logic and provide PP platform to explain further her findings rather than demean& lambast her so unnecessarily (so much of Liberation Movement)
8. Phezu kwabo eff we will support you from kzn asijiki
9. They got good spin doctors please my leaders becarefull, they'll want to drag & delay this case for as long as possible. They'll try to faulter you for one useless action, these are crooks & will use their gupta & their media(sabc, new age, citizien, bribed political analyists & ann7) platforms to redecule our course & to push their evil motion. My leaders be very cautious & remain solid as you are, I won't be surprised that the 1st day of the court won't even last 5min,we must come 100% prepared for those ligalised criminals.
10. Worry not honourable Ndlozi, we are aware of their tricks and we are focused on the issue not the side issues which the Anc wish to achieve.....we are now familiar with their tactics and is no longer holding water any more. Zuma must pay back the money.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

FIRST POST

FINALISATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT (6 August 2015)

The parliamentary ad hoc committee set up to consider the Police Minister’s report on the security upgrades at the President’s private residence today finalised and adopted its report – which will be tabled for consideration by the National Assembly. The National Assembly directed the ad hoc committee to conclude and report on its work by 7 August 2015.

The committee expressed satisfaction that the reports of both the police minister and public works complied with the recommendations of the 2014 ad hoc committee. The police minister's report, in particular, gives a thorough and accurate picture of the state of affairs regarding the upgrades at Nkandla and was helpful during the course of the committee's in loco inspection. Contrary to the opposition political posturing, the report of the police minister was never intended as a replacement for any other investigative report on Nkandla, but was intended to provide a full account of the implementation of the recommendations of the previous ad hoc committee.

The ad hoc committee found in its report that South Africans were misled about the so-called opulence at the private residence of the President and that there was a gross exaggeration of the scope, scale and cost of the project. Through the corrupt collusion of officials and private contractors, the prices were grossly inflated and the shoddy workmanship as well as poor quality facilities do not correlate with the amount of money paid. There is general consensus that those responsible for deviation from the PFMA should be held accountable and the money must be recovered from those found guilty of these transgressions. We are pleased that efforts are currently underway to ensure that all implicated in corrupt conduct are pursued legally and all the monies are recouped.

The committee has recommended that the portfolio committees on public works, police and the standing committee on intelligence must ensure continuous monitoring of corrective actions to be taken by the relevant national departments. The committee also recommended that the relevant departments and law enforcement authorities ensure the expeditious conclusion of civil, criminal and disciplinary matters.

It is unfortunate that the opposition sprung the so-called minority report, which is similar to the DA document it submitted to the committee when it started. Their claim that they participated in good faith therefore rings hallow, as their report is a proof that their minds were already made up even before the ad hoc committee could start with its business.

The opposition has repeatedly claimed that the ad hoc process was illegal and unconstitutional. This is despite the establishment of the committee process itself being the consequence of the demand by the opposition to Parliament following the release of the police minister's report.

The minority report of the opposition does not only undermine the thorough work that the committee had undertaken, it also undermines the contribution they made during the process. The report, for instance, contradicts the frank contributions they made following the inspection visit at the private residence of the President.

The EFF's decision to take the matter relating to the Nkandla security upgrades to the Constitutional Court is a right that any person or party enjoys under our constitution, and we are hopeful that it would bring to an end unnecessary disruptions and sloganeering in the National Assembly. We are hopeful that contesting the matter in Court would do them good, as Courts make judgment on the basis of facts, evidence and cogent legal arguments, not sloganeering, rowdiness and stunts which the EFF has become synonymous with.

We reaffirm the legal and constitutional legitimacy of the ad hoc committee. It would have been a gross dereliction of constitutional duty if Parliament failed to initiate a process to formally consider the report of such national importance.

ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ANC CHIEF WHIP

COMMENTS

1. The next election am not gona vote for ANC am done with this shit party....
2. In the event that the ad Hoc committee sugests that President Zuma is supposed to pay back some of the money, we are prepared to pay R2,50 each bearing in mind that we are over a million and some unaudited supporters, we'll even have some leftover change to buy Thuli Madonsela wigs for the whole year.
3. We might be poor but we are not stupid..... Stop insulting our intelligence. It is none of our business that the contractors have done a shoddy job. What matters is that Zuma orders that new police barracks be built outside his house and he took the existing ones as his property..... The swimming pool was no fire pool. Building a new kraal was not even in the security features..... Lastly why are not disputing the Public Protector's findings from the court since the judge is the only one entitled of disputing her findings?

4. Nelson Mandela at the launch of the office of the Public Protector in 1996 “Even the most benevolent of governments are made up of people with all the propensities for human failings. The rule of law as we understand it consists in the set of conventions and arrangements that ensure that it is not left to the whims of individual rulers to decide on what is good for the populace. The administrative conduct of government and authorities are subject to scrutiny of independent organs. This is an essential element of good governance that we have sought to have built into our new constitutional order.”
5. Viva President Zuma viva,A demon was formed in a form of public protector to destroy our loved ANC and President, no weapon formed against ANC shall prosper
6. President Must not pay! EFF must go to Hell! At court they will loose! They lack law knowledge , taking in to account the recent struck -off -the roll case! Where they interpreted as acquittal! They were exposed yesterday!
7. Tambo, Mandela, Sisulu & Hani are turning in their graves.what a corrupt ANC.. Corrupt and selfish Crooks only!!!!
8. Sasa Mosa Pakade Thuli Madonsela is an ANC loyal cadre
9. COSATU and SACP should take this corruption and misuse of public resources to the high court.. Disgraceful.. Phansi corruption.. Phansi
10. In your foolish statement, you are trying by all means not to mention the #PublicProtector Report. How was the general public misled and who misled it? On what basis are you nullifying the recommendations of the Public Protector? Surely, it cannot be on the basis of a 5-hour visit! A more than 2-year investigation report cannot be rejected on a 5-hour visit. Surely, you don't believe South Africans are that foolish and stupid, don't you? I don't think you guys understand what a Chapter 9 Institution is.

SECOND POST

ANC STATEMENT ON THE ADHOC COMMITTE ON NKANDLA REPORT (19 August 2015).

The African National Congress welcomes the conclusion of the work of the Adhoc Committee on Nkandla report which has diligently and thoroughly carried its task to conclusion. We also

welcome the findings and recommendations regarding the reckless and rampant corruption by government officials and contractors.

It is our view that this matter must be given urgent attention to ensure that those responsible for this corruption should be held accountable for their wrong doing. We call law enforcement agencies and affected departments to act decisively.

Measures must be taken by government to ensure that this does not repeat itself as it makes mockery of public prescripts when regulations are by-passed with almost impunity. We call on swift action to ensure full accountability by those implicated.

242 Likes106 Comments37 Shares

COMMENTS

1. Why do we so much risk the ANC rich history with individuals? This can never be undone.....never. we have been subjected to humiliation from this person and we on the ground are suffering as we have to answer to this gemorse of Nkandla. Please comrades. ...lets stop this and resort the ANC values that liberated this country. ANC LIVES.....VIVA....PHANTSI NGO HLOHLESAKHE PHANTSI
2. They ANC says they support the report of police minister Nathi Nhleko and its recommendations,it also says swift actions must be taken against all those who are involved in the Nkandla saga.The same ANC rejects the Public Protectors report the report that is clear and its recommendations,and endoses the report of a Cabinet Minister undermining the report of a chapter 9 institution.The ANC contradicts itself in this matter.I think voter must be sobber in their mind when they are voting.
3. We must protect our President against Draculars.
4. Well done ANC, you have successfully destroyed the democracy of South Africa which was written in the blood of those who fought hard for many decades and died for it.... Well done!!!
5. Only the morons welcome this stupid report, the people who truly love the ANC are deeply hurt by the damage done by Zuma's lapdogs who are hellbent on covering up his corrupt activities

6. LOL... The ANC is a joke. No intergrity whatsoever. Just dugging this great organization deeper and deeper into a hole. Losing more and more support. Why don't you just get rid of all the rotten apples and try and restore your credibilty with the people which you are ripping off.
7. were the accused officials and contractors given the opportunity to explain their parts in this conspiracy?
8. No vote for ANC frm me nxt year am tied of their issues. They must go to hell.
9. So the last line reads "We call on swift action to ensure full accountability by those implicated." Why does this exclude Zuma who was implicated by Madonsela. Then again the Marikana report excluded Ramaphosa.
10. u have to thank the DA coz without DA you wud have not know about the corruption took place

    @ your leadership home ANC. # I think DA is the best they are seriousely working like emoticon

THIRD POST

DA'S DECISION TO APPROACH THE COURT ON NKANDLA MATTER (August 19, 2015)

The Office of the ANC Chief Whip notes the decision by the DA to approach the Western Cape High Court regarding Parliament's adoption of the report of the ad hoc committee that processed the police minister's report. The right to approach the courts to adjudicate on matters, including the DA's failure to substantively persuade parliament on the correctness of its arguments, is a right enshrined in our democratic constitution.

We know too well that Courts and police stations have now become fashionable places for media theatrics, where opposition parties attract a certain degree of media attention on the door steps of the Courts and police stations than they would in their offices.

Far from being concerned with media stunts of the opposition, our focus as the Majority Party in this institution is now on ensuring that important recommendations passed by Parliament yesterday are implemented by the executive.

ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ANC CHIEF WHIP

COMMENTS

1. The problem with the opposition parties in Parliament is that they have taken the public prosecution persued by media institutions and imperialists on Jacob Zuma and paraded it to our Society as a legitimate prosecution. When it is tested by the rule of law and it doesn't go their way, they cry foul and then discredit whatever is not in their Favour. The public Protector's office should be an independent unbias and non-political favouring office. So many of the South Africans (including myself) believed in that office's Nkandla report up untill the minister's report and the ad hoc Committee's visit to Nkandla. It would really be naive and stupid of any1 not to see that contradictions of reality SEEN by the ad hoc committee and The Public protector's report are there! It is not a matter of who's more trustworthy than the other but of facts. Money was misused, corruption occured and possibly money laundering too. This publicity stunt of being shamely obsessed With President Zuma is utterly rubbish. Infact, alot of Tax payers money is also used extensively by the DA using our justice system to further ridicule the ANC at all costs for political and publicity points. Now that we all know and AGREE that money was misused and Inflated in the Security upgrades in Nkandla, shouldn't we be focusing on finding those who committed this crime using President Zuma's private residence to enrich themselves and subject them to the rule of law. The DA and EFF's obsession is nothing but publicity stunt. One day,they agree with the ad hoc committee, the next day, they are against it. They can't have it both ways. Its a game of obsession vs reality and i choose to believe reality. Good work by the ad hoc committee, now bring criminal charges to the wrong doers and lay this thing to rest. Let DA and EFF keep shouting while you continue work and representing South Africans. #as_i_wait4_the_insults
2. Since when the minister of police is responsible for investigating public officials?Is the substitution of the report of the public protector legitimate and constitutional? We won't be fooled by ANC majority in parliament. The adoption of Nathi's report is the decision of Luthuli House in the National Assembly.

3. I am dissapointed by ANC on the Nkandla issue, we love our movement but how leaders protect corruption hurt us.
4. The DA is doing what i the ANC voter would love to see happening, i didn't vote for corruption to be swept under the capert
5. Every year ppl threatning the ANC that they will not vote for ANC but the ANC win & next comming elections the ANC is going to win again.If don't like the ANC then keep your vote & save comment.We will vote the ANC.#Siyaqhuba
6. Those that feed on crumbs of corruption will forever be saying Viva and long live ANC even when it is doing wrong cause their agenda in politics of the stomachs has rendered them useless in the Arena of independed thinkers.
7. I am yet to be convinced by one argument to the contrary of the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee. All I have seen is the over reliance to Thuli Madonsela's report to the three reports that we have had thus far. It like the Editor of the Citizen said "Some people just hate Zuma." So I hope they will excuse us when we of the Ruling Party do what the ruling party should do govern to their best ability. And anyone who considers it insufficient, I hope they are as kind to the alternatives in retrospect to their governance in areas they currently govern. For us and for now, A luta continua and for those who fail to win arguments in Parliament and decide to spend money in courts, we shall see you there. #Siyaqhuba
8. ANC has became a disgrace under Zuma's leadership, I will never vote for this party again.
9. Have ya noticed in Parliament yesterday after the report was adopted that all the majority party's benches were empty, they were there to endorse the report, using their majority, how then do we begin to convince Parliament about the position of opposition when the ANC doesn't want to be persuaded because the same ANC does not partake in discussions in Parliament, they only go there to vote and then ya write this article telling us that the opposition failed to persuade Parliament, are ya in ya right mind? Because the whole process was done and concluded in Luthuli House others are straying along the games played by ANC, the formation of those committees, decisions, adoption and voting for those reports were designed by Luthuli House, so WHO ARE YOU FOOLING ANC???!!!!

10. Nkandla nkandla always we are tired now about this nonsense zuma will be out in the office while the opposite are busy about nkandla what else ? WHERE POLICE ARE BRUTALY KILLED / SENZO MEYIWA KILLERS / KILLING OF THE PEOPLE / MARIKANA MASARCA / ANCIEDENTS IN OUR ROADS / NESFAS CORRUPTION /LOW SHADDING / NPA CNATIONAL PROSECUTION ATHOURITY STABILLASATION/ GUNS IN WRONG HANDS/ TEACHERS RETIREMENT BEFORE TIME/ THE SAFFETY OF CHILDREN AN TEACHERS IN SCHOOL/ JUST A FEW AGENDA AND STOP THIS NKANDLA