

**Assessing the Growing Impact and Potential of Social Networking Mediums in
Crisis Communication in South Africa: A Case Study of the South African
Protection of State Information Bill**

Nokuthula Moyo

MYXNOK003

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Master of Arts in the department of Film & Media Studies**

Supervisor: Ibrahim Saleh

**Faculty of Humanities
University of Cape Town**

February 2015



The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:
Signature removed

Date: 19.05.2015

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
R2K	Right to Know
PRISA	Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa
SMCC	Social Mediated Crisis Communication
BMCC	Blog Mediated Crisis Communication
SCCT	Situational Crisis Communication Theory
DA	Democratic Alliance
SANEF	South African National Editor's Forum
UN	United Nations
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
API	Application Programming Interface
MAT	Media Appeals Tribunal
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAPS	South African Police Services
IFEX	International Freedom of Expression Exchange



ABSTRACT

With new political developments breeding opportunities for crises, proliferation of new media types increasing exposure to crises, there is a growing awareness of the potential, influence, impact and capabilities of social media. Focusing on South Africa's Secrecy Bill, a crisis with implications on access to information and media freedom, this study provides a discussion of the dynamics of crisis communication online. By undertaking an analysis of the uses of social media during deliberations of the Secrecy Bill and its implications, the study sought to explore how young South Africans have embraced social media as a communication tool. An examination of the literature reveals that younger generations are frequent bloggers and users of Twitter, a popular social media site. Focusing on these two platforms, through a qualitative content analysis, findings show that their contribution to deliberations was mainly to make sense of the crisis and distribute relevant materials relating to the debate.

Table of Contents

COMPULSORY DECLARATION	2
ABBREVIATIONS	3
ABSTRACT	4
CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW	8
1.1 INTRODUCTION	8
1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND	10
<i>1.2.1. FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY</i>	11
<i>1.2.2. NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO THE SECRECY BILL</i>	13
1.3 SOUTH AFRICA AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH	16
1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	17
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	21
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	22
1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	24
1.8 OUTLINE OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS	24
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	26
2.1 CRISIS COMMUNICATION	26
<i>2.1.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION ON PUBLIC RELATIONS</i>	26
2.2 THE SMCC MODEL	30
2.3 SENSE MAKING THEORY	33
2.4 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA	35
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW	38
3.1 ALTERNATIVE MEDIA	38
<i>3.1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA</i>	40
3.2 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA	42
<i>3.2.1. SOCIAL NETWORKING</i>	45
<i>3.2.2. BLOGS</i>	48
<i>3.2.3. TWITTER</i>	50
3.3 SOCIAL NETWORKING AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION	54



CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE STUDY	61
4.1 THE SECRECY BILL	61
4.2 DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA	64
<i>4.2.1. THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN A DEMOCRACY</i>	67
4.3 THE DECLINE OF MEDIA FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA	71
<i>4.3.1. MEDIA REGULATION</i>	72
<i>4.3.2. POST-APARTHEID MEDIA CHALLENGES</i>	74
<i>4.3.3. EXISTING STRUCTURE OF MEDIA REGULATION</i>	80
CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY	82
5.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	82
<i>5.1.1 RESEARCH METHODS FOR STUDYING SOCIAL MEDIA</i>	82
5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS	84
<i>5.2.1. SAMPLE</i>	86
5.3 CODING PROCEDURE	87
5.4 DATA COLLECTION	89
5.5 DATA ANALYSIS	91
5.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	91
CHAPTER SIX: PRIMARY ANALYSIS	93
6.1 TWITTER AS A CRISIS COMMUNICATION TOOL	93
<i>6.1.1. TRENDS OF THE TYPES OF TWEETS</i>	99
6.2 BLOGS AS A CRISIS COMMUNICATION TOOL	101
6.3 APPLYING THE SMCC MODEL	105
6.4 CONCLUSION	105
CHAPTER SEVEN: TECHNICAL ANALYSIS	107
7.1 USES OF TWITTER AND BLOGS IN SOUTH AFRICA	107
7.2 POLITICAL USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING CRISES	108
7.3 NON-POLITICAL USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING CRISES	110
7.4 MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CRISIS	116
7.5 THE SECRECY BILL DEBATE	122
7.6 SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS	124



CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	132
8.1 CONCLUSION	132
8.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	134
8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	135
BIBLIOGRAPHY	137



CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The increased use of social media tools over the past five years has changed the way young people communicate. It has changed the way they form an understanding of the world around them, whether social or in relation to business. One of young people's increased uses of social media has been to form an understanding of the events surrounding crises. In the past, crisis information was often disseminated by official response agencies such as police departments. These agencies were responsible for sending information about violent crises to the public; both directly and through the news media through a one-way communication flow (Heverin & Zach, 2012). Today, with the aid of new and social media, crisis-related information no longer comes from a single, centralised source. In South Africa, for example, where the majority of the population can both access and afford mobile phones, social media usage is high. Response agencies and some traditional media channels may no longer be the preferred source of crisis-related information for some, particularly among younger generations aged 18-35. They may instead actively search for crisis-related information through social media tools.

Given the number of crisis situations gaining high-profile attention through social media platforms, for example, the Arab Spring in 2011, or the kidnapping of young girls in Nigeria in 2013, it is argued that social media have initiated changes in the functions of communications that impact the development of crises and crisis communications. This thesis explores if and how the addition of social media to crisis scenarios has disrupted the field of crisis communication in South Africa. Existing literature, for example boyd (2008), boyd and Ellison (2007), highlight social media's influence in a number of ways including speed, engagement, and control of the message, interactivity, authenticity, boundaries, visibility, transparency and crisis facilitation, and triggers. This thesis attempts to highlight the way social media is used by the youth in South Africa during crisis situations, particularly in the political sphere. Essentially, the thesis aims to help define the contemporary use of social media in these situations and outline the possible outcomes. As such, the research

aims to go beyond the normative level by using existing literature to address the multitude of findings.

As South Africa is used as the context of this thesis, the political crisis under examination is the South African Protection of State Information Bill, also known as the Secrecy Bill. It has been used to examine the reactions of the new imposed laws that are affecting freedom of the press and access to information. Over the past few years, debates around the conflict of secrecy and democracy have generated mass interest in South Africa. The Secrecy Bill aims to control state information, ultimately weighing state interests up against transparency and freedom of expression. Information rights were a driving principle to ending apartheid in the 90s, and have since been central to democracy in the country. However, with the Secrecy Bill, South Africans believe that this democracy is facing challenges by protecting the powerful from scrutiny. Furthermore, for ordinary citizens secrecy is not only about political issues but also with every social, environmental or economical issue, there is a need for information. Therefore, the media laws that the South African government have passed are beginning to strongly affect media freedom. The South African government has considered passing this Bill hampering access to market sensitive data, unnerving markets and muzzling media investigations (Defence Web, 2010). Few proposed laws have attracted as much controversy as the Secrecy Bill. It is for this reason that the thesis will focus on this Bill.

Following the struggle that South Africans faced during Apartheid (1948 -1994), Thompson (1999) argues that journalists have always been victims of media censorship, which several other authors, for example, Gordimer (2013) argue now appears to be growing worse with new laws being imposed by the government, continuing problems of government secrecy in democracies as a whole. The freedom of the press was central to the African National Congress (ANC) during South Africa's first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela's, presidency. Mandela believed that "a critical, independent and investigative press is the lifeblood of any democracy. The press must be free from state interference. It must have the

economic strength to stand up to the blandishments of government officials”¹ (cited in Silberstein, 2013). Despite this, as a new reign of the ANC began, the party seemed to take a different direction. According to Mogul (2012), in late 2011, the Secrecy Bill began affecting the democratic South Africa that the former President had set out to achieve, resulting in a growing crisis of democracy.

This thesis proposes that the inclusion of social media dynamics in crises, such as the Secrecy Bill, have influenced the way crises take shape. With a case such as the Secrecy Bill that affects journalism practices, social media platforms enable its users to express their views, share information and gain knowledge about the processes of their government and crisis events. The way a crisis takes shape online is important to note, especially since the information crises in South Africa is on-going. A brief introduction was given to the topic, below is the research background.

1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

As briefly mentioned above, social media has radically changed the communication landscape over the past several years. As a result, crisis communication is also undergoing substantial change. The types of crises that organisations face in this social media age can be any of these as posited by Hilse and Hoewner (1998):

- Reinforcing crisis: used as an additional channel to present stakeholder opinions
- Absurd crisis: this emerges from the Internet’s uncontrollable and diverse content i.e. rumours and opinions about a topic or organisation
- Affecting crisis: when organisations are critically scrutinised by stakeholders and they become the subject of public discussion with negative impact
- Competence crisis: this can be characterised by a difference in competences between the stakeholder and the organisation. This blows over online with online experts joining in the discussion.

The above shows that crises and crisis communication can take many forms in social media. There has been notable studies that discuss the use of the Internet and social

¹ Nelson Mandela was speaking at the International Press Institute Congress on the 14th of February in 1994

media in information sharing, for example, Diani and McAdam, (2003), who try to understand this phenomenon follow western views that expect social media tools to facilitate large-scale mobilisation by avoiding formal organisational structures. In their research, they stress the role of Internet as recruitment channels for mobilisation research (Diani and MacAdam, 2003).

Other researchers, Gonzalez-Bailón, et al., (2011), have analysed dynamics of information diffusion and recruitment, Howard and Parks, (2012) and Boulianne, (2009) researched the Internet's impact on political change and Pasek, et al., (2009) highlighted its association between online social media usage and offline civic engagement and Bennet and Segerberg (2012) highlighted the association between social media and connective action. These types of studies reveal online media's ability to assist in crisis communication (Garrett, 2006). However, while there has been a great deal of research on crisis communications (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2011; Coombs, 2007; Heath, 2006; Seeger, 2006; and Benoit, 1997) and social media (boyd & Ellison, 2007; and boyd, 2009) individually, there is insufficient data around the effects of social media on crisis communication. Although there is a growing body of literature in this regard, there is an inadequate representation of Africa, particularly in developing countries like South Africa. This study seeks to bridge this gap in research and provide data supporting the uses of social media in crisis communication in South Africa.

1.2.1. Fight for democracy

Social media has supported democracies by allowing forums for free speech. Freedom of speech and press is the right to say and print what one pleases, especially about those who are in power (Schauer, 2001). In a democracy, this type of freedom of speech can only exist where there is a free flow of information between a government and its citizens. Thompson (1999) states that a healthy democracy requires publicity and publicity is what prevents the corruption that is almost inevitable in secrecy. It requires that citizens know what officials are doing so that they can be held accountable for their actions. Therefore, in a democracy, publicity should be the

ultimate priority. This type of publicity signifies openness and transparency² in government, which is what a healthy democracy should represent. One way to achieve publicity is through the media, social media included. The media acts as a conduit of information providing citizens with access to information that is of public interest (Coronel, 2005). Access to government information not only provides citizens with opportunities to participate in democratic decision-making, but to be adequately informed in order to do so. Welcoming government secrecy can only threaten a democracy. It can also accumulate negative connotations, arouse suspicions and open the government up to close scrutiny. The political secret has acquired a bad reputation. State secrets are often assumed to be the crimes of the state, which creates several crises in democracies where publics begin to speculate on governmental criminal activities, giving birth to the circulation of rumours (Horn, 2011).

While there is a view that supports transparency over secrecy, there is an alternative view that acknowledges secrecy in free societies. Colby (1976), states that certain secrets are necessary in a free society. Some of the fundamental workings of a democracy are based on secrecy. For example, the voting processes – a ballot box or the attorney and client relationship. Protecting this type of information is essential to a working democratic system. If some policies or processes of government were to be made public, they would not be able to be carried out effectively, if at all (Thompson, 1999). This view supports that both transparency and secrecy are essential to a truly free society. For secrecy to not cause extensive concern, it should be approached from concentrating on what needs to be exposed rather than what needs to be kept secret (Colby, 1976). This type of secrecy would operate on a need-to-know basis. Those who need confidential information to perform their duties would be provided with access to it. Approaching secrecy in this manner would solve queries of how much information should be exposed to the public (Colby, 1976). It would also strike an appropriate balance between openness and secrecy.

Although there are some justifications of secrecy, these views are not strongly supported by human rights laws. An open exchange of information is vital to the kind

² Transparency regulates a democracy by providing citizens the right to hold those in power accountable (Birchall 2011).

of informed citizenry essential to a healthy democracy (National Catholic Reporter, 2002). Information that is kept secret is likely to be seen as something that could not be legitimised were it to be made public (Horn, 2011). It is important to consider the significance of political secrets in the public sphere. In extreme cases, they not only become objects of curiosity or permanent suspicion but also speculation, sources of rage and scandal. Each of these threatens the existence of democracy because of the absence of free flowing information between citizens and their government (Horn, 2011).

Looking at South Africa today, the current media landscape is very different from the original vision that the government had. The National Assembly adopted the Secrecy Bill on the 25th of April 2013, and has been awaiting the president's signature. In South Africa this poses a serious problem impeding the country's growth and development. South Africans have always supported freedom of speech and human rights since the overthrow of the apartheid regime but the sanctions that are imposed by new secrecy laws prevent press freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of expression (Smith, 2012). Journalists and whistle blowers³, who should be protected under the law, will receive excessive prison sentences for exposing criminal activity, corruption and other issues of public interest (Human Rights Watch, 2013). There is also a lack of protection or defence for journalists who uncover abuse of office or corruption scandals.

1.2.2. Negative reactions to the Secrecy Bill

It is clear that the Bill has received negative attention in the country; its major criticism remains to be the failure to include a public interest defence for the Secrecy Bill (Olukotun & Louw, 2013). For example, earlier draft versions of the law were widely condemned because of provisions that undermined the right to access information of public interest (Human Rights Watch, 2013). The drafters have since come up with a more softened version, which, despite their substantial improvements over the last two years, still faces opposition. In its current state the law seeks to

³ A whistle blower is a person who exposes misconduct, alleged dishonesty or any illegal activity occurring in a government or organisation.

regulate the classification of state information and advance public interest by protecting certain valuable information held by the state. It claims that the protection of information is justifiable under the pretext of national security and national interest (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Although South African journalists have fought to suppress any legislation that would affect media freedom, this proposed Bill extends censorship in a manner reminiscent of South Africa's apartheid past.

It is for this reason that the Secrecy Bill comes to limit the gains of South Africans' struggle for freedom. The imposed jail sentences are developing an atmosphere of fear instead of security. The regulation on what information people should access is not representative of democracy. One of the major issues leading to crises in South Africa is the implications of the imposed sanctions. Imposing sanctions regarding the right of access to information can lead to a society where the government has secrets. Furthermore, to protect government secrets, people are often denied access to information that they should have access to (Mogul, 2012). By suppressing investigative journalism and media reporting, citizen participation potentially declines because they are incorrectly informed. Therefore, citizens may be unable to engage in political processes.

Section 16(1) of the Bill of Rights states that

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes-

- (a) freedom of the press and other media;
- (b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;
- (c) freedom of artistic creativity;
- (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research

South Africans have set out to express their views and protest against the Secrecy Bill by joining coalitions such as the Right To Know Campaign (R2K), which was launched to advocate the free flow of information in a free society (Right To Know, 2010). The Public Relations and Communication Management Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) has expressed severe disappointment at the adoption of the Secrecy Bill by the National Assembly, which as it stands is currently in breach of PRISA's code of ethics. Every individual academic, lawyer and accountant will experience great difficulties in completing and publishing research. The PRISA code of ethics

requires professionals to report facts of any given situation and to never deliberately conceal anything that is in public interest to disclose. These professions are dependent on the role of the media (PRISA, 2012).

While the government hails the Secrecy Bill as a necessary measure to protect South Africa's national security it is a violation of the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution, which seeks to protect human rights and develop an open society based on the will of the people (Nathan, 2010). Critics of the Bill do not argue that certain information that is considered important to national security by the government does not need to be protected. Rather, they argue that media policies, which lead to media censorship, contradict the transparency and accountability of a healthy democracy (Naidoo, 2010). Uncovering bribery and corruption is not seen to be a risk to national security or South Africa's safety (PRISA, 2012). As a result, media institutions, trade unions and civil society all rounded up and began protesting against government actions in attempts to secure press freedom.

Even after transition to democracy, journalists have continued fighting for a media landscape that is free from state intervention. Another major concern is that the South African government would have the ability to decide what can or cannot be considered as classified information, which could apply to a significant amount of information that should be in the public sphere (Olukotun & Louw, 2013). This nature of secrecy in government practice neglects the fundamental democratic values of a nation (Thompson, 1999). Transparency and accountability are two sides of the same coin. A government cannot promote accountability and then introduce measures that undermine it. It is the disciplinary measures introduced by media laws that are against the principles that South Africans have fought for (Naidoo, 2010). As a result, several challenges arise when new laws and regulations affect the freedom of speech and expression. This is why (1) the use of social media is important to note in such a context where as mentioned, it has supported democracies by allowing forums for free speech and (2) the notion of freedom of speech should be addressed.

1.3 SOUTH AFRICA AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

A brief discussion was given above in relation to the issues the Secrecy Bill poses to freedom of speech in the country. According to Strünig (2013) the United Nations (UN) regards freedom of speech and expression as core human rights. Jacobs (2001) adds that limitations of these rights are known to contradict what democracy stands for, which is what is essentially highlighted above. As a country that has always taken pride in human rights, especially regarding freedom of speech and expression, passing the Secrecy Bill has caused great controversy among civil society, human rights activists, the media, and opposition parties. Much controversy surrounds the Bill with objections from critics who have identified problematic areas of the Bill and are fighting against measures that appear to limit freedom of the press and the right to information on potential inappropriate action by public officials (Smith, 2012). This controversy has been covered widely in both local and international media, raising multiple concerns of the freedom of press and right to information and will be discussed further below.

While other African countries such as Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda and Mali are being acknowledged for their press freedom by the United Nations; South Africa is receiving widespread and international condemnation. The United States, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland have all expressed concerns of the Secrecy Bill threatening media freedom in South Africa (Smith, 2012). The condemnation was received during a UN review of the country's human rights record. The recent outcries from the South African media sector have forced local and international human rights organisations to pay attention to what journalists see as not only an assault on their freedoms, but more broadly, the freedoms of the public (Naidoo, 2010).

While South Africa has often been described as a country where freedom of expression is a reality, its ranking is affected by the threats posed by media censorship stunting investigative journalism in the country. In 2010 Freedom House downgraded South Africa's ranking from free to partly free in the freedom of the press index (Bauldaf, 2011) and has remained that way since. In the 2014 World Press Freedom Index, South Africa ranked 42 out of 180 countries. These statistics relay that the government is moving away from a democratic path. Mogul (2012) argues that after

its initial progress, South Africa is slowly heading back onto a path similar to the Apartheid era secrecy. Reporters Without Borders (2013) view the new media laws as serious threats to transparency, freedom of expression and accountability, providing politicians and other government officials with the opportunity to abuse their powers, infringe civil societies, and acquire confidential information through the use of intrusive measures without being held accountable by the public, thereby challenging democracy (Nathan, 2010).

As most of the discussion around the Secrecy Bill involves professional journalism, it is also important to note the impact it has on ordinary citizens. It is this impact that is focused on in the thesis, particularly the youth, as people (outside of professional journalism) are creating and publishing their own content (Lasica, 2003; Bentley, 2008; Thurman 2008; Kaufhold et al., 2010). By focusing on the social media activity among the younger generation, this thesis aims to achieve this understanding. Young people who spend their time creating, sharing and consuming blogs, tweets, Facebook updates and entries, videos, and photos are transforming the power of communication. This increase in online activity has sparked a new form of democracy, where online mediums have created forums for free speech.

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned, the information crisis in South Africa has been on-going for several years, most notably since 2012. Such a crisis involves high and low periods of communication. Communication often increases considerably during critical periods and typically peaks during recovery phases through a participatory media culture that exists online. While information sharing after the “triggering event” is crucial to making sense of crisis situation, individuals also want to connect to their community (Schaefer & Dervin, 2001; Heverin & Zach, 2012). The idea of sense making is important to note, particularly in the context of social media and the present research. Sense making is the process by which people give meaning to experience. While it has been studied in other disciplines, sense making plays a role in crisis communication. In this context, sense making refers to the processes through which individuals, groups, and organisations communicate about a rapidly evolving threat situation.

The concept of sense making in crises is usually on the part of leaders and decision-makers so that they may simplify their account of the crisis they face, imposing a sense of order, reducing uncertainty, and guiding action. However, in this case, sense making refers to the citizens (youth) and how they rationalise the crisis, question it and reflect on it in an attempt to reduce confusion. It is not to suggest that people are unable to make sense of crises on their own, however social media provides a new dynamic which allows people to reach out to others in similar situations. The discussion of social media is not used as a way to challenge existing traditional forms of media, but to understand how it provides active users with empowering interactive platforms that could enhance their democratic participation and active citizenship. Collective behaviour aligns with the sense-making concept (Dervin, 2003; Sellnow, et al., 2002).

Very little research has examined the management of crisis communication response messages in the online sphere. Research on incorporating online media into crisis communication is just emerging. Jin and Liu (2010) have proposed a new model, blog-mediated crisis communication model (BMCC) to assist public relations professionals navigate the rapidly expanding online sphere. This study makes references to the social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC), which seeks to explain the public's use of social media during crises. The SMCC model proposes that public's use social media during crises for issue relevance, information seeking and sharing, and emotional venting. It further proposes that information form and source affect how organisations manage crises. This will be explored further in Chapter Three.

Gaining prominence, citizen participation is now an integral part of journalism studies (Fernando, 2008). Although there are broader aspects extending beyond active citizen participation, the most important element is being informed. The knowledge management paradigm constitutes a way in which the acquisition, transfer and assimilation of information can be effectively used to manage and control messages in an online crisis communication response situation. Access to government information through media outlets is the most common way that youths keep themselves informed. This thesis does not ignore traditional media and its role in crisis communication, however it acknowledges that with the developments in technology,

most media content is additionally published online. Furthermore, mobile technologies have made access to the Internet easier. Social media is powerful largely because of its three key elements, which are immediacy, ubiquity and availability (Landau, 2011). Depending on demographics, access to social networking platforms, currently the most common form of social media, is generally available at a low cost (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Shirky, 2011). Through these platforms, user generated content has blossomed. The importance of citizen participation today is noted in its recognition as an alternative voice in journalism.

The youth have become active participants in traditional news making processes, creating their own news stories within their respective online communities, and sharing them on their online social networking profiles and/or blogs (Thurman, 2008; Bruns & Highfield, 2012; Netzley & Hemmer, 2012). Social media has provided people with access to tools for content production, giving them greater means to express themselves, become part of a wider community and share content in ways that had never been witnessed before (boyd, 2008). According to Paulussen, et al., (2008), the growth in citizen participation and interaction online introduces alternative media and voices, increasing democratic potential. Traditional understandings of the term journalist have evolved with the progression of digital media. Digitalisation of the media landscape has introduced a global trend of expanding the practice of journalism to include free publications by frequent users, beyond media institutions who observe, describe, document and analyse events based on their opinions and experiences (UNESCO, 2013).

Anyone who participates in these activities represents a growing trend of online journalism and an alternative culture of people who are not professionals but are keen to share their opinions. User generated content is a term most commonly used to describe the different kinds of media content created and published by a demographic which was previously only consumers of information (Clever, Kirchner, Schray & Schulte, 2009). Notably, user-generated content is found to be more influential, memorable and trusted for millennials⁴ than other types of media (Bennet, 2014). The shift from user consumption to production is directly linked to the rise of social

⁴Millennials are defined as those ages 18 to 34 in 2015 (Washington Post, 2015)

networking tools, blogging software and online communities, which has made independent publishing possible (Paulussen, et al., 2007). Through social media, content travels at lightning speed. Its frequency and speed have made social media an interesting topic for discussion in crisis communication studies. Social networking platforms have become important tools for information sharing, breaking news, and deliberating crises, political processes and many other functions.

Stocker (1997) argues that one of the most important features of an effective crisis communication strategy involves creation and dissemination of key messages to target audiences. Since excessive media censorship is considered a crisis in a democracy directly affecting the quality of information for which the public has access, the citizens are the target audiences. The representation of citizens in this study is the population of youth. Therefore, how youth receive messages covered by the media is important to this research study. It is this type of expansion in digital media and increase in participation that has made this topic an ideal and appropriate research area. Media coverage of an event is a powerful mechanism that can shape public opinion. People seek information about a crisis and evaluate the cause of the event and the organisational responsibility for the crisis based on media coverage of the crisis (An & Gower, 2008)

Popularity in peer media platforms, virtual worlds, and group discussions are replacing several interests in mainstream media. This is particularly true among younger audiences who spend much of their free time online, interacting within their respective online communities (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2010). This is not to say that older age groups are not using social media. While older generations are likely to engage with online media, statistics show that 71% of millennials check social media at least once every day (Bennet, 2014). For this generation, online media is their main source of information, making their participation an important feature of research studies. The rapid growth of online mediums and increase in their popularity has produced an environment where communication occurs on the basis of trust and credibility (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2010). Therefore, multiple research studies have developed interests in exploring the discourse presented by the voices that exist on alternative media platforms. This often focuses on mainstream media's

contribution, as a source of information, to the participation, addressing its role in the conversations that are taking place online.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of this study is to explore the potential and growing impact of social media in the process of crisis communication in South Africa. Currently, crisis communication is important in research with the rapid evolution of new media channels. The study uses a qualitative approach to provide a picture of how social media has changed and is changing crisis communication. Premised on the stated purpose, the main objective of the research is to emphasise the importance of social media's contribution and user participation in crisis communication. In addition to focusing on mainstream media coverage of secrecy and censorship in a democracy, this research also focuses on alternative engagement that represents members of society who are at the core of a democracy: the citizens. In relation to the media coverage of the threats to media freedom posed by the Secrecy Bill, a further objective addressed by this thesis is the role that young South Africans have played in creating their own content based on the controversial and widely reported Secrecy Bill regarding its implications on media freedom in a democratic South Africa.

While their participation through media platforms is generally associated with the Internet, it does not begin and end there (Goode, 2009). However, as a focus, this study refers to the use of digital-interactive media (i.e. social networking platforms). In the context of this study, the term media coverage refers to print and online versions of mainstream media content. Broadcast media, online and print media have different operational systems relating to both coverage and relationship with government. Addressing both would make the study too broad. To limit the scope, the study focuses on discussions of press freedom in relation to coverage featured in print and online media. The purpose is not to find a correlation between traditional media coverage and online content but to explore the uses of social media during crisis events with reference to both.

The study acknowledges the on-going debate between the media and state regarding freedom of expression, however the focus is mainly on the uses of social media and

the youths' participation. One of the key principles in crisis communication is tracking what the audience is saying about issues that could potentially lead to a further crisis. This makes it essential that social media be the focus of this research. To know how social networking platforms contribute to crisis discussions is not only a benefit to crisis communication literature, but also to crisis communication practitioners, governments and anyone involved in a crisis. While there are several different platforms that enable discussion, only Twitter and blogs are discussed in this study. This is because; the researcher found that the platforms that are commonly used to represent younger generations are Twitter and Blogs. Both have enabled youths to maintain a model of news and events and have become systems where news is being reported and shared.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While many studies have discussed new media as a tool for communication in times of crises worldwide (see Macias, et al., 2009; Austin, Liu & Jin, 2012; Liu, Austin & Jin, 2011; Flew, et al., 2013; Kim, 2013), there is a lack of scholarly information on the potential of social media in South Africa. There have been countless examples of cases where social media has been an important tool in revolutions or disaster relief situations (the use of social media in the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa in February 2011 and the use of social media during Hurricane Katrina and earthquakes in Australia, for example), however, minimal attention has been paid to how these mediums are being used in a South African context. Studies of social media in crisis communication examine how Public Relations practitioners and organisations have integrated social media as part of their management tools (Eyrich, Padman & Sweetser, 2008) as opposed to how audiences use social media to communicate with and about crises.

The case chosen for research is the current media freedom debate that affects the quality of South African democracy. Many of the discussions that are presented on media freedom are still on going. In this regard, there are many opportunities to build a foundation for future research. There have been research studies that have given wide attention to the debates of media freedom and threats of censorship between the media and the state (Deane, 2005; McQuail, 2003; Bennet & Lawrence, 2008).

However, there is a lack of research that covers this discourse and its relation to digital media. The debates about the South African Constitution, debates about freedom of expression, and the Secrecy Bill are missing a youth perspective.

Since one of the main sources of information for citizens is print media, media censorship that limits what gets printed affects citizen participation. Online communication has provided researchers with opportunities to tap into discussions and gain detailed insights of conversations, perspectives and content that is being shared online. Therefore, it is important to gain insight on the reports, discussion and views of youths online who are interested in engaging in discussions of the Secrecy Bill and its effect in South Africa. As bloggers are becoming increasingly influential in society, this and similar studies will be particularly beneficial. With more people having access to the Internet, it is beneficial to understand how sharing opinions can influence the thoughts of a community. The findings of the present study will provide insight to existing literature that will help better understand the use of social media in crisis communication. Addressing the role youths can play in documenting the impact of the Secrecy Bill is useful in reshaping and restructuring the understanding of various social processes. While there has been much focus on the reactions among civil society groups, human rights organisations, media institutions and the international community, there has not been enough focus on what young South Africans, who are the future, think of the implications of the Secrecy Bill.

The sanctions that are imposed may not affect their journalistic practices directly, but they do affect the access to information that they may seek through investigative journalism. Its effects on democracy also affect the future of the South African community as a whole (Cooper, 2012; Van Der Westhuizen, 2012). The basis of all power is the collective body of the people. It is the citizens who are given the opportunity to choose, through their voting rights, who to appoint as public representatives in government. This means that the people who have been elected are accountable to those who voted for them (Citizens Movement, 2012). Conveniently, there are a large number of youth who keep themselves informed and actively participate in political discussions through online channels of their choice (Fanselow, 2009). Based on the premise that the Internet yields freedom of speech and expression, the researcher thought that it would be interesting to address younger

generations that frequent this medium. The journalistic capabilities and advantages it provides are not solely based on selling a news story but are more focused on reporting issues that are in line with private interests (Tilley & Cokley, 2008). This study should provide insight into how people who live by these values have responded to news of the South African government introducing laws that undermine their core practices and beliefs.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the limited literature on audience uses of social media during crises, the present study sought to examine the following research question:

Research Question: How have young South Africans used social media as communication tools to participate in the Secrecy Bill debate?

Sub-questions: What is the general practice of South African youths regarding use of social media during crises?

- Do youth use social media mostly for political or non-political crises?
- How does the media coverage of a crisis affect youth's engagement during crises?
- How has South Africa's media freedom debate demonstrated this study's premise?

To study the impact of social media in the process of crisis communication, a deeper sense of the characteristics, patterns and general uses of social media during crises in South Africa would assist in developing an understanding the role of young South Africans regarding the controversial and widely reported Secrecy Bill regarding its implications on media freedom in a democratic South Africa.

1.8 OUTLINE OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

To answer the above research questions, the next chapter (Chapter Two), presents a theoretical framework of crisis communication studies followed by an overview and discussion of the practice in South Africa. In Chapter Three, a detailed literature review of social media and growth of citizen participation is provided. Chapter Four provides an overview and in-depth analysis of the Secrecy Bill followed by the method for research presented in Chapter Five. Chapter Six forms the primary analysis of the research, which includes the findings and interpretations. Chapter

Seven includes the technical analysis made up of the sub-questions provided above. Chapter Eight concludes the research study with limitations and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 CRISIS COMMUNICATION

The crises that occurred internationally from the 1960s and 1970s emphasised the importance of crisis planning. For example, the 1962 Cuban missile crisis provided management theorists with the opportunity to prevent or encourage particular plans of action (Mehta & Xavier, 2012). According to Mehta and Xavier (2012) the crises experienced by Johnson & Johnson and Exxon, for example, contributed to influencing or challenging the principles and practices of crisis communication. These authors argue that from the late 1990s, there was a need to map and measure external environmental influences on the crisis management practice. A range of perspectives about crises have been historically embedded in the public relations discipline. Marra (1998) argues that crisis communication was established as an essential and functional tool in public relations. For this reason, to fully understand the functions of crisis communication, understanding public relations is important. It is the important element of all successful crisis management efforts (Marra, 1998).

2.1.1 Brief Description on Public Relations

The descriptions and definitions of public relations functions agree that its main functions include building and managing relationships with stakeholders by means of two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In this way, mutually beneficial relationships are created and can ensure the survival, growth and potentially good outcomes of an organisation (Grunig, 2006; le Roux & Naude, 2011). The emergence of new communication technologies has broadened the scope of public relations. As a result, media relations have become more knowledge based and there has been an increase in diverse audiences (Adams, 2006; Jones, 2012). In the context of new technology, Grupp (2000) suggests that part of public relations practice has become managing strategic online relationships. Advanced technology, such as social media, and the 24-hour news cycle means that audiences are now global (Rai & Cottle, 2007). It is for this reason that understanding public relations is beneficial to understanding crisis communication. They both focus on the relationships between an organisation and the public, more specifically two-way communication.

The following section aims to examine crisis communication and its relation to technology through a communication ecology point of view. The section evaluates how a certain crisis event such as the Secrecy Bill as one mode of communication is put in context of all relevant modes of communication. This approach is particularly evident in this thesis, as part of the study of social media. New media (to be discussed further in Chapter Three) has brought about many benefits and new opportunities. With a global 24-hour news cycle, new media increasingly captures public attention in the most creative ways (Ferreira, 2003). People think about all of the ways they go about gaining an understanding of information or simply acquiring information about their community, and in this case, a crisis event. New media has enabled people to communicate differently about things that are most important to them. In this way, responding to a crisis is in context of their communication environment. Crisis events point research towards a new ecology of emergency media to be explored further by first providing definitions and issues of crisis communication. The SMCC and sense making are the theoretical frameworks for this thesis. The chapter then puts the conceptual framework into context by discussing its practice in South Africa.

In general, one can posit that a crisis entails an event that constitutes a drastic change that potentially destabilises the way a system works. It could be an unpredictable event that creates an issue, keeps it alive or gives it strength (Austin, Liu & Jin, 2012). An issue that may be caused is a “contestable point, a difference of opinion regarding fact, value, or policy, the resolution of which has consequences for a strategic plan and future success or failure” (Heath & Palenchar, 2009, p. 93). Seeger (2006) noted that crises could also be intentional events where the outcome of the intention, is not received well by the public. These descriptions have been evident in the Secrecy Bill and are the reason this research focuses on this Bill in the context of crisis communication. However, below are definitions of crises that this study will use. Fearn-Banks (2011, p. 3) defines a crisis as “a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome.” This negative outcome can affect an organisation, company or industry, as well as their publics. Another definition in research by Perry, et al., (2003) finds that crises are commonly defined by occurrences that attract extensive national news media coverage. Lastly, Macias, et al., (2009) have defined crises not only in terms of physical impact – property damage, bodily injury or death – but also in terms of social disruption. These three definitions will be used as a definitive point

in this research study as the Secrecy Bill highlights 1) a negative outcome for media freedom in South Africa affecting media organisations and their publics, 2) extensive media coverage both nationally and internationally and 3) social disruption within the South African community due to their minimised right to freedom of speech and expression.

According to Quarantelli (1998), a crisis has four stages:

- Mitigation – which is a continuing effort to lessen the impact of crises
- Preparedness – which is the design of plans and procedures to minimise the impact
- Response – which are the actions taken to save lives and decrease any damage
- Recovery – where there are actions are taken to return things to normal

Weick (1993, p. 633) calls the critical period of a crisis the “cosmology episode” in which an individual perceives that the world is no longer rational and orderly. Sense making during such critical periods is vital because individuals may be facing real-time, life-threatening situations requiring immediate and accurate information. Solomon (1997) found that when people begin to experience the “cosmology episode” the intensity of their reactions impacts sense-making behaviour. When individuals express their inner thoughts and feelings in a conversation, they may not always expect to receive a response. In sense making, Dervin (1999) called this the “talking cure” that is a concept originated with Freud’s (1957) psychoanalytic focus on the verbalisation of thoughts, feelings, and dreams to release difficulties with inner struggles and conflicts. Sense making and the “talking cure” are strongly related to crisis communication practices, where audiences seek crisis communication information and use new media to communicate around crises. Dervin’s (1983) theory of sense making will be explored later in this chapter.

In all crisis management efforts, communication is an important element (le Roux & Naude, 2011). One of the key components to successfully handling a crisis is controlling the flow of information by effectively selecting an appropriate communication medium to disseminate key messages and reach the target audience (Wigley & Zhang, 2011). International crisis events in 2011 and 2012 point to the emergence of a new ecology of emergency media, which now incorporates

conventional mass media (broadcast media such as radio and television in particular) alongside many channels, from SMS⁵ to social media. Indeed, what is becoming clear is that it is not any one of these media forms and platforms, but the interweaving or marriage of these different channels that ensures effective crisis communication. Given the rapid evolution in communication and different types of media that have become available for a vast spectrum of publics, crisis communicators face new communication challenges (Coombs, 2007). The most recent communication challenge is in regard to the introduction of social media as platforms for deliberating crises.

With the introduction of the Internet it has become necessary for new factors to be taken into consideration within crisis communication. Social networking mediums (discussed further in Chapter 3) have provided strong platforms for young people to contribute to political processes, express their views and learn more on issues within or outside of their environment. With this type of access youths are able to promote democratic processes. Research by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2006) shows that during crises, social media usage increases. Social media enables its users to virtually band together to share information and demand resolutions during crises (Jin, Liu & Austin, 2011). This has pointed crisis communication towards a new form of participation. These changes in the communication realm suggest that organisations and governments no longer have a choice about whether to pay attention to social media trends. The use of social media in the early years of their adoption had been dismissed for a lack of credibility and accuracy in comparison to mainstream media. However, more recently, organisations and crisis communication practitioners have noted the importance of integrating social media into crisis management (Jin, Liu & Austin, 2011). During crisis communication the stakes are often high; it is important for communicators to provide evidence-based guidelines to effectively meet the public's expectations for communication through social media.

There are two main theories of crisis communication that can be used to describe and define crisis communication. These are; Coomb's (2007) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) and Benoit's (1997) image repair theory. Despite their

⁵ SMS – short messaging system

wide use in crisis communication theory, this study did not see them as fit to address the research question because these theories do not address public's crisis communication behaviours. To this end, scholars have called for more theory building in crisis communication research. To address public's crisis communication behaviours and the importance of social media in crisis communication, Jin and Liu (2010) have proposed a BMCC model serving as a roadmap for crisis communicators when the need to respond to blogs arises during and after crises. The BMCC model has since been renamed to the social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC), which reflects a broader aspect of communication online through a variety of social media platforms, not only limited to influential bloggers. It is these aspects of the SMCC model that make it suitable for reference in this study. A brief description of the model follows.

2.2 THE SMCC MODEL

The SMCC model seeks to explain the public's use of social media by first stating that social media use during crises is motivated by issue relevance, information seeking and sharing (Liu, et al., 2011). Made up of two parts, it first explains how crisis communication forms and sources affect responses and the best practices for crisis communication in a social mediated environment. People who frequent social media are influenced by content that provides them with credible information and addresses their informational and emotional needs (Jin, et al., 2011). It is for this reason that young people are more likely to turn to social media in times of crisis, as they seek out a shared emotional space where they can feel supported and express their frustrations in a space with people of similar interests (Liu, et al., 2011).

One component of the SMCC model reflects that crises can be sparked and spread online through a variety of social media platforms and off-line interactions. It emphasises the ubiquity of online and off-line shared opinions among people who are affected by the crisis. The SMCC model has been used in crisis communication studies that seek to evaluate the influence social media has in communication and as recommendations for developing online crisis communication strategies. Austin, Liu and Jin (2012) used the SMCC to study how audiences seek information from social and traditional media in relation to what factors affect media use during crises. Hvass

(2014) applied the SMCC model to the SCCT in a study of crisis communication within the backdrop of social media. Jin, et al., (2014) have tested essential components of the SMCC model to understand how publics produce, consume and share crisis information through social media and other sources. Guidry and Messner (2014) applied the SMCC model to analyse the social media site, Instagram, as a new emerging crisis information form.

Youths increasingly use social networking sites, such as Twitter and blogs (both platforms are discussed in detail in Chapter Three). In fact, Twitter’s growth has become an effective tool for communication during and after crises (Jin, et al., 2011). The SMCC can be used to describe an interaction between an organisation in crisis and three types of publics. The three types of publics describe producers and consumers of information before, during and after crises (Austin, et al., 2012). The first grouping is influential social media creators, who create and produce crisis information for others to consume. The second is social media followers, who consume information that has been shared and lastly the social media inactives, who may consume the crisis information indirectly through communication with social media followers or traditional media that either follows influential social media creators or social media followers (Austin, et al., 2012). The model is used to describe how information is distributed to each type of public and how publics’ respond to crises.

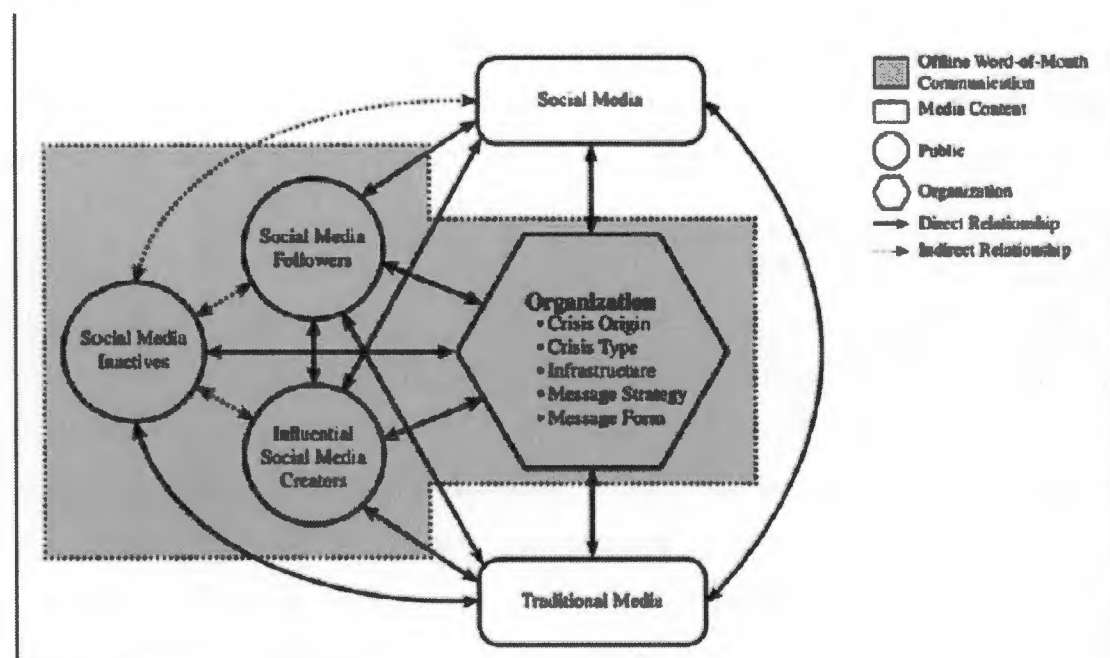


Figure 1. Social-mediated crisis communication model

The arrows in Figure 1 show the direction of communication with the key publics in the SMCC model. It identifies the channels of communication used both by organisations and audiences when responding, reacting, searching or sharing crisis information. Each arrow indicates a two-way communication flow between each crisis communication source, indicating that while social media followers may receive crisis information from influential social media creators or traditional media, each also occurs in reverse. Traditional media may also source crisis information from social media followers (Jin, et al., 2011). The solid arrows in the model indicate direct communication relationships (e.g. social media and traditional media directly inform each other's crisis coverage) and the dotted arrows indicate indirect communication relationships (e.g. social media in actives receive crisis information shared on social media via social media followers).

The SMCC model also accounts for how organisations respond to crises by five considerations: crisis origin, crisis type, infrastructure, message content and message form, listed under organisation in Figure 1. While, each consideration may not always apply to every crisis an organisation may experience, each forms an important part of the SMCC model because the organisation is the central source of information (Jin, et al., 2011). Each consideration will be elaborated on for further understanding below.

Crisis origin: - this refers to where the crisis originated. Whether it originated from an internal issue (e.g. mismanagement) or an external issue (e.g. rumours). The origin of the crisis affects the organisation resulting in the need for crisis response strategies.

Crisis type: - this can take on three forms, which are victim, accident or intentional crises. Crisis types have been strongly emphasised in crisis communication literature. Coombs (2011) identifies crisis types in the situational crisis communication theory. The different types of crises play an important role in how organisations should communicate.

Organisational infrastructure: - depending on the crisis origin and type, the organisational infrastructure indicates how best the crisis should be handled. Communicators will decide whether the crisis should be handled through centralised messages or interpersonal communication through the organisation, individual branches or affiliates.

Message content: - these considerations refer to attributes of the crisis message and the information included in the message that helps publics respond to the message and to understand it.

Message form: - the message form is how the message is conveyed (e.g. through a tweet, a press release, a magazine or newspaper article) and may also include the source of the message (e.g. the organisation, publics, journalists etc.). Twitter and blog posts are emerging message forms that can be conveyed by both organisations and audiences.

While the SMCC model is often used by communication practitioners to track how crisis types, crisis origin and organisational infrastructure affect an audience's perception of crisis responses, this study uses the SMCC model to understand how audiences communicate during crises. Drawing on literature of the SMCC model, social media is providing new virtual spaces for dialogue for young people to network with one another and share grievances or organise protests by way of achieving change (Saleh, 2013). Using the SMCC model, social media is classified as a form of crisis information. It will be used as a road map for understanding the distribution of information on social media. Many conversations that occur online increase further and spread through to offline communities (see Figure 1). The main focus of the model in this research study is social media and the information sharing activities that occur between the key publics of the model. To understand how audiences are using social media in times of crisis, the second grouping social media followers form an important part of this study. Crisis information is transmitted between traditional media and social media, which serve as key sources of information for social media followers. Considering social media as a crisis information form illustrates the impact of online communication in spreading news and information. As mentioned above, both the SMCC and sense making are the theories used in the thesis, therefore a description of sense making follows.

2.3 SENSE MAKING THEORY

Focusing particularly on the social media platforms used in the study, Heverin and Zach (2012) have studied how micro-blogging changes and contributes to collective sense making during a crisis. Being able to share information online through the

increased use of social media tools has changed the way citizen's form an understanding of the events that surround a crisis. Crisis related information is no longer bound to a single centralised source. For some, news media may no longer be the preferred source of crisis related information. The SMCC model provides an evaluation of the influence that social media tools have in crisis communication. It helps us understand how publics produce, consume and share crisis information through social media sources. Using the SMCC model to describe how information is distributed to each type of public and how publics' respond to crises, the sense-making theory will be used as a complementing theory.

When audiences begin to engage online during the critical periods of a crisis, there are various themes shared in conversations that help audiences make sense of a situation individually (Heverin & Zach, 2012). Dervin's (1983) theory of sense making defines it as a process where individuals attempt to bridge the cognitive gaps that they face in everyday life as well as during non-routine times such as during a crisis. As individuals attempt to bridge their cognitive gaps, they may face challenges such as conflicting information. In these situations there are high levels of uncertainty. A study presented by Heverin and Zach (2012) shows that social media can play a vital role in collective sense making during crises. Dervin (2003) argues that since an individual does not have a complete view of a constantly changing reality, he or she needs to reach out to others to make sense of what is taking place. An individual cannot make sense beyond his or her bounded rationality (March & Heath, 1994). Therefore, individuals must "muddle" through together with other individuals to understand both the order and chaos that is taking place in their world (Dervin, 2003, p. 36). Essentially communication plays an important role in the response, decisions and actions of those involved because what someone shares can influence and impact the thought process of another person.

Because social media provides forums for discussion it is with this type of opinion related communication that sense making is easily possible following an event that triggered a crisis. With their interface that allows many users to be active on one platform at the same time, users are able to connect. The publics described in the SMCC model, and mentioned above, play a role in each other's sense making. While social media creators create and produce information for others to consume and share,

Solomon (1997) found that even when individuals express their own inner thoughts, before they are given a response and even if they aren't, it is a talking cure.

Furthermore, Figure 1 shows the direction of communication used both by official sources and audiences when responding, reacting, searching or sharing information. By sharing information online, influential social media creators are reacting and making sense of the information received from traditional or official sources. Through a continued process of two-way communication, they continue to express their thoughts. Once thoughts have been expressed it is the beginning of sense making (Dervin, 1999). Social media followers and social media inactives have the opportunity to make sense of situations through the information provided by influential social media creators and vice versa. Although influential social media creators may be the publics who have first-hand information, their followers may share an opinion with them that allows them to further understand crisis processes as a whole.

2.4 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Skinner and Mersham (2008) South Africa is a developing country with an emerging economy. The author describes the media environment in the country as having provided spaces for people to engage and deliberate over issues that may affect them (Skinner & Mersham, 2008). It is no different from other countries, where youths and new media have played important roles capturing global attention through citizen empowerment and transformation of societies (Anthony & Thomas, 2010; Starbird & Palen, 2010; Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Bruns & Burgess, 2012). Earlier studies have examined how professionals are using new media tools to communicate with their audiences and to build consumer relationships. For example, Naudé, Froneman and Atwood (2004) explored the interactive nature of the Internet by applying the two-way asymmetrical model of public relations to the websites of ten South African, non-profit non-governmental organisations, with the aim to show how non-governmental organisations build consumer relationships.

Similarly, Erasmus (2012) measured how the increased use of social media is impacting communication practices in South Africa in comparison to studies

conducted in developed countries. However, despite these studies there are very few that have examined how the audiences are using social media to communicate with and about organisations during crises (Austin, et al., 2012), especially in the context of South African crisis communication. As such, this study attempts to build literature by approaching crisis communication through youth's interactions online. Focusing on youth's communication during crises provides unique insights to the potential and impact of social media.

Following South Africa's transition to a democracy in 1994, the South African government actively moved towards integrating communication into a more professional role (Holtzhausen, et al., 2003). South Africa's democratic transformation created both opportunities and challenges for organisations. The developmental context and change in economic and political environment results in a need for excellent corporate communication functions where stakeholder relationships prove to be more unpredictable (le Roux & Naude, 2011). Crisis communication roles often fall under the responsibility of an organisations public relations department or an outsourced external corporate communications firm.

Discussed above, one of the key functions in crisis communication is managing to successfully control the flow of information by developing and disseminating key messages to the media, publics and stakeholders. This is a function that is most common in public relations practice (Wigley & Zhang, 2011). The South African public relations industry has taken the lead in Africa. There has been an awareness of the importance of public relations in South Africa for more than fifty years (Meintjes & G de Wet, 2009). This includes producing literature, learning programs, courses and training led by PRISA, established in 1957. PRISA plays a leading role in representing professionals and driving transformation throughout the southern African region and has registered practitioners in Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa (PRISA, 2014).

According to Ferriera (1999), crisis communication is practiced differently by different organisations especially in different countries. The way crisis experts communicate with audiences usually depends on the culture of the particular country. When examining something as important as crisis communication in South Africa, the

trends and directions of the change process are to be taken into consideration. The specific roles identified require different skills and have different contributions to the roles that would be identified in the USA or Europe. The period since 1994 in South Africa has been marked by a number of political, social and economic changes that have deeply influenced the country. One of the most important features of South Africa is development and change. Therefore, the role of crisis communication is shaped by the dynamics of a society in transition (le Roux & Naude, 2011). Holtzhausen's (2005) survey of changes in public relation's practice in South Africa since 1994 stresses the importance of two-way communication, relationship building and importance of understanding an African culture. Changes in the political climate have also changed the way practitioners communicate. Currently, communication with publics not only has to be inclusive and participative but the cultural attributes of the public also have to be taken into consideration (Holtzhausen, 2005). Since political changes focused on democratisation, there were greater demands for transparency. This new political environment brought the government closer to the public (Holtzhausen, 2005). Public relations professionals have since benefitted from increased press freedom, which has made the media more accessible. Media relations gained in importance. Public relations is an important subject because the aftermath of a crisis will always be remembered for the way communication with the people is handled (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Coombs, 2011). South Africa's diverse audience not only changed the context of communication but also the way communication takes place (Holtzhausen, 2005).

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework of the study, that is, the SMCC model and the sense-making theory. These theories were introduced in this chapter and will be drawn out during the findings in reference to the Secrecy Bill. Furthermore, the chapter also concluded with a discussion of the public relations practice in South Africa to highlight the importance of communication, specifically two-way communication in crisis communication, as well as the relationship building aspect via social media (which will be discussed further in the following chapter). It is important to note both the two-way aspect of communication as it is important in the SMCC model, and relationship building as it is important in sense making. The next chapter will focus on social media and how crisis communication can take shape online.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

In the previous chapter a discussion of crisis communication theory was provided, highlighting that literature in crisis communication has developed to include the growth in use of new media. These new media technologies share at least three defining features: they are digital, converging and networked. Being digitalised eases the process of information sharing, access, and interface with other “smart” devices and users. As such, the public is interconnected regardless of geographical boundaries or time zones (Goggin & Newell, 2003). Continued advancement of technology and a rise in popularity of new media platforms has led to participative content production practices termed user generated content. This refers to different types of media content produced by anyone who has access to the participative web (Clever, Kirchner, Schray & Schulte, 2009). User generated content leads to increased consumer participation and facilitates the free flow of opinions and the sharing of experiences online (Wang and Owyang 2010). In such a setting, there is an on going levelling of the playing field, by shifting the command control of communication from organisations to consumers (George, 2012). Youth have become empowered by social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Blogs. “Netizens”⁶, “citizen journalists”, bloggers and social media influencers are emerging as important stakeholders whom practitioners need to engage with (Freberg, et al., 2011).

It has been argued that the rise of social media has allowed the escalation of crises (Siah, et al., 2010). This explains why, when crises are reported in online media, more people become aware of them and even help to perpetuate them by circulating them further. Social media is thus unique by offering alternative sources of news and information. However, one cannot always trust the information they find online. A disadvantage of the use of social media to distribute information is that it could lead to the spread of inaccurate information, spoofs and “spin-offs” (Ho, et al., 2011). On Twitter for example, there are a number of parody accounts that purport views of the

⁶ A user of the Internet, particularly a habitual or avid one

official accounts by posting satirical messages (Wan, et al., 2013). However, according to Pang (2013), despite the disadvantages that one might face, it is undeniable that social media creates hype around particular topics, particularly in crisis situations. Social media hype, defined by Pang (2013) is netizen-generated hype that causes a huge interest in social media spheres. It is usually triggered by a key event and sustained by self-reinforcing quality in its ability for users to engage in discussion. It can exist even before news evolves into media hype. This chapter elaborates on crisis communication, social media and participation by first examining a brief overview of social media followed by a review of the growing relationship between crisis communication and social media, and practices of public relations and crisis communication in South Africa.

The previous sections have mentioned the ideas of new, alternative and social media; the following is a brief description. Atkinson (2006, p. 52 cited in Kenix, 2009) defines alternative media as “any media that are produced by non-commercial sources and attempts to transform existing social roles and routines by critiquing and challenging power structures.” Lately, alternative media is often in reference to Internet based media forms. It refers to forms of self-managed, non-hierarchical news coverage platforms, produced by the people whose concern it represents, through direct participation and engagement (Atton, 2001; Vatikiosis, 2004; Fuchs, 2010). Developing interests in computer-mediated communication are concerned with the different types of social interaction occurring within cyberspace. Over the past twenty years alternative media has brought about a range of different text-based digital genres, in which users can write and interact with each other (Downing, 2003; Hookway, 2008). Rather than being just another source of information, alternative forms of media promote social interaction and enable active citizenship, whether by citizens featuring in news stories themselves, or by creating and producing their own content relevant to their daily activities (Haas, 2004). It aims to include people who are normally excluded from mainstream media news cycles or coverage by offering different news agendas and featuring alternative news coverage. In contrast to mainstream media’s ideal of informing citizens, alternative media takes informing citizens a step further and promote citizen participation.

Alternative media have transformed consumers into active participants of everyday events affecting their lives. Different forms of alternative media have made it much easier to focus on the capabilities of electronic and cyberspace dimensions that are changing lives (Schauer, 2001; Kenix, 2009). The active political involvement of a democratic nation's population is seen as a necessary means to the growth and survival of that nation (Colby, 1976). This has continuously been a development seen with improvements in communication and the spread of information. By offering a space for citizens to become reporters of their own experiences, struggles and lives, alternative media have potentially covered important social issues differently than main presses. However, it is important to note that although alternative media have provided spaces for citizen participation, citizens continuously rely on mainstream sources to provide content for analysis or for curation of content (Lasica, 2003; Kenix, 2009). The most popular form of alternative media is social networking commonly referred to as social media (boyd, 2007; Fenton, 2011; Storck, 2011). Social networking describes online file sharing services, where users produce and share content that provides knowledge, ideas, news and opinions (boyd, 2007; Drury, 2008). As the focus of this research is on citizen participation in using social media platforms, a further understanding of the impact and capabilities of social media is provided below.

3.1.1 Social Media

Social media is a concept that is often used to describe a variety of platforms that build on the idea of collaboration and dissemination of content. Social media are digital tools and applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange between audiences (Russo et al., 2007; Holmes, 2011; Austin et al., 2012). While it is considerably a new term, it is not an entirely new concept. According to boyd (2009), media has been leveraged for sociable purposes for many centuries. Even the first application developments of the Internet included instant messaging, chat rooms, and bulletin boards, among other applications that were all used for communication and sharing. Nevertheless, the idea of social media has gained traction. There are new genres of social media which are driven by user-generated content that describe new ways that people communicate, gather and share information. The most widely used understanding of social media centres on social networking. Social networking platforms are best understood as web-based services

that allow individuals to create public or private profiles within bounded systems. As a personal media tool, users create a profile that they use to connect with different users whom they share similar interests with (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social media profiles are used for various reasons depending on the person. People generally create profiles to:

- Build social relationships within communities
- Create, publish and distribute content that could be in the form of photos, texts, videos, or audio
- Share opinions, through commentary or new posts, on content that has been received or published elsewhere (e.g. mainstream media) (Drury, 2008)

Consumers of information are simultaneously contributors of information providing the basis for user-generated content. A survey conducted by Oh (2011) shows that citizens produce and share information with other users online because they enjoy it. By actively participating in discussions online, users learn new matters. Social media can also serve as channels for expressing collective consciousness and national solidarity.

The capabilities and democratic potential of social media platforms has attracted much research. Research on social media emphasises its capacity to empower citizens (Haas, 2004). By producing their own content, users feel as though they are a part of democratic processes. Its democratic significance rests in its ability to affect the everyday lives of citizens. Citizens use their weblogs and social networking profiles during crises to provide timely updates on events. These technological changes have impacted the way people send and receive information. Social media has seen an increase in the transmission of messages and the usage of these messages as news sources (Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide, 2011). These media are being used to circulate real-time information about a variety of crises and risk information.

This widespread generation of content and consumption enables individuals and communities to gather and engage in conversations in shared social contexts beyond geographic constraints (boyd, 2009; boyd, Golder & Lotan, 2010). It has become the simplest tool used to connect people who share similar interests, political views, participate in the same activities or are eager to explore new activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common practices,

language or shared identities (boyd & Ellison, 2007). By creating and discussing content through collaborative efforts, users come to a shared understanding of the content that is created (Westerman, et al., 2011). Sites vary by the extent to which they incorporate information and communication tools. Some may focus on mobile connectivity while others will focus more on blogging, photo or video sharing.

In a democracy, there are different ways on how to create effective and meaningful engagement with the youth, that contributes to policy making. One of the most important ways is to engage through democratised platforms. Democratised platforms refer to, “free” and “open” public spaces where public space where lively debates can take place on many issues still considered off limits to mainstream media. Social media tools therefore have the potential to connect the youth to political decision-makers. Furthermore, while, promoting digital access does not guarantee freedom, social media tools have enabled citizen engagement that supports the capabilities of democratic activists through providing forums for the public to document their experiences, spread important news of on-going protesting and share their own feelings through words and images. As the focus of this research is on citizen participation in using social media platforms, a further understanding is provided below.

3.2 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This section discusses the importance of this type of engagement with social media as a conduit of information between the government and younger audiences. Engagement via the Internet and social media is important to note. This is because an ethnographic study, conducted by Carey (2005) observed that people within their homes have begun to form social and informational relationships with the Internet (cited in Macias, Hilyard & Freimuth, 2009). The participants of the study showed that use of the Internet has become part of a daily routine, much as brushing their teeth. It is the freedom of choice and ability to access the content they choose that has made the Internet a more preferred medium of communication. In the political sphere, this is what is referred to as citizen participation online. Citizen participation has emerged as a practice that seeks to better inform citizens. Its growth has been so rapid that the language and definitions have not always kept its pace, are not universally accepted and are therefore, still largely contested (Tilley & Cokley, 2008). Netzley

and Hemmer (2012) define citizen participation as a practice by citizens with no qualifications, formal training or skills in journalism that collect and distribute news content. Lasica (2003) and Hermida (2013), describe a journalist as anyone who is an eyewitness to an event, an interpreter of events and who reports it as honestly or accurately as possible. These definitions have not accounted for someone who reports an event inaccurately. However, when someone blogs an event, it is regarded as reporting (Bentley, 2008; Hyde-Clarke, 2010; Netzley & Hemmer, 2012). For the benefit of this research, these definitions are used to address the participation of youth online.

According to Clark, Goldstein and Berendes (2013), a core principle in citizen participation is the idea that people should be given opportunities to have their voices heard to influence the decisions that impact their lives. News media has been used to fulfil participation and engagement, playing a mediating role between elected officials and the public. Apart from traditional media, social media has become common in citizen participation. Online versions of news consumption are attracting a new growing audience (Pew Research Center, 2010 & 2012; Stassen, 2010). For example, during the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, there was plenty of media coverage of the demonstrations, protests, riots and resistance demanding the overthrow of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. In one of CNN's interviews, Wael Gonhim, a young activist said, "If you want a free society, just give them Internet access." (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Abusharif, 2014) His statement is characterised by the instrumental use of social media to bring about political change. Media coverage of the aftermath of the Egyptian Revolution focused on how these new types of media acted as effective tools for promoting engagement through allowing and supporting forums for free speech (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Digital platforms have become crucial mediums through which people can express themselves and share ideas. The increased prevalence of interactive media options, particularly social networking sites, has enabled a creation of media content and participation in a growing virtual environment (Anthony & Thomas, 2010).

Undeniably, news practices are changing in the wake of technological capabilities. Advances in the information era, specifically social networking (discussed further below) have proven to be profound innovations. Consequently, traditional roles of

media are changing with the ubiquitous nature of these new media technologies (Mayfield, 2007). While acknowledging the centrality of traditional journalism in the shaping of modern democratic society, today, audiences are becoming more involved and creative in various information sharing processes (Miller, 2008). Individuals worldwide are being empowered. The Internet has increased the speed, reach and comprehensiveness of journalism available to the public, lowering the costs of anyone who is interested in participating (Reese, et al., 2005). As mentioned earlier, it is fast becoming a major source of news among younger generations and communities (Netzley & Hemmer, 2012).

Regarding the younger generations, it is noted that many young people are not regular consumers of news, yet the Internet has penetrated its way into news consumption. When young people do seek out news, they often turn to online channels for peer reviews of mainstream media news coverage (Bowman & Willis, 2003; Flew, 2011). According to a Pew Research Centre study (2010), nearly three in four young Americans ages 18-29 cite the Internet as their main source of news, over television, newspapers and radio. In South Africa the results are similar; in 2013 there were 3.2 million smartphone users in the country, and 2.8 million of them were over 18 years of age. Therefore, it is not surprising that Internet users keep themselves informed in current events through online channels such as social networking sites. Scholars, for example Macias et al. (2009), have identified numerous uses of the Internet that are similar to traditional media, like providing entertainment, information, and social utility but go beyond traditional forms additionally providing interactivity and interpersonal connectivity (Macias, et al., 2009).

The number of media platforms provides citizens with greater means to experiment with communication tools. Audiences, who were previously passive consumers of news, have taken a post-modern approach to content production with more personalised styles of news reporting. There is great potential lying in user-generated content, depending on the way it is addressed. Research by Netzley and Hemmer (2012) shows that although user-generated content lacks the same standards as professional content, it does not affect a consumer's perception of its credibility. The credibility of user-generated content will be discussed further under social media. The expansion of social media has facilitated the growth in popularity of independently

published websites, news stories and blogs (Thurman, 2008). Participatory media technologies that allow for the creation and distribution of user generated content have become powerful media tools that define an audience.

The growth of digital media has gained prominence in South Africa. Recent research carried out by consultancy World Wide Worx (2014) shows that the Internet economy contributes two percent to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP). This contribution is rising by around 0.1 percent a year, reaching 2.5 percent by 2016. Consumers' access to entertainment and media content are being democratised by the expansion of access to the Internet and the explosive growth in smart phones, laptops and tablets. Smartphones give people access to news, email and social networks, in particular those in lower-income brackets that do not have daily access to computers. It is clear then that citizen participation has evolved becoming increasingly evident that traditional forms of media are no longer the only source of information and that there is now more sources of alternative media that can be used. An important feature of alternative media platforms is how these platforms are used to contribute to crisis communication practices. Through social networking platforms that have encouraged citizens to produce their own media, citizens have the potential to set media agenda's (Anthony & Thomas, 2010). These new communication technologies have made it possible for citizens to represent common interests by actively participating in the creation and dissemination of information (Anthony & Thomas, 2010). They have given citizens a voice and thereby, power. The people's participation itself and the content they produce positively contribute to an informed citizenry and democracy (Nip, 2006 cited in Khamis & Vaughn, 2011).

3.2.1. Social Networking

Since their introduction, the effects of social networks on human communication have naturally contributed to a change in lifestyles. The most important use of social networks is not that they are a form of media but that they are social. Their nature allows users to interact while providing them with information. These sites are now responsible for countless advantages in social, cultural, economic and political spheres (Hjorth & Kim, 2005). Publics are now more in control of what they read, hear or watch. The increasing use and popularity of social networks has presented several opportunities for different situations. Some examples of social networks are,

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Flickr, to name a few. These services also include blogs and podcasts. Depending on the use of the different social networks, social networks enable users to become convenient tools of communication for sharing information with others (Hjorth & Kim, 2005). Social media and its platforms are more than just tools to deliver information. They are about building relationships, receiving perceptions and exchanging ideas. Social networking can be a beneficial practice to assist learning about a range of new topics and events (Drury, 2008). Many users have integrated these sites into their daily practices. Consequently, social networks have transformed the way people communicate worldwide and they are continuing to increase in popularity, which has created an incentive for citizens to deliberate over crises on these respective sites. Previous traditional roles of the media are changing, resulting from the ubiquitous nature of social media (Mayfield, 2007 & 2011).

Social networks represent multiple public spheres today. Habermas's (1974) theory of the public sphere described public conversations occurring between spheres of private and public. Different forms of social networks have developed as a public sphere that represents discursive spaces where users, either on their own or as representatives of social groups, can debate on public issues that are pertinent to their lives or of their concern. It has emerged as a form of bridge media by linking traditional media with citizen participation and contribution (Reich, 2008). As a result, social networks offer venues for ordinary citizens to share their views. Before developments in digital media began to grow, this was very rare. These platforms now provide users with opportunities to speak freely on topics of their choice. The growth in popularity of forms of social media has made citizen participation fruitful.

One of the most cited examples of the potential of social networking is the crisis surrounding the 2009 Iranian Elections. Young adults, academics, conservatives and religious groups took to Twitter, both to protest and cover protests against what they believed was a fraudulent election to call for freedom and justice (Burns & Eltham, 2009; Quirk, 2009). Another example is of an anonymous Iraqi architect who used his independent weblog, "Where is Raed?" to report news of the Second Gulf War through his eyes (Haas, 2005). His blog was picked up by millions of readers, attracting such wide attention that his eyewitness reporting was featured in both

mainstream Arab and Western news media (Haas, 2005). Similarly, people have shared information on Twitter to raise awareness of the campaigns that were held to raise money for Haiti after the earthquake in 2010. However, while the benefits of using social networks such as blogs and Twitter are evident in terms of information sharing, they do not come without their challenges.

One of the challenges surrounding the increased spread of information on social networks is the question of its credibility. In traditional media, before an article is published, there is a process to go through known as gatekeeping. It is a process where a professional decides what information to include in an article and how the information should be presented. There are often numerous people who participate in gatekeeping such as journalists, editors or even media owners. Gatekeeping checks information for accuracy ensuring the credibility of the information that is distributed. Social media has changed traditional media practices where either active users become their own gatekeepers or online media channels suffer from a lack of gatekeeping practices (Westerman, et al., 2011). The gatekeeping function has shifted from the producers of the content to consumers of the content. Consumers of the content are responsible for deciding whether the information is credible or not. Although questions around the credibility of social media content have formed important discussions of their capabilities, they have not affected social media's prominence as a source for information sharing.

The different platforms have become adept at providing information to people seeking to reduce the uncertainty that is often caused in crises or high-risk situations (Westerman, et al., 2011). While social networks do not replace traditional journalism, it creates another layer of information and diverse opinion (Newman, 2009). Blogs and Twitter are prime examples of citizen participation, social media and user-generated content and will be discussed in detail further below.

3.2.2. *Blogs*

A blog, a shortened term for web log, is a form of personal media within a public web page that serves as commentary, opinions and uncensored, unfiltered sources of information in the form of an online journal (Garden, 2011; Wright & Hinson, 2008; Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2004; Ferdig & Trammell, 2004). In the same way that a person keeps a personal journal, blogs tend to be updated frequently providing content on account of experiences, beliefs, views, interests, discoveries and personality of the author (Coleman, 2005; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005; Gardner, 2011). It can also function as a technical advice column, sports chat, celebrity gossip entertainment forum and political commentary, if not all of the above (Drezner & Farrell, 2004). Blogging software allows bloggers to set up profiles and organise published posts in an archive by chronological order so that they are made easily accessible to a person visiting the site, searching for past entries or any other material relevant to their search on the web (Coleman, 2005). One of the most striking features of blogs is their diverse complex visual designs and layouts. In addition to textual expression, they also offer visual expression by use of images, colour schemes, videos, titles and memes.

Since 2000, the Blogosphere, an intellectual cyberspace that bloggers occupy, has grown at an excessive rate. They have gained significance because blogging software is made freely available to online users encouraging interaction in multiple spheres. Unlike personal web pages that are difficult to set up, anyone with an opinion who is keen to share it can create a blog and publish a post with links to other sites in a matter of minutes (Hjorth & Kim, 2005; Wright & Hinson, 2008). The system of blogging ultimately develops a strong sense of an online community (Hjorth & Kim, 2005). Blogging represents the best form of initiating conversations online, through the ability for users to directly comment on original blog posts. Information exchange within the blogosphere occurs mostly through commentary on posts. The incorporation of commentary directly onto posts has the ability to start extended opinion-based discussions (Woodly, 2008). Readers generally have no reason to hesitate engaging with the author's argument, by also providing his or her own opinion. Blogs represent the best form of invitation that writers use to initiate conversations with readers online (Thurman, 2008). They can take on many forms as either, thinker – sharing original information and opinion, linker – sharing social

information, or filter – selecting, evaluating and aggregating information existing across the Internet (Macias, et al., 2009). Each of these types can cover many topics with frequent updating. Blogs are typically quite personal and individual and can therefore, be used to gain insight into bloggers' perceptions (Thelwall & Stuart, 2007).

Functioning as a key interface for public interaction and alternative sources of information, blogs have now become listening posts of modern democracy and public opinion (Drezner & Farrell, 2004; Herring, et al., 2004; Woodly, 2008). Collective blogs symbolise democratised media because participants are making their individual voices heard. The democratic potential that blogging represents, strengthens voices through self-expression and self-empowerment within the public sphere (Herring, et al., 2004; Hjorth & Kim, 2005). As a source of information, blogs affirm citizen's thoughts and allows interactions providing citizens with effective ways to participate in politics (Coleman, 2005; Woodly, 2008). Unlike forms of traditional media where gatekeeping is necessary to ensure credibility, the blogosphere does not require gatekeeping because its credibility is not based on access to, or validation from officials. Therefore, it is less likely that bias will occur. Bloggers would prefer to write in a more critical manner than constrain themselves to objective writing (Woodly, 2008). Freedom from such constraints enables bloggers to write more openly and honestly, which is a positive aspect of the blogosphere. They have become influential because credible blogs offer quality information.

One of the benefits of blogs are the vast amounts of information that one can find online through networked systems that rely on hyperlinks to enhance their own posts (Drezner & Farrell, 2004; Garden, 2011). Hyperlinks take on many forms. They are used to represent relationships between producers of web materials and are often viewed as connections between sites for web users (Kenix, 2009). Most blogs link to other sources of information, including other blogs forming an interactive dynamic where users can quickly be led to relevant information. Some users prefer to maintain a blog roll on their main homepage that will contain clickable links to respective blogs. Blog rolls are often a list of blogs that the author reads frequently or admires. This gives a person reading the blog insight to the blogger's interests and preferences. Other users prefer to directly link the content of information within their posts to

other blogs using key phrases or terms (Drezner & Farrell, 2004). The findings from Technorati's 2011 Blogosphere Report indicate that citizen participation of content production is constantly changing and evolving (Technorati, 2011). People are updating their blogs more frequently and their interaction has shifted from having conversations with peers, to having conversations with other bloggers (Technorati, 2011). With nearly fourteen million blogs online, indexed by Technorati (2011), there is no doubt that those who have traditionally consumed news are increasingly willing to create content (Thurman 2008).

By their sheer number alone, blogs demand attention in communication research. There have been research studies that focus narrowly on the adversarial relationship between blogs and traditional media (Macias, et al., 2009). Some studies have found that blogging had the potential to replace mainstream journalism with more authentic and personal writing, while other studies found that blogs were never competition for mainstream journalism, they are more complementary (Newman, 2009). Blogs have had a number of benefits that speak to the value of social media. Depending on the topic, blogs can be instrumental in explaining complex stories. The format of blogs, linking with other multimedia tools, also allows breaking news to be handled in a manner that was previously impossible (Newman, 2009). Similar to other social networking sites, blogs appear to serve as information conduits during crises or events. There have been a few studies, for example, Sweetser and Metzgar (2007) that have researched the use of blogs in crisis situations and during major breaking news stories. Many of the first accounts of the 2004 Asian Tsunami came from bloggers who not only aggregated news coverage but also shared stories of personal experiences, survival, grievances and humanitarian assistance (Macias, et al., 2009).

3.2.3. *Twitter*

The social networking platform Twitter, founded in July 2006, is devoted to spreading information, in that its users can subscribe to broadcasts of other users creating a network of multiple connections (Bakshy, Hofman, Mason & Watts, 2011). It has become an extremely popular online micro-blogging service. Micro-blog discourse is first and foremost, conversation. Combining elements of social networking and blogging, Twitter users submit periodic status updates commonly referred to as tweets, in reverse chronological order that are no more than 140 characters in length.

Unlike the blogging software that allows endless messages per post, Twitter consists of much shorter messages (boyd, et al., 2010; Asur, Huberman, Szabo & Wang, 2011). However, because users frequently choose to share additional web-content, a popular strategy of tweeting includes adding shortened links (e.g. <http://bit.ly>) that direct users to full articles or content featured on an external site that could be a blog, a website or video. The frequency of sharing links and Uniform Resource Locator's (URL's) suggest an important informative function of Twitter (Vultee & Vultee, 2011).

The culture of Twitter is all about participation in a large public space. As a platform, Twitter provides flexible communicative structures. The openness of the system allows users to 'listen in' to a wide range of accounts and gain a multifaceted understanding of how an event is being experienced and reported. People join Twitter and tweet often as a means to be a part of a broad dialogue (boyd, 2009; Flew, et al., 2013). It fulfils conversational uses and provides conversational gratifications (Vultee & Vultee, 2011). Participants create profiles involving use of the "@" symbol to identify different users, messages addressed to themselves and to address a message to another user (e.g. @MissMoyo). Profiles can either be public (visible to all, even to non-registered visitors) or protected (visible only to followers approved by the user), which means users have to request to follow a protected page. It is more common for users to opt for public profiles (boyd, et al., 2010; Flew, et al., 2013).

Tweets are displayed as a stream to people that they have connected with called followers. Followers are able to share the original tweets posted by the people they follow using a retweet, which is a method of forwarding on Twitter (Asur, et al., 2011; boyd et al., 2010; Kwak, Lee & Moon, 2010). Directly replying to or retweeting a tweet composes conversations. This is done to entertain followers, share information, comment on a tweet, validate a tweet, or to save a tweet for future reference. Saved tweets can also be "favourited" for personal access. Twitter's structure disperses conversations through streams of messages so that many users can be talking about a particular topic at the same time while others will be surrounded by the conversation but are not directly participating (boyd et al., 2010). In this way, users are often aware of different events without any active engagement. One advantage of Twitter is that there is no need for reciprocation in following users or

engaging with a user. People can reply or retweet the tweets of people who they do not follow (Kwak, et al., 2010).

If a user opts to have a public profile, their tweets are additionally located on a public timeline that is searchable through key words, phrases, hashtags or trending topics. Daily trending topics are shown to users in list form on Twitter's main home page. The Twitter homepage is frequently updated to suit popular topics that people online are discussing (Java, et al., 2007; Huberman, 2008; Kwak, et al., 2010). Hashtags are identified by the hashtag symbol, “#” which additionally marks tweets topically as a way to increase visibility of conversations centered on a particular topic (e.g. #SecrecyBill). Accessible from a variety of devices, Twitter has emerged as a popular platform for people to report and share news about major events (Garden, 2011; Bruns & Highfield, 2012). Twitter's structure and functions make it exceptionally easy for citizens to participate in ambient journalism processes. It has developed into one of the most popular platforms for creation and curation of news content (Hermida, 2013). Compared to blogging, micro-blogging occurs at a faster rate in real time (Java, et al., 2007; Bruns & Highfield, 2012; Vis, 2013). By encouraging shorter posts, it requires less time spent generating content. Shorter posts also mean that there is a chance that they may be more frequent, e.g. users may post several updates in a day than blog posts, which are updated every few days (Java, et al., 2007).

Just as blogs have established themselves as platforms for reporting news stories, discussion, curation and commentary, Twitter has also been noted as the social networking medium most popularly used for breaking news updates. Its real-time qualities enable information to rapidly spread between users (Latonero & Shklovski, 2011; Bruns & Burgess, 2011). In 2009, a US Airways plane carrying 155 passengers crashed into the Hudson River. After the accident, one user tweeted to CNN, “sorry, CNN, not fast enough anymore” (Vultee & Vultee, 2011). Within minutes after the crash, the news was being reported on Twitter. Photos, videos and live experiences were telling the story. One user, Janis Krums uploaded a photo using a service called TwitPic adding a tweet, “There's a plane in the Hudson” and “I'm on the ferry going to pick people up. Crazy” (Beaumont, 2009; CNN, 2009). This tweet appeared before news outlets had even received the news. Media channels, like the New York Times, did not post this story onto their website until twelve minutes after Krums's tweet

(Beaumont, 2009; Buzeck, 2009). The immediacy in which the news was reported was not possible before social media. Twitter is frequently the first source to provide news and information, including the terrorist attacks that took place in Mumbai in 2008, the massive earthquake that hit Haiti in 2010 and the Nigerian plane that crashed in a neighbourhood in Lagos killing more than 150 people in 2012. It is a popular medium for news stories because of Twitter's unique features and trend of tweeting while news is happening (Bruns & Highfield, 2012; Wright & Hinson, 2012). Twitter leads to an environment where the best ideas and content, regardless of who posted it, can spread and gain great influence.

When a message is widely shared, the Twitter stream can look almost repetitive (Vultee & Vultee, 2011). An important aspect of news discussion is where Twitter users frequently engage in gathering and sharing what they perceive to be relevant materials by tweeting links to further information (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). Its personal style drives a sense of emotional involvement to events. Twitter's coverage of events reflects the user's own perspective. It is here where activities of citizens tweeting events as they occur are a close description of Lasica's (2003) random acts of journalism and Hermida's (2010) ambient journalism. The readily available and always on communication technologies are enabling citizens to maintain a model of news and events occurring around them. Social media are becoming awareness systems where active users are conscious of their surroundings, activities, and news.

While Twitter may be used regularly for non-journalistic purposes, it springs into action as a major tool for discussion at only a moment's notice, which reflects each user's level of interest in the story (Bruns & Burgess, 2011; Flew, et al., 2013). It has become instrumental both in drawing attention to events as they unfold and facilitating sustained discussions of major stories over timeframes measured in weeks and months (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). The simple format of Twitter's messages and ubiquitous network has made live tweeting a more important practice than comparable live activities. Live tweeting activities have often been linked to eyewitness reporting. After the above mentioned US Airways plane crash, an eyewitness uploaded a photo of the crash to Twitter. His live tweeting alerted traditional media to the crisis (Beaumont, 2009; Covello, 2010). Currently, live tweeting activities also include second hand discussions of unfolding events as a kind

of instant evaluation of newsworthy events (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). Mainstream media reporting or the established interests of specific communities often fuel these discussions. Topics are highlighted, shared, and evaluated in attempts to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the event or the issue that is under discussion.

This potentially contributes to the basis of citizen commentary. By having a largely social organisational structure, users post short messages containing the information they want to share in particular discussions, which may or may not have external links (Bruns & Highfield, 2012). Other users share their own opinions, by replying or retweeting, which then becomes a collaborative exercise. Unfolding news events, natural disasters, and political discussions, for example often unfold via Twitter. Users search and seek further information to share it, which becomes the topic other users begin to comment on, providing coverage of an event or news story (Bruns & Highfield, 2012). Information is effectively circulated through settling on a single widely used hashtag. Through this type of interaction, news information is always readily available on Twitter. It remains the favoured site for news and views. As of May 2010, users between the ages of 18 and 34 have had a strong presence on Twitter (Vultee & Vultee, 2011). This statistic becomes meaningful when discussing the potential of user-generated content as online sources reaching mass audiences.

3.3 SOCIAL NETWORKING AND CRISIS COMMUNICATION

An increase in worldwide crisis events has drawn attention to the role of information technologies in warning and response activities. However, Greer and Moreland (2003, p. 428) state that “research is scarce regarding the use of online communication following a major incident”. When news of a significant crisis emerges, there is often a high level of public interest, and therefore communication is needed (Thelwall & Stuart, 2007). There is first a need for general information to understand the crisis event, followed by a personal information need such as who was involved, where the crisis took place and what is being done about it. Drawing on citizen participation as an emerging large-scale interaction, research describes how this type of interaction has implications for crisis management, and the different functions of these emerging information pathways. People are naturally information seekers (Shaheen, 2008; Palen, et al., 2010). Conway, Ward, Lewis and Bernhardt (2007, p. 213) contend that

the Internet has “the ability to instantaneously distribute information and is a powerful basis for Internet potential crisis to protect the reputation of an organisation”. Publics will continue to seek information from multiple sources of an event or crisis that may directly affect their own lives or their community. They turn to their media for informational and emotional needs, seek interactions with both process and content and both interact with and escape from the world (Vultee & Vultee, 2011). Most crises create a need not only for information, but also for human conversation and compassion (Veil, et al., 2011). Thus, social media enters the communication realm with a potential impact that was never seen before. Relying primarily on social networks, citizens engage with each other to validate and interpret information that is received from formal sources (Palen & Liu, 2007).

There is a growing importance of social media to social processes, whether those processes are political transitions, revolutions, or disasters. Such a change affects all aspects of crisis communication, from speed to reach to impact. Social networks have presented organisations with new avenues to communicate with audiences. These mediums have moved into crisis communication literature readily but have not replaced traditional methods of conceptualising information or engaging with stakeholders through press releases and conferences. Instead, they serve as a complement filling a pertinent niche in the communication spectrum (Vultee & Vultee, 2011). The knowledge management paradigm constitutes a way in which the acquisition, transfer and assimilation of information can be effectively used to manage and control messages in an online crisis communication response situation.

Despite the identified importance of social media in crisis communication, there is a small but emerging body of literature focusing on how publics engage on social networks in times of crisis. Palen, et al., (2010) have conducted studies of Twitter during mass convergence or emergency events. Macias, et al., (2009) and Thelwall and Stuart (2007) provide research of blog functions during risk and crisis communication. Sutton, Palen and Shklovski (2008) have discussed the general and resourceful capabilities of social networks expanding the information arena. These authors report a large volume of conversation and information exchange during crisis events. Users will post messages to their profile and retweet/re-blog to share messages that have been received on their social networks or via traditional media (Latonero &

Shklovski, 2011). Herring, Scheidt, Kouper and Wright (2004) examined the interconnectivity of blogs during Hurricane Katrina and found that certain subsets showed characteristics of community dialogue and connection. People who were affected frequently visited online forums and reported positive experiences engaging with social media. Other studies have explored the role of the Internet, specifically blogs, in maintaining a sense of community, expressing emotions during crises (Macias, et al., 2009).

Citizen participation during crises or disasters is not a new phenomenon but social networks have made their engagement easier, more visible and broadened the scope of their participation (Palen & Liu, 2007). Possibilities for participation are expanding with the increased mobile access to social networks (Sutton, Palen & Shklovski, 2008). It is clear then that the use of social networks as a news source is on the rise. Social networks support informal communications allowing for resourceful interactions. Seeger (2006) suggests that the public can serve as a useful resource in crisis communication. In general, media provide sources of information for the public but the nature of social media tends to gather people around a certain topic or event. This occurs more so during a crisis. During crises or an emerging crisis, publics tend to spend even more time engaging in online communication. As online media is their preferred source of news, they spend most of their time discussing the event as a conversation, forming political arguments, informing others of the event, and advocating change or solutions to the problem (Soule, 2010; Holmes, 2011). One of the reasons publics seek out crisis information through social media is because they provide a unique and unfiltered up-to-date line of communication. In some cases, social network use can change the cycle of a crisis drastically. As issues continue to emerge online, crises can become more unpredictable (Austin, et al., 2012). Barker (2011) argues that a crisis can become a time of chaos, risk and uncertainty. Under such conditions, it is important that crisis communication experts pay attention to discussions that are taking place online; closely following the discourse of unfolding events as they may lead to a crisis. Public opinion has always been of great importance in crisis communication.

The significance of social networking in crisis communication cannot be fully understood without being placed in context. The digital world provides both an

opportunity but also possible dilemmas. For example, during the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill in the Gulf, a satirical Twitter account @BPGlobalPR was created generating over 190, 000 followers and the verified BP Twitter account @BP_America had more than 18, 000 followers. The satirical account became a viral hit revealing the increasing importance of monitoring social media and understanding how to effectively use social media during crises. Crisis communication cases such as the BP oil spill are changing how crisis communication professionals view, interact with, and share information with affected communities during a crisis (Buehner, Palenchar & Veil, 2011; Wright & Hinson, 2012). The increasing capabilities of Twitter and blogs represent the importance and potential of user generated content in the coverage of a crisis situation. Both sites possess characteristics of participation, openness, conversation, community and connectedness. The news of an event that could lead to crisis or news of an actual on-going crisis can be shared online via Twitter or within a blog post, reaching millions of people without the presence of mainstream media (Veil, et al., 2011).

Content that is shared online is similar to the 'word of mouth' concept (Soule, 2010; Austin, et al., 2012). Online news is tremendously influential and is even perceived as more credible than mainstream media in some instances (Yang, et al., 2013). Given these capabilities, there has been an increase in the volume of research on social networking in crisis communication to accommodate the changing media landscape. There is a growing awareness of the significance of social networking to communication. There have been many studies, for example Wigley and Zhang (2011) and Hilding-Hamann (2012), on how to incorporate social media into crisis management plans and understanding how publics use social media. Such research proposes that publics use social media during a crisis for the following reasons: to issue relevance, for information sharing and seeking and to offer a space for emotional venting and support (Liu, et al., 2011).

Organisations, governments and crisis communication experts are used to being in control. They are used to designing messages to feed to the public based on their particular view. Currently empowered by social media, citizens are connecting with each other, drawing power to define their own perspective of issues that are surrounding them that is in some cases at odds with the view that organisations want

to project (Buckingham, 2008). Gradually, organisations have come to recognise the powerful potential of social media (Bernoff & Li, 2008). Coombs (1999) suggests that as an important practice in effective crisis communication, organisations should scan a variety of Internet sources, searching for any changes, trends, and emerging social or political issues. Social networking assists Coombs' best practice by offering volumes of information of thoughts, events and activities within communities. When conflicts or events occur, first users tweet, then they upload pictures and links to blog posts followed by related articles. Social networks provide a direct link to publics and can serve as a valuable and knowledgeable tool (Perry, Taylor & Doerfel, 2003). The nature and volume of blogging and micro-blogging discourse suggest lessons for professionals. As Twitter and blogs give voice and access to the people, they are an important addition to crisis communication. "Whether accurate or not, the public's perception is its reality" (Seeger, 2006, p. 239). In some cases social media can serve as a platform where crises are triggered. Incidents of online discussions or posts, especially on Twitter, have reached mainstream news (Pang, et al., 2012). The pervasiveness of social media has made it difficult for mainstream media to ignore user-generated content present on social media.

These features that publics often associate with social networks are especially influential during crises (Liu, et al., 2011). Blogs have been well matched to crisis situations because the technology that enables blogs tends to be resilient (Macias, et al., 2009). Crisis communication as a theory and practice has traditionally been based on mass communication paradigms (Falkheimer & Heide, 2009). From a crisis communication perspective, the growth of citizen participation and user-generated content are problems as well as opportunities. Social media tools have much potential for encouraging awareness, knowledge, and involvement in crisis communication by making the topic visual and interactive (Veil, et al., 2011). They have enabled increased contact with publics, which include opportunities for interactive communication and immediate feedback (Ferreira, 2003). Conversations take place constantly, without knowledge or participation. Governments and organisations can quickly monitor public perceptions this way.

The importance of citizen participation has been noted in examples of the Arab Spring movements in 2011 where activists used Facebook and Twitter effectively to express

themselves, inform people of the abuses of the state, organise protests and ensure that their voices were heard (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011). Additionally, the aftermath of the Iranian elections provided examples of how powerful communication tools can be. They were used to share information, link to and highlight mainstream media reports and user-generated content. The way users engage with the public during events sheds some light on the way they perceive information, accept it, and decide to share it. During unfolding crises, it is important to be able to track patterns of activity in real time. In most cases, this is to make sure that current communication strategies are effective and to assess whether there is a need to change them. Crisis communication experts can benefit from tracking public online activities. Insights to personal observations of a crisis, and public opinions are gained through assessments of online activity (Flew, et al., 2013). At the height of the BP oil spill, many people stumbled across satirical twitter accounts labelled as BP Public Relations accounts that were sending out incorrect information, criticising BP's efforts to handle the crisis (Austin, et al., 2012). In situations such as these, it is important for the organisation or public sector experiencing the crisis, to identify satirical pages that will cause any harm and deal with the issue effectively. Without paying attention to the circulation of messages on social media, any information could be spread globally.

Since its introduction and integration into society, no one would have thought that Facebook, Twitter or blogs would become important institutions in the public sphere (Dahlgren, 2013). Currently, phrases such as "I saw on Twitter", "I read on a blog" or "It's all over Twitter" have become popular in daily conversations (Catone, 2008). Although social networking did not start out with this intention, its increasing informative functions have become an important aspect of daily consumption (Newman, 2009). Newsrooms and organisations have adopted several social media platforms as essential mechanisms for instant delivery of breaking news and concisely to reach wider audiences who are increasingly active online. This is a sign of how far social media has come. By developing a presence online, organisations benefit from direct engagement with citizens especially during crisis situations. Furthermore, as different social media platforms have become awareness systems, journalists have begun to use these systems as an alert to trends or issues that are hovering under the radar. Twitter's unique features has helped it become an intelligence system that

provides journalists with early warning about emerging issues, market changes, trends, people and news (Ferreira, 2003; Hermida, 2010).

This literature review has highlighted the different uses of social media, particularly social networks (blogs and Twitter) in crisis communication. The uses have been drawn out in order to understand citizen participation in online communication as opposed to traditional or mass communication. It is evident that social media has added a new dynamic to the way information is passed on and the way individuals engage with it. In relation to crisis communication an individual's surroundings are important, and this chapter highlighted the ways in which social media and social networking have become part of an individual's everyday life and why it is important to study. Furthermore, this chapter highlighted the ways in which youth have begun to engage with their social realities online. The following Chapter will pay close attention to the case study of the thesis; the Secrecy Bill, and the current media freedom debate in South Africa. The case study puts the research into context.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CASE STUDY

4.1 THE SECRECY BILL

In this section of the research, the Protection of State Information Bill, (Secrecy Bill), that caused much controversy in South Africa is addressed. In order to focus on the content of information that is being shared among young South Africans, the researcher found it essential to have a deeper understanding of the media environment in the country, both past and present and the Secrecy Bill, its implications and how it has been widely received. As it stands, the Secrecy Bill is still awaiting President Jacob Zuma's signature. It had not been signed into law in South Africa. To have free, independent, diverse and economically viable media is a critical pillar of a functioning democracy. It is designed to inform the people of a nation of the challenges in government, the government's policies and actions. The press plays an important role in the accountability of government. Its purpose is to encourage debates on government policies and actions. However, South Africa has come under criticism over concerns of the quality of democracy, especially regarding freedom of speech and access to information.

As mentioned in Chapter One and Two, the proposed Secrecy Bill is a step backwards for press freedom. For a country often seen as a model for transitional democracies in the continent (Beck, 2012; Freedom House, 2012), the Bill is a worrying threat for the media and the public's right to freedom of expression. One of the main concerns of the Secrecy Bill is the absence of an adjudicatory body independent of the government that would review sensitive information. The absence of this body would allow the government to classify any information as confidential and issue heavy penalties of up to twenty-five years in jail for whistle blowers. It would be used to the government's benefit creating an imbalance of power between those who hold information and those who request it. The concerns of the Secrecy Bill in South Africa arise because it puts secrecy over the right to access information and restricts the ability of the press to serve as watchdogs on exposing official corruption (Freedom House, 2011).

Following South Africa's transition to democracy, the media professed to play a vital role in ensuring a transparent democracy, which would hold the government and public officials accountable by exposing them if there was any abuse of power or any corruption within the government (Daniels, 2012). The proposed Secrecy Bill has a severe impact on this practice as it sets harsh penalties for investigative journalists who divulge them or fail to report possession and sources of classified information (Moore, 2009). Out of fear of being sentenced to up to twenty-five years in jail, investigative journalists are reluctant to hand over documents involving exposure for publication (McDonald, 2011; Reporters Without Borders, 2011).

Matthews et al., (2008) state that by limiting investigative reporting, officials have the opportunity to become corruptive and abusive in their power, knowing that they will not be held accountable for any illegalities because the public will be denied access to any information. Issuing punishments to journalists for disclosing sensitive information is not completely odd. This happens in all democracies across the world. People can be arrested for revealing official information (Birchall, 2011; Horn, 2011). The problem with the Secrecy Bill is that there is no section that discusses whether or not investigative journalists can present a public interest defence (McDonald, 2011). A public interest defense can only be used if disclosure reveals criminal activity. The limited public interest protection in the Bill jeopardises freedom of expression and the media's role as watchdog.

Few proposed laws have attracted as much controversy as the Secrecy Bill. As a major societal and democratic crisis, the South African and international mainstream media have covered the Bill extensively. In 2010, when the public was first introduced to the Secrecy Bill, The Cape Times was the first to declare that it should be dismissed and join Apartheid legislation in history (McDonald 2011). Other newspapers, The Pretoria News and Cape Argus, for example, were more emphatic, announcing that the Bill set out to maintain Apartheid era secrecy. Shortly after these announcements the Secrecy Bill established itself in nationwide headlines, which also quickly became a feature of international news (McDonald, 2011). Australian news claimed it was an attack on the press, The London Sunday Times and Independent reported that President Zuma's media censorship was an attempt to gag media with a Bill described as "worse than Apartheid legislation". The effective eye-catching and

constant references to Apartheid censorship in the context of new laws generated a wide interest mobilising public opinion intended to have those in power question their decision (McDonald 2011, p. 123).

There has been a great deal of negative feedback both locally and internationally, which have continuously urged the South African government to revise sections of the Secrecy Bill before passing it as a law. Given the gravity of the Secrecy Bill's irregularities, the media's outrage is not surprising. It has received criticism by human rights organisations, such as the R2K campaign, which find its breaches of human rights unacceptable (Reporters Without Borders, 2011). During South Africa's transition to a democracy in 1994, South Africans witnessed mass information, previously held by the former government, become public. The information that was brought to the public's attention exposed and confirmed that there had been gross human rights violations that occurred under the guise of national security (Kisoon, 2009). Basing judgment on errors from the past, South Africans concerns about new legislations that set out to protect information, which has the potential to cover up human rights crimes are not in vain.

The ANC claims that the Secrecy Bill is not aimed at muzzling the media. The minister of state security, Siyabonga Cwele, told Parliament the Secrecy Bill would "strengthen democracy while balancing transparency and protecting our national security and national interests" (Cooper, 2012). Noting these remarks, the ANC's main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA) commented, "Whether or not it is the purpose of the Bill is debatable. The fact remains that the Bill in its current form still poses a significant threat to human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the constitution" (Smith, 2012). Enver Daniels, one of the state's law advisors, defended the Bill arguing that the reactions by the press and civil society are hysterical. From the ANC's perspective, in order to engineer the democracy they desire the media's role within this democracy needs to be redefined, contained and directed toward nation building (Daniels, 2012). This statement shows that there is a difference in understandings between the government and media body of what role the media should play in a democracy. However, by shielding government practices from public scrutiny, people will never know if the actions taken are legitimate or fraudulent. Such actions cannot be corrected or prevented if they are not made public,

which weakens the public's confidence in government conduct (Kisoon, 2009).

It does not only affect journalists and whistle blowers, but also affects all citizens of South Africa. Several campaigns have formed in response to the Bill (e.g. The Right2Know campaign and a group made up of University of Cape Town students called, 'Students Against Secrecy'). Protests and campaigns were aimed at raising awareness and encouraging South Africans to stand up for their rights (Easton, 2012). During the draft stages of the Secrecy Bill, protests were organised in Pretoria, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Soweto where a combination of citizens and organisations dressed in black attire for what they called, "Black Tuesday". According to The Times online, wearing black symbolised the beginning of dark days for media freedom, freedom of speech and expression (Mogul, 2012). It had been three years since the Bill was first drafted and introduced to the South African community. Since its introduction, there have been many parliamentary discussions and debates in response to demands for amendments of the Secrecy Bill, which was adopted by the National Assembly on the 25th of April 2013 and awaits President Jacob Zuma's signature.

4.2 DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africans have always supported a free flow of information as well as the right to make informed decisions about the future (Daniels, 2012). Passing new laws that compromise media freedom and freedom of expression is a violation of human rights and undermines the quality of democracy. Freedom House is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to expanding freedom around the world. As a catalyst, Freedom House speaks out against any severe threats to democracy and empowers citizens to exercise their fundamental rights (Freedom House, 2014). For more than 50 years, Freedom House has monitored freedom, reported on trends and offered solutions on how to improve the protection of human rights and civil liberties (Williamsburg, 2014). The findings from Freedom House's latest annual report, Freedom in the World 2015, showed a decline in South Africa's freedom, from a rating of 1.5 in 2006 to 2.0 in 2007 onwards. On a scale of 1 – 7 (provided by the Freedom House) South Africa is still considered a free country. Freedom in the World applies one of three broad category designations to each of the countries included in the index: Free, Partly Free and Not Free. Figure 2 obtained from Freedom House

website shows South Africa's current press freedom ranking is Partly Free. It is for this reason that the decline is important to note. It is argued that this decline is associated with the police confrontations with striking mineworkers and the advancement of the Secrecy Bill.



Population and GNI data source

Figure 2: Freedom House Index

In 2006 the Freedom House Index showed that South Africa was relatively free. The change in index shows that press freedom is becoming a crisis in South Africa. Similar to Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders is a non-profit organisation that defends attacks on freedom of information worldwide (Reporters Without Borders, 2014). Reporters Without Borders is also a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) that is an organisation that uses Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a core definition of press freedom, which states that

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers. (United Nations, 2010).

During the past decade Reporters Without Borders have published an Index showing developments in press freedom worldwide. The Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index considers many criteria from legislation to violence against

journalists. In the 2014 World Press Freedom Index, South Africa ranked 42 out of 180 countries. While this is not a poor ranking, it significantly lowered from being ranked 33 in 2009 and 26 in 2002 (Reporters Without Borders, 2014). It should also be noted that in 2013, this ranking was at 52 of 179 countries. This can be argued as the year of the height of the Secrecy Bill. It is the year that the bill was approved by the National Assembly on 25 April 2013 and the year that everyone waited in anticipation for the Presidents decision. Despite the fact that President Jacob Zuma has not passed the Secrecy Bill into law yet, press freedom rankings in South Africa continue to decline. These current statistics represent the fact that that the government is moving away from a democratic society largely due to the steps that have been taken towards media censorship.

The most widely employed scholarly definitions of democracy focus on the principles of democratic governance (Dalton, Shin & Jou, 2007). The concept of democracy is universally accepted as the global standard of good governance (Samarasinghe, 1994; Abdellatif, 2003; Huelss, 2012). It is defined by the goals and outcomes of a country, which supports freedom and liberty and includes freedom of speech, civil liberties and protection of citizenship rights. These are indicators that scholars often refer to when defining a democracy. It does not have a fixed meaning, and is often considered more as a signifier by what it stands for and represents other than what it is (Daniels, 2012). Other important signifiers of a democracy include transparency and accountability. When there is insufficient transparency, government accountability with the public is weak. As a result, citizen participation decreases and publics are unable to hold the government accountable for laws and policies. The right of access to information lies at the heart of a transparent government providing a basis for democratic accountability in a free and open society. It serves as an advance of human rights and any restrictions of access to information can undermine these rights (Matthews, et al., 2008).

Additionally, Section 32 (1) of the Bill of Rights specifies that

- Everyone has the right of access to
- a) any information held by the state and
 - b) any information that is held by another person and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights.

According to Harber (2014), transparency in the government is an element that is noticeably absent in most African countries post-independence. In South Africa the new government showed a need to avoid the perpetuation of old patterns in new democratic order by encouraging new media to engage with government to provide information exchange with citizens, empower communities and ensure transparency in government (Harber, 2014).

South Africa's first universal suffrage election in 1994 was marked as a miraculous transition, embodying a movement towards democracy (Southall, 2000). Following this election, in 1996 the new South African Constitution became the cornerstone for democratic governance, protecting human rights, transforming institutions, and overcoming the injustices of the apartheid past. It laid the foundation for an open society where the role of government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is treated as an equal protected by the law (Nathan, 2010). Coming from a heavily restrictive past, the new Constitution made South Africa a much freer place to live. Her previous racial dictatorship and colonial restrictions had been successfully replaced by a Constitutional state (Southall, 2000).

The Constitution is regarded as one of the most liberal democratic instruments of governance. The emphasis of the Constitution is that it is in compliance with the law and any law or actions that are inconsistent with it must be declared in front of the courts (Nathan, 2010). The mission of the government is to protect the Constitution and lead the country based on the values and principles noted within it. As a product of the liberation struggle, South Africa's new Constitution celebrated unity and provided much hope for lasting peace and stability within the community. Seen as a "state of the art" document, it was celebrated by democrats across the world (Mattes, 2002, p. 24).

4.2.1. The Role of Media in a Democracy

Mainstream media is ordinarily central to democratic processes. Democracies rest on the quality information that journalists should provide (Singer, 2006). Apart from providing entertainment, traditional media is seen as the conduit of information that is a productive way to empower citizens. At the centre of democracy lies the recognition

of all citizens to participate and engage in society's decision-making processes. This requires that citizens have access to the necessary information in order to make informed choices (Harber, 2014). The media plays a central role, as in any representative democracy, in conveying the workings of parliament and executive powers of state to citizens (Harber, 2014). A viable democracy requires more than just the implementation of key institutions of government (Votmer, 2008). If the media cannot perform their role adequately, government's processes are inadequately represented to the public. This undermines the quality of information the public has access to.

Without reliable information, it would be impossible for citizens to make informed choices during election periods or be aware of any of the challenges in the structure of the economy, and any issues of the country that may affect society as a whole (Votmer, 2008). By keeping citizens informed about matters that are of public concern, the media serves as a medium able to hold officials in both public and private sectors accountable especially by exposing corruption (Pillay, 2004). Described as a "pillar of democracy", a "defender of public interest" or "fourth estate of government" media landscapes in democracies are designed to support a press that is free from political party control or interference. A free press is designed to maximise political, social and cultural outcomes for citizens in a society. Essentially, in order to function adequately, democratic states require free media. It is through press freedom that journalists can contribute to a successful and healthy democracy by creating a space and platform for a diversity of views, questioning the meaning of politics, which deepens democracy (Daniels, 2012). By providing citizens access to information, exposing corruption and abuses of power, the media is considered the primary institution for holding the government accountable for their actions (Harber, 2014).

Since the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and the unbanning of liberation movements, South African media have been confronted with the following questions: -

1. What role should the media play in a new democracy?
2. What are the ethical responsibilities of the media owed to the public, which

has recently emerged from centuries of colonialism and apartheid?

3. How should the media orientate itself towards a society that has faced several challenges of inequality? (Wasserman, 2013)

The media had found itself in a new environment where it had to define its roles and responsibilities towards opening up a democratic public sphere through providing a platform for many voices and a representation of a variety of perspectives that were previously impossible. The South African media set out to become an agent for change in a new democracy (Wasserman, 2013). Describing their outlooks and values, the ANC expects the media to encourage and develop social cohesion by

- Building a national consensus of a common set of values that are consistent with democratic order;
- Supporting and promoting the development of a national pride as a nation;
- Promoting national unity through support of the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution (Steenveld, 2012, p. 134).

The points above highlight a media approach by the ANC that favours national interest. From the government's view, the points express what the responsibility of the media ought to be in a democratic state. They viewed change as not only representative of society but also as a structure of the industry that would better serve the need of a democracy (Harber, 2014). In its 'ready to govern' document of 1992, the ANC asserted that freedom must be supported by an equal distribution of media (McDonald, 2011). However, more recent actions, suggest that over the years, the thinking has changed. Since ushering in a new era of transparency and democracy, the media have fought to stand firm in their right to freedom of expression despite any clashes and tension with the government and ruling party (Wasserman, 2013). As a result, critics have accused the media of not contributing to the healing of South African society. This brings attention to the key debate that is the uncertainty of the role that should be played in deepening democracy.

Shortly after transition in 1994, the new government had the task of setting up Constitutional values and legislative foundations to achieve a democratic state (Steenveld, 2012). In order to successfully achieve this, transformation was imperative. Media transformation during post-Apartheid is best understood in terms

of the history of print media's ethnic presses. Each ethnicity, Black, English and Afrikaans, had its own media agenda in relation to the group's political status (Steenveld, 2012). Before the ANC held power in government, the segregation, lack of unity and political suppression of black organisations enabled the white press to become commercial and mainstream, while other voices remained marginalised, silenced, banned or harassed. Construction of news values complied with and did not challenge the state in the way that black news was openly opposed to Apartheid rule (Steenveld, 2012).

There are reports that black news editions were required to tone down their news reporting on any discriminatory treatment. As a consequence media reporting on South Africa had a very limited unrepresentative perspective. It was clear that the apartheid state had defined the terms of operation of the press that were neither liberal nor free. There were more than one hundred laws, which set out to regulate and inhibit media actions (Steenveld, 2012). The ANC was determined to change this in order to develop a media that was racially representative at all levels. Working with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), they acknowledged that print media was struggling to escape the deforming effects caused by South Africa's history. Despite substantial changes, racial critiques of the press were still prevalent. In its outlook and values for South Africa, the ANC stated that media must be encouraged to foster and develop social cohesion (Steenveld, 2012). Freedom of the media would not only be defined by the absence of restrictive laws but also by the ability of all people to access information (Mathatha, 2007).

During Apartheid, the media that were suppressed were the media who supported the liberation movements through adversarial reporting of the struggle for freedom. Now that a new government was formed and they were provided with new opportunities, these media were faced with the decision of whether to continue supporting the movements that had formed a new government or persist with their initial mode of reporting. The consensus was the latter, which has now come under criticism for what is considered lack of support for the government (Wasserman, 2013). The print media has continuously been accused of being the biggest perpetrator of liberal democracy (Duncan, 2011). The problem is that there is too much focus on limitations of what the media should not do rather than how media can contribute to democracy.

Confusion over media responsibility is at the heart of these debates. Governments support the view that the media should be held accountable for the issues they choose to publish. However, there is skepticism that the idea of media responsibility has the potential to be used as a defense for government to protect their interests because it implies that responsible media would not slander or report any private affairs of political leaders (Wasserman, 2013).

4.3 THE DECLINE OF MEDIA FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA

During President Nelson Mandela's term, free, independent and outspoken press was a priority. He sought to develop an independent press that would ensure the free flow of information, freedom of expression and access to information for all citizens (Pillay, 2004). He stated

A critical, independent and investigative press is the lifeblood of any democracy. The press must be free from state interference. It must have the economic strength to stand up to the blandishments of government officials. It must enjoy the protection of the Constitution, so that it can protect our rights as citizens. It is only such a free press that can temper the appetite of any government to amass power at the expense of the citizen. It is only such a free press that can be the vigilant watchdog of the public interest against the temptation on the part of those who wield it to abuse that power. (Nelson Mandela – February 1994)

However, observations of South African democracy in more recent times have pointed out the government's shortcomings in achieving a truly free media society. Judging from the literature in the earlier paragraphs, media institutions found themselves defending their rights to media freedom. While universally it is agreed that democratic states require free press, the differing assumption among South African leaders is that this freedom should be towards a positive transformation in society (Wasserman, 2013). Critiques of the media, for example, Steenveld (2012), state that the media's framing and representation of the South African political economy is problematic, therefore justifying the need for media policies that would safeguard the rights of the citizens. Scholarly papers (see for example Coronel, 2002; Rioba, 2009; Daniels, 2011) show that there appears to be a lack of understanding

between the state and the media regarding the role of media in a democracy. Media institutions prefer systems of self-regulation with press codes set by external bodies, while the government seeks to control it. The difference in views creates difficulties in the relationship between media and government because there is no agreement on what media responsibilities should be. Steenveld (2012) argues that these responsibilities need to be made explicit before the government can issue public policy meant to address media failures.

4.3.1. Media Regulation

The current debate on media regulation has strained the relationship between government and media. In a country like South Africa, with a history of excessive censorship, state accountability is largely mistrusted, the introduction of the Secrecy Bill would appear to deprive media bodies from their right to freedom of expression (Duncan, 2011). Originally, the harsh conditions of the Apartheid system of oppressive laws and regulation made way for self-regulation during the transition to democracy (Wasserman, 2013). Later, the view was that self-regulatory systems favoured journalists and the media industry and was not pro-active when dealing with any ethical transgressions, as a result the media cannot be trusted to regulate themselves (Duncan, 2011). Despite the ethical systems that were put in place through statutory bodies to adjudicate complaints against the media, such as the Press Council, the government fought against alternative oversight by first introducing a Media Appeals Tribunal (MAT) followed by the Secrecy Bill (Wasserman, 2013). The Press Council came under heavy criticism for not providing sufficient protection for people whose rights to dignity, reputation and privacy have been violated, for overlooking ‘brown envelope journalism’⁷ specifically at Cape Argus, which is a serious offense that the media are unwilling to admit, and for failing to levy fines to journalists who are found guilty of any violations (Duncan, 2011). The Council would only compel journalists to make corrections to the original article, which would not change any reputational damage even if apologies were issued (Duncan, 2011).

The government additionally made complaints about the process of waiting for courts

⁷ Brown envelope journalism is the bribing of journalists by officials who attempt to control the stories that get published and those that don’t (Sparks 2011, p. 12).

to hear cases. Courts were considered expensive and the time it took for courts to reach decisions was too long. In this regard, the tribunal would play the adjudicative role by not completely overriding the Press Council but complementing it. The ANC's argument about the Press Councils bias towards media outlets is not supported by any statistics. Meanwhile, statistics produced by the Press Council show that 60% of the ANC's cases against the media have been in favour of the government. Owners, editors and journalists do not always share the same interests. Their argument assumes that each have common interests. There is also insufficient evidence to show that 'brown envelope' journalism is a widespread trend in South Africa. Furthermore, the criticisms of the media violating human dignity and privacy were not among the complaints yet they are the biggest criticisms against the media.

The MAT was the ANC's attempt to transform the media landscape as a necessary means to strengthen democracy and public accountability. Despite the intention, there were concerns that such a statutory body would provide government with the power to decide what is published and what is not. Even though it was unconvincing, government assured the public that the statutory body would be independent from the state. While statutory media councils are not unknown, they are not common in democracies. They exist as exceptions and not the rule (Duncan, 2011). Denmark, for example, has a present statutory body that was established after the collapse of a self-regulatory body because of the challenges between journalists and media owners. The reasoning for a statutory body in Denmark is justifiable but the same does not apply for South Africa (Duncan, 2011). In the wake of threats against media freedom, the Press council began making attempts to improve its system of self-regulation. Unfortunately the ANC passed its final resolution and the Media Appeals Tribunal was established in 2010.

It is this level of criticism that makes it increasingly difficult for the media to play the role it should in a democracy (Harber, 2014). From the debates between the media and the state, the question of media freedom in South Africa focuses so much more on doing no harm rather than doing good. In most cases these debates suggest that the media fight for freedom; that is free from any constraints. At the outset of media transformation, there was less political interference in the media and media accountability was not a principal concern of the ANC (Sparks, 2011). As a

consequence, imposing external accountability arouses suspicion (Duncan, 2011). By working together, the media and the government are responsible for the accountability of the other (Steenveld, 2012). The media is often accused of exercising their power with no form of accountability (Duncan, 2011).

The ANC suggests that media policies are designed to hold the media accountable whenever there are concerns of conduct that do not protect citizens. Analysts who support media freedom regard this notion by the ANC as a means to curb media freedom concealed as accountability. While accountability is a necessity, they believe there are ways to achieve it without harsh conditions that stifle freedom (Duncan, 2011). The biggest challenge is that the government and media have different views on the media's social responsibility (Steenveld, 2012). Therefore, it is difficult to put media accountability to practice.

4.3.2. Post-apartheid media challenges

Too much focus on limits to freedom during apartheid regime distracts from a more recent history, which is equally as relevant if not more appropriate. Post-apartheid media has faced challenges of the changing nature of the ANC's bid to extend the power of the state (McDonald, 2011). In 1999, the ANC lodged complaints against the media suggesting that government faced a hostile press with their negative reporting (Harber, 2014). From 2002, there were strong hints of a growing antagonism regarding the press following a trend of an opinionated media. The annual ANC conference document proposed that there were no changes in the media environment and that the media continuously acts in a manner that resists meaningful transformation in society (Harber, 2014). Members of the ANC insinuated that generally the media has failed to come to terms with the political changes of the country. They believed that there was no media outlet that supported the functions of the government. Activities of the state are always closely watched with much suspicion and open hostility.

In 2006, publishers who were being subjected to submitting materials prior to publication in the amendments made to the Publications Act of 1996 were contesting its force. After a successful campaign, the publishers won exemption for themselves (McDonald, 2011). The amended Publications Act of 2009 now requires that

submitting materials before publishing does not apply to any bona fide publication⁸. Other publishers and distributors would face a fine or a prison sentence if they did not comply with pre-publication rules (McDonald, 2011). Later in 2007 at the ANC Conference in Polokwane, the language and tone of each speaker indicated that the hostility towards the media had grown stronger. They shared their criticisms of the media discussing its anti-democratic nature and elements. With each speaker's combative tone, came the threat of state intervention into private media (Harber, 2014). Regardless of the ANC's assurances that a tribunal would not have any state influence, the statements made at the conference implied that the tribunal would be set up to influence media content (Duncan, 2011).

Thus, being independent in media is seen as being anti-transformation, anti-development and anti-ANC, which was also implied later in 2010 (McDonald, 2011). In 2010, the ANC issued a policy document titled, Media Transformation, Ownership and Diversity outlining what the ANC's approach to the media would be. This policy document is worthy of close attention as it presented justifications of government intervention in the sphere of the media despite the Constitution's guarantee of media freedom. The ANC critiques the South African Media industry drawing on the argument that media production companies are in pursuit of profit, meaning that there is not enough focus on developmental journalism, which poses as a threat to diversity and democracy (Steenveld, 2012). The document claims that South African media continue to present the South African government as a shallow spectacle, which has led the government to believe that the media has adopted an anti-transformation, anti-development and an anti-ANC stance (McDonald, 2011).

The media landscape has been described as one that does not comply with or print ANC agendas. Opting to fight against the watchdog role of the media, the ANC felt that media needed to be interrogated. In the document presented, the ANC's stance was that the media showed a lack of support towards political programs and only showed these programs open hostility (Harber, 2014). Defending its beliefs, the ANC shared that a true watchdog would create open space for proper reporting to shape national unity. The criticism was that the media is intrusive, embarrassing,

⁸ Any genuine, real of original publication

uninformed, brash, irresponsible, vulgar and disruptive. It is this critique that showed that the ANC's concerns of the media's reporting had moved from critiquing its shortcomings to a strong discomfort in its critical reporting (Harber, 2014).

Despite the concerns within government, some media remained persistent in their reports of government officials. In 2007, The Sunday Times published leaked medical records from 2005, rumoured to be stolen, of former Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang who had been facing controversial issues over her reputation for alcoholism and the skepticism of her HIV status. The medical records that had been published showed that she was still consuming alcohol, even while admitted in hospital. This invasion of Msimang's privacy infuriated the ANC despite a judge's ruling stating that the matter served the public's interest (Harber, 2014). A similar incident occurred in 2012 when the City Press published a character painting of President Zuma showcasing his genitals. This publication brought furious protests from the ANC who took court action. Officials began boycotting the newspaper. Satirising the president breached the Constitution's right to human dignity; however, there were conflicting views of the balance between the right to criticise by means of satire and the President's sense of dignity (Harber, 2014). On account of the actions of the media and nature of its reporting, the ANC believes in and supports their decisions to pass media laws. However, before any laws are passed they first have to pass the test of the Constitution (Duncan, 2011).

By expressing an intense desire for a statutory MAT, the ANC appeared to become more anti-democratic towards open access to information and press freedoms. The tribunal would be the final court appeal, accountable to government, superseding the pre-existing Press Council (Harber, 2014). Although not enough detail was given on how such a tribunal would operate, it was stated that the statutory appeals would adjudicate on complaints heard by the Press Council (Duncan, 2011). Parliament's decisions caused great controversy. In response, the press set up public inquiries with the courts to find out the effectiveness of the Press Council. The press was determined to know why the government felt it was necessary to introduce a new system of press regulation. The government was accused of attempting to stifle the criticisms that it had been receiving from the press (Duncan, 2011). The former Chief of Justice, Pius

Langa, recommended that the Press Council and tribunal co-regulate. In this way both the media and the government would have their interests served (Harber, 2014).

In 2010, defending and supporting the MAT, President Jacob Zuma said that the media invaded the privacy of officials and therefore undermined their human rights and dignity. Additionally, according to ANC spokesperson, Jackson Mthembu, the aim of the Media Appeals Tribunal was to terminate the waywardness of journalists whom they believed were not contributing to the South Africa they desired (Daniels, 2012). The Minister of Higher Education at the time, Blade Nzimande, also supported the tribunals, stating that if there was a major threat to South African democracy, it was the media. The General of the South African National Defence shared his views saying that the media trivialises matters by tagging the activities of politicians that they do not like, labelling them as corrupt (Daniels, 2012).

Former ANC youth leader, Julius Malema, felt that during this time it was important for the ANC to fight against the media, which they felt was ruling itself. Further comments that were passed by Julius Malema stated that the media operates in ways that they find themselves untouchable and can write about anything. Malema continued expressing a need for this type of behaviour within the media to come to an end (Daniels, 2012). These comments made by officials within the ANC portrayed the media as dangerous and positioned the media as a threat to democracy (Daniels, 2012). This discourse suggests a closed society. In addition to this, there was the arrest of an investigative journalist of the Sunday Times, Mzilikazi wa Afrika, in 2010 which began raising concerns about the type of control political officials wanted to have over the press. At this time, it appeared that the ANC was unhappy that Mzilikazi had exposed the divisions and factions in the party's leadership in Mpumalanga. By arresting him they had intended to stop his investigative reporting (Daniels, 2012). His arrest signified an unprogressive society reminiscent of Apartheid. Following this event, South Africa dropped five places in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index (Daniels, 2012).

The ANC's actions have not supported Radebe's earlier assurances about not threatening the 'Fourth Estate'. The rapid changes that were being made began affecting South Africa's growth as a liberal democracy (Harber, 2014). Disagreement

on exactly what human dignity and values of equality and freedom are, are potentially affecting everyday media practices. The government and the media continue clashing over differences in interpretations of how each of these values should be received (Wasserman, 2013). The transition during post-Apartheid did not guarantee any agreement. For those who support the idea that the media should ensure “a better life for all”, the outcome of journalism practices would be that the government is accountable to its citizens (Wasserman, 2013).

As a contributing agent of change in terms of the right to freedom of speech, in order to achieve this accountability, the media should continue being adversarial towards the ruling party. The opposing views express that this type of adversarial journalism would contribute to discourses of “us” against “them” in debates, potentially leading to hostility and social rifts. Adopting an attack dog style of journalism aimed at the democratically elected officials seeking to restore trust after periods of colonialism and apartheid would be counterproductive. It is these critics who encourage the media to be more sensitive in their reporting increasing social cohesion but also managing to keep the government on its toes. Alternatively, this argument favours the guide dog style of journalism that journalists resist therefore creating intense atmospheres between both parties (Wasserman, 2013).

In 2011, the media came under sustained attack from the government to the point where attention was deflected from reporting the news to fighting to protect the right to continue doing so. In 2011, the biggest story in South African media was the media itself (Roper, 2012). When drafts of the Secrecy Bill surfaced later in that year, the media’s focus was on the restrictions of the Bill, not explaining in detail how it affected the Constitutional rights of all South Africans (Roper, 2012).

At a Media Indaba held by parliament in 2011, diversity and transformation were collapsed, signalling a media that would then be controlled by political officials. It appeared that the majority of the ANC ultimately wanted South Africa to have a media sector that would report to parliament. The media’s increasing adversarial reporting revealed a sign of sensitivity among politicians in the ruling party whose actions implied that media should not invade the privacy of politicians or portray them in a negative light (Wasserman, 2013). Protection of an individual’s dignity as an ethical journalistic practice can become quite problematic. It can become a defense

to prevent the media from exposing any misconduct or corruption. In many other African countries, governments opt to formulate laws that protect its officials from offensive slander by the media resulting in harassment of journalists (Wasserman, 2013).

Given South Africa's history, passing similar laws would not be received well. Additionally, South Africa is still a highly unequal society and a majority of the country's citizens have previously been subjected to systematic racism and denied rights to human dignity (SAHRC, 2006). Democratisation may have restored political rights to citizenship in a legal setting but there are still major inequalities that have been inherited from Apartheid reflected in the struggle for citizens to gain access to the public sphere where media agendas are being set (Wasserman, 2013). To the advantage of the ANC, media critics argue that adversarial media reporting could polarise society even further. Nevertheless attempts to gag the media by introducing a Media Appeals Tribunal and Secrecy Bill are not representative of democracy and show structural flaws in South African democracy (Duncan, 2011). In deepening South African democracy, the ANC and government officials need to accept and tolerate the media's scrutiny of its performance (Daniels, 2012). What the government needs to realise is that government officials and departments are key news sources. In this way, they influence the media. A change in government practice has the potential to shift media reporting (Steenveld, 2012).

A member of the National Executive, Pallo Jordan, at one point supported this intention. He wrote in *The Times* that in the spirit of the Constitution the value we place on a free independent and outspoken press in democratic South Africa cannot be overstated. He asserted that, 'The ANC has not and shall not wilt under criticism or close scrutiny' (Daniels 2012, p. 6). Initially, he confirmed the ANC's commitment to media freedom. However, just a month later, he began supporting the media tribunals agreeing that the media did not reflect South Africa's transition to a democracy. The change in his opinion in such a short period of time was unexplainable. Understandably, the public sector found such a transformation both confusing and suspicious. In further support of the Media Appeal Tribunals and proposed Secrecy Bill, Pallo said "When you read our print media you never get a sense that this country is moving from an authoritarian state to democracy." He further stated, "there

is no country that has no secrets. The purpose of the Bill is to protect the secrets of this country.” (Matlala & Khanyile, 2010;Daniels, 2011, p. 10). By these statements and the ones mentioned earlier, it appears that many government officials do not support an independent press or an open society. Many reports on the coverage of corruption scandals in 2010 had not left the ANC unscarred. Media analysts speculated that as a result, senior officials in the ANC aimed at establishing political control over the media (Daniels, 2012).

4.3.3. Existing Structure of Media Regulation

Critics of the media argue that the existing structure of media regulation does not give sufficient protection to the rights of those who have been violated that should be protected by the Constitution (Daniels, 2012). This leaves citizens with no other option but to fight for a democracy, emphasising the importance of focusing on public access instead of state secrecy. Referring back to the importance of youth in this study, an article published in *The Daily Maverick* (2012), discusses the importance of youth participation in the challenges South Africa faces today. The debates around freedom of expression and the Secrecy Bill are missing a youth perspective. The author says that young people in civil societies are the ones that have better courage to take on many issues facing society. The article insists that young people should fight for their space to matter. As the Secrecy Bill has begun to affect media freedom, the right to access information including freedom of expression, content sharing social media platforms such as blogs and Twitter begin to play an important role, as youths are using them to distribute content and engage in discussions regarding the unfolding situation in South Africa.

Both the past and current media environment in South Africa have been highlighted in this Chapter. It is evident that even after the Apartheid regime the media in the country have always experienced challenges especially when reporting about political and governmental issues. Since President Nelson Mandela’s term, the ruling party (ANC) has expressed their insecurities with the media, which has recently given birth to the introduction of the Secrecy Bill. Even though the Secrecy Bill was not the first Bill or act to be passed (see *The MAT*) in regards to the regulation of media in the country, it is (1) the most recent challenge to media freedom and (2) arguably the one received with the most negative views. The challenge experienced by citizens with the

Secrecy Bill is that it does not advocate for the protection of those who may have been violated and should be protected by the Constitution. Furthermore, debates around freedom of expression, media freedom and the Secrecy Bill are missing a youth perspective. Towards answering the research question, the next chapter provides the methodology used for research.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

5.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides detail on the research design and method used to answer the research question listed in Chapter One. As mentioned in Chapter One, a qualitative content analysis is used as the research method. This chapter aims to present the qualitative content analysis following a case study approach, as this approach allows detailed documentation of a relatively new phenomenon. It offers an interpretative and critical analysis of online crisis communication response. In this chapter, first the dominant research methods previously used to study social media are discussed, supporting the decision to apply a qualitative content analysis approach to this study. The following sections, in no particular order, discuss ethical considerations, details of the sample, data collection and data analysis. Finally, the advantages and disadvantages of applying a qualitative content analysis are discussed.

The aim of this research study is to develop understandings of how citizens use alternative media as a means to engage with each other and deliberate over crisis events. To achieve this research objective, the SMCC model, presented in Chapter Two, is incorporated to describe the flow of information during a crisis. Social media provides the opportunity for people to freely express their thoughts on matters that affect their daily lives (Lansdown, 2001, 2005; Buckingham, 2008). By addressing the nature of citizen participation online, the research can generate important knowledge from influential blog posts, status updates and commentary that is based on important events or daily, casual conversations. It can be valuable as a means to gain insight into general opinions of a community (Rennie, 2006; Atkinson & Cooley, 2010). As this study explores the use of social media, there is a need to explore blog discussions, blog comments and twitter updates in an attempt to understand how these mediums are being used. Essentially, the Secrecy Bill is analysed through detailed documentary analysis of Twitter and Blogs.

5.1.1 Research Methods for Studying Social Media

This research study focuses on young South Africans use of social media platforms as communication tools. Common methods of research on social media have been quantitative surveys of users online. Lenhart, et al., (2010) conducted a survey

detailing the activities of young adults online. Weblogs have become increasingly popular in communication research over the last few years. Due to the democratic potential that blogging presents, multiple research emphasises the use of blogs as communicative mediums that encourage alternative means of social interaction (Gumbrecht, 2004; Baumer, et al., 2008; Papacharissi, 2009). There are numerous research methods that have been used to acquire knowledge on blogs. Herring, et al., (2004), for example, used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the characteristics of community dialogue in blogs. Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005) employed quantitative content analyses to identify and quantify the structural and functionality of blogs, focusing on blog author characteristics, reasons for blogging, frequency of posts, usage of blog features and frequency of commenting. Nardi, et al., (2004) conducted an online survey of Internet users to learn the different reasons people blog. Wright and Hinson (2008) used in-depth interviews as a research method for bloggers. Within the South African context, Bosch (2010) provides an overview of emerging blogging trends in the South African context focusing particularly on the public sphere created by bloggers.

Since its launch in 2006, Twitter has attracted multiple interests in research studies. The openness of the platform, easy access to data and insight into everyday communication practices makes Twitter a notable medium concentrating on the way new social media trends are reshaping journalism (Schultz, et al., 2010; Vis, 2013). While methods of studying twitter are still developing, the majority of studies include description and analyses of developing practices on Twitter from a variety of perspectives (Java, et al., 2007; Huberman, et al., 2008; boyd, et al., 2010; Hermida, 2010; Vis 2013). Each of these studies examine the process of tweeting analysing Twitter's key features through descriptions of the functions previously mentioned in Chapter Three (e.g. @ replies, hashtags (#), followers etc.). Bruns, Highfield and Burgess (2013) applied the processes of Twitter to a case study method to examine the impact of Twitter on the Arab Spring. There are also studies that have focused on Twitter as a learning tool (Greenhow & Gleason, 2012). According to Bruns and Burgess (2011) there is a clear need to develop further methods for researching Twitter's response to news and current events. They recommended that an achievable direction for Twitter research focusing on news and current events is to track the Twitter community's uses of hashtags and keywords. The Twitter application makes

it possible to automatically capture any tweets containing given keywords with only a few limitations.

5.2 RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The research design used in this study is qualitative in nature. Content analysis was chosen as a research method in order to investigate how youth use social media to address the current human rights crisis in the South African blogosphere. Content analysis is a systematic, objective, quantitative and qualitative method to analyse the characteristics of a message (Neuendorf, 2002; Macnamara, 2005), and is widely used in communication research because it allows researchers to focus both on the subject and context communicated while simultaneously constructing categories that contain content sharing communalities (Berelson, 1959; Holsti, 1969; Lombard, et al., 2002; Riffe, et al., 2005). A qualitative approach was used in creating relevant categories including crisis themes, sources of statements, and evaluative contents that were relevant for the specific case investigated. Coding categories were derived directly and inductively from the raw data (Mayring, 2000; Patton, 2002). The data produced descriptions or typologies reflecting youth engagement (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). After identifying the main coding categories, data were analysed and classified according to the qualitatively developed coding scheme (described in detail in data collection). The main idea of this procedure of analysis is to preserve the advantages of the quantitative content analysis as developed within communication science and to transfer and further develop them into qualitative-interpretative steps of analysis (Mayring, 2000).

Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research method because it is a reliable method to offer new insights. This method of inquiry, widely used in communication studies, is a research technique that is able to make replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (Krippendorff 1980,). Holsti (1969, p. 608) defines this process as “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages”. By performing a content analysis, researchers examine written documents as forms of social communication. The result of a content analysis represents the meaning of a text and the intentions of the author.

Qualitative methods have proven successful, particularly when analysing messages in certain media (Krippendorff, 1980).

Qualitative content analysis is interpretive and finds importance in the use of language. Pleijter (2006) finds that analysing the use of language is important in communication studies. The use of different words helps to create and reproduce systems of social meaning (Tonkiss, 1998). This means that content that has been provided in tweets or blog posts can be used to support the mind-set of the person who posted it. Therefore, in order to understand citizens' use of social networks as a form of participation, qualitative content analysis proved most suitable. The objective of the content analysis in this study was to determine the overall opinion of citizens regarding the Secrecy Bill's implication on press freedom through content that has been shared in tweets and blog articles posted online. Within this study, understanding can be achieved by focusing on the content provided by citizens. Finding data to represent the opinions of citizens requires a method as effective as a qualitative content analysis. According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) a qualitative content analysis assists researchers in understanding social reality by identifying the important themes and categories within a body of content.

The most important feature to consider when performing a content analysis is the mind of the researcher. It is impossible for a researcher to be completely free from preconceptions of the study. This has often proven to be a disadvantage of qualitative content analyses in the past (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cohen et al., 2007). If there are problems with the researcher's judgement, the data could be compromised. However, the objective of this study is to give a neutral interpretation of the findings. Another disadvantage of using a content analysis relates to research questions that are ambiguous or too extensive. It might be difficult to find accurate data to support these types of questions. Lastly, excessive interpretation by the researcher is a potential threat to an effective content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Each of these disadvantages of content analyses has been taken into consideration for this research.

5.2.1. *Sample*

In order to understand youth's use of social media as a tool for engaging each other and deliberating over political processes, a convenience purposive sample was obtained. The focus of youth participation with social media tools is not to say that its use and its popularity is limited only to younger age groups, but that it is more likely that new media attracts younger generations. User generated content is considered as a platform for deliberations on the Secrecy Bill as a basis for this thesis because participation is central to a democracy and this type of content does not share media agendas. Although there is no previous research to prove this, it is assumed by the researcher that participation through online mediums provides a neutral and honest opinion. Unlike the importance of facts in print media, opinions are what matter online. Young people feel free to engage in discussions that satisfy their interests where they can share their opinions on political matters. These audiences express their opinions to their peers through social networking tools (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2010).

Due to the nature of this study, a purposive sample is the best method to explore this participation online. It involves a series of strategic choices that are used to carry out the research. The units of analysis that are selected using a purposive sampling method rely on the judgement of the researcher. Each unit is selected because of a certain characteristic. Twitter and Blogs were chosen as a representative sample of social media. There are numerous social media platforms that youth use for participation yet Twitter and Blogs were selected as a focus of research as they are two of the most widely used mediums of online communication in South Africa. For example statistics show that 71% of youth in South Africa check Twitter at least once every day (Bennet, 2014). Blogs were chosen because among youth, they serve as a platform for unfiltered and uncensored commentary and sources of information usually in the form of an online journal (Garden, 2011; Wright & Hinson, 2008). This type of communication online would best serve the purpose of the research. Twitter was selected as a medium of choice because of its capability to form wide networks and multiple connections of users who are able to participate in a broad dialogue. The speed in information sharing on Twitter is important to crisis communication studies where the quality of information is important to the process.

Additionally, both social networks have features that enable unlimited engagement and wider public access that other social networks do not have. You do not have to be a Twitter subscriber or have a personal blog to access to the content of information that is provided on either site. While you may not be able to tweet, you are able to view the topics in discussion and as long as you have an email address or any type of social networking account, you are able to leave a comment on a blog post. This eliminates the difficulty of accessing information online as with other social mediums such as Facebook. Lastly, Twitter and blogs were also chosen because of their increasing use and popularity during crisis situations, major events or breaking news stories.

Since blogs and Twitter were chosen for the study, a sample of 3000 tweets from more than 200 youth and 20 blogs were collected over the period of research in order to represent youth participation online. The characteristics of tweets and blogs chosen were dependent on whether the content mentioned Secrecy Bill, freedom of expression or media freedom. Purposive sampling is a common method found in qualitative research studies (Palys, 2008). The content included in the sample were unofficial sources (e.g. <http://sweettorque.wordpress.com> and <http://jonathandockney.blogspot.com>).

5.3 CODING PROCEDURE

As previously mentioned, the specific objective of the content analysis was to determine how youth are using social media to communicate in times of crisis. Blog posts and comments were divided into units of analysis and investigated by looking at the underlying meaning of the text (Krippendorff, 1980). The research followed inductive reasoning and inductively developed categories for coding the sample (Mayring, 2000). In other words, themes and categories in the blog conversations emerge from the data through careful examination and constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Elo and Kynga (2008) claim that inductive reasoning works better in creating coding categories if there is not enough former knowledge about the phenomenon or if this knowledge is fragmented.

Studies about the blogosphere in crisis communication are limited (Baron & Philbin, 2009; Coombs, 2008; Semple, 2009), and not enough general knowledge on stakeholders' opinion is currently available. Therefore, a qualitative, inductive approach was considered the most appropriate analytical tool. When forming the coding scheme, decisions were based of the findings from Java et al., (2007) who categorised tweets into 1) daily chatter, 2) conversations (which includes Twitter replies and retweets), 3) sharing of information using URLs and 4) reporting news stories. For this research, a similar coding scheme was created for analysis. Table 1 summarises the final coding scheme including the categories and their appropriate examples.

Table 1: Categories

Categories	Example
Emotional reactions	Any emotional loaded word makes tweets fit this category: 'Shock!' or 'This is disgusting! Is this what the secrecy bill was approved for?'
News notification (typically includes URL)	A. News is framed in own words B. Frame with attribution C. Own words but clearly in the frame of the topic D. Rejecting the frame: 'While #Mandela lay in state Zuma signed a secrecy bill into law. An example of why dark days lie ahead in South Africa'
Media reaction	A. Neutral notifications or questions on story progress B. Mainstream media criticism: 'Is this the way to go? RT @eNCAnews.'
Political comments	Comments implying disagreement such as "someone should be accountable" or "human rights"
Citation from link or video	Tweets or posts that contained links to YouTube videos or articles including blog posts
Recommendation	Any comments that involved encouraging people to take an action e.g. 'If you haven't signed this, then do it now!'
Other	Any other comment of importance relating to the Secrecy Bill, South African government or related debate.

Krippendorff (2012) states that the way a researcher approaches category formation is significant to the interest of the research and that categories should be formed close as possible to the research objective. These categories were therefore specifically chosen to represent the data for this thesis. Through analysis, these categories are set to provide an overall view of the use of social media amongst young South Africans relating to the Secrecy Bill.

5.4 DATA COLLECTION

One of the main ways to perform research on Twitter is by searching publicly accessible data. Using a Twitter search is useful when researching event-related tweets because they can be tracked over time (Bruns & Burgess, 2012). Data sets were collected through Twitter's Application Programming Interface (API), an interface that enables tracking user activity and keyword and hashtag searches. The simple network structure of the Twitter platform, where accounts are either public or private, means that topically relevant tweets from public accounts can be found and shared widely (Flew, et al., 2013). Using a general search, a hashtag search, a keyword search and a conversation search, every tweet that included the following keywords Protection of State Information Bill, Secrecy Bill, South Africa, Media Freedom in South Africa, Press Freedom South Africa and the following hashtags #POSIB and #SecrecyBill were tracked from late 2011 for the purpose of analysis.

Twitter's high-powered data storage enables comprehensive tracking of public user participation in social media spaces around specific themes, and content by capturing content created and shared that had been gathered around the key hashtags. However, using the keyword and hashtag method to search for tweets can limit data collection because it does not capture any tweets or discussions of any particular news events that do not include the chosen terms or hashtags. Therefore, the data presented must be understood only as a reasonably representative sample rather than a comprehensive data set of Twitter activities involving discussions of the Secrecy Bill. Additionally, due to the volume of content on Twitter, there were over a million tweets that appeared on the public timeline. These included tweets, retweets, hashtags, direct replies and tweets containing URLs. For the purpose of analysis only the tweets

selected using a purposive sample were filtered through and categorised into the sets provided in Table 1.

Blogs that are considered important for this research are personal posts or political writings and commentaries. Due to the extreme volume of blogs online, the search was narrowed to focus only on blogs authored by South Africans. First, a list was developed of identifiable blogs related to the Secrecy Bill by searching the Internet using Google Search and following links posted in relatable tweets. A comprehensive directory of blogs does not exist so random sampling was not a possible method in this research. The content from blogs used for this research was collected using the Google Blog Search tool. Instead of searching for blogs directly on different blogger sites, using the Google Blog Search was more extensive for the research. Using this search tool, every blog that included the keywords Secrecy Bill South Africa and Media Freedom South Africa appeared on the Google home page. Each blog was then tracked manually to determine whether it was a personal blog posting or a posting for online media websites (e.g. Daily Maverick). It was not difficult to find these blogs as most are hosted on either wordpress.com or blogspot.com. Only one of the blogs selected was a personal website (e.g. justcurious.co.za), however it appeared to be authored by an unofficial source.

The blogs that were considered personal were visited and browsed through to further assess whether the content of the post would be beneficial for the present research. Assessing the content of the blogs was not a long or challenging task. As part of the assessment, the post had to mention the Secrecy Bill in detail by either sharing information from print media or expressing a personal opinion. Not every blog selected featured commentary but another important feature of blogging is simply sharing information. Every blog selected as part of the research contained one or both of these features. Similar to the data collection of tweets, each user profile of the selected blogs was read to determine if participation was by a young South African or professional. The data collection occurred over a three-month period between August–November 2014 and the tweets studied during this period were dated from 2011–2014.

5.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Following the case study selection, the researcher collected and analysed a set of data relating to the Secrecy Bill. The data set was used to qualitatively track the discussions regarding the crisis under study. The main objective of the case study of the Secrecy Bill is to examine information, which includes social media content on the on-going crisis in the political dynamics in South Africa and assess its impact on youth perception and engagement.

Data Set 1: Social media content such as blog postings, and comments and Twitter updates. Documentation by youths online with screen shots of the original tweets and blog posts were available for analysis. This set of data was used to track the crisis, i.e. the trigger event, public reaction, transition to mainstream media and back. The aim of this data set is to unpack the overall tone of postings and updates on social media in South Africa to gauge public sentiments regarding the Secrecy Bill.

5.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The emergence of research in online communication has several challenging ethical dilemmas, particularly in qualitative analyses where the material published on the Internet raises concerns of ethical research regarding the consent and privacy of research subjects (Eysenbach & Till, 2001; Hookway, 2008). Informed consent is important especially when researching people. However, obtaining consent from participants in web-based research can be challenging. People do not always use their true identities online. They conceal their identities by choosing to remain anonymous or identifying themselves by pseudonyms or using fake identities altogether (Palme, 2002). Another main challenge in online communication research is how to distinguish online private spaces from online public spaces. This distinction is not always clear on the Internet.

Striving for an ethically sound approach to a user's content, this research concentrated on blogs firmly located in the public domain with free access. The content used for analysis has been made publicly available by the host website and the blogger. It does not require reviews from the Research Ethics Board since it is expected that participants who make their content publicly available are seeking public visibility (Eysenbach & Till, 2001). On Twitter, it is also quite simple to differentiate between

private and public profiles. All private content does not appear on public timelines and researchers would need to request permission to follow users to gain access to their tweets or any information they have shared on their profile. This research has only collected tweets that appear on Twitter's public timeline search. Thus, all content that has been used in this research can be quoted.

CHAPTER SIX: PRIMARY ANALYSIS

6.1 TWITTER AS A CRISIS COMMUNICATION TOOL

The investigation of the importance of communication using alternative means was the driving motivation for this study. It was designed to examine the potential of social networking as an effective communication tool for deliberations during crises. The on-going media freedom debate in South Africa has resulted in political crisis affecting core democratic values. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a qualitative content analysis was used to gather data required for the results of the study. Due to the vagaries of collecting data from the Twitter API, the following findings are not a fully comprehensive data set for each tweet, retweet, reply or hashtag. Given the type of crisis and time frame of data collection there are brief gaps in the archives. As Twitter's API is the only access point for tweets covering the Secrecy Bill, it is impossible to verify the amount of data that could have been excluded from collection. However, the data that has been collected is immense and sufficient as a basis for the examination of broad patterns of Twitter activity.

Over the course of the data collection period, 3000 tweets were captured originating from more than 200 youths. The categories observed here are emotional reactions, news notifications (typically including URL), media reaction, political comments, citations from links or videos, recommendations and other. The study found that the use of Twitter in percentages is as follows: the most frequent use of Twitter in discussing the Secrecy Bill was found in two categories, political comments with (n = 25%) and citation from a link or video with (n = 25%). The second frequent use of Twitter in discussing the Secrecy Bill is emotional reactions with (n = 17%). Following emotional reactions, were tweets including news notification with (n = 14%), other with (n = 9%) and media reactions with (n = 8%). Finally, the least used category in discussing the secrecy bill was recommendations with (n = 2%). The following section discusses each category from the most frequent to least frequent. The purpose of these categories was to help make sense of the use of Twitter during a crisis.

Table 2: Twitter Categories

Categories	No.	%
<i>Political Comments</i>	750	25%
<i>Citation from a link or video</i>	750	25%
<i>Emotional reactions</i>	500	17%
<i>News Notification</i>	425	14%
<i>Other</i>	275	9%
<i>Media Reaction</i>	244	8%
<i>Recommendations</i>	56	2%

Political Comments

Political comments were one of the most widely used categories on Twitter. Tweets in this category (n = 750, 25%) contained mainly harsh criticisms about the government. These tweets were found to be political when they included information, words and phrases about the government, Jacob Zuma, Nelson Mandela, parliament or the ANC. For example,

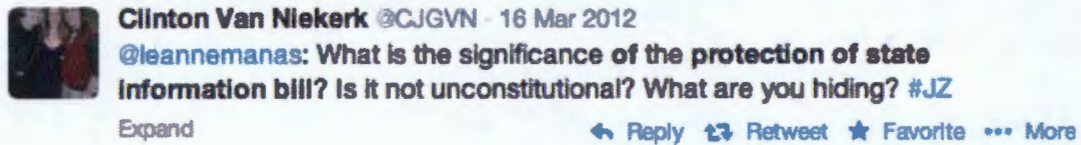


Often, these tweets contained links to external sources, which would redirect users to stories based on government statements. Most of the political comments referenced promises the ANC had made to South Africans during transition to democracy.



It was found that youth would tweet in this regard to the Secrecy Bill i.e. by quoting statements issued by the government as a way of displaying the disparities in the promises the government once made to the community. One of the topics prevalent in youth's discussions is "freedom" and by calling out the false promises made by the government via their Twitter accounts, they are highlighting the freedom that they have a right to. These political discussions are valid on Twitter as users were able to share, through retweets and links, the common sentiment that the Secrecy Bill was a

backward step. Many users revealed their familiarity with the Constitution, by criticising the bill in its context. An example,



As mentioned before, users were able to share similar sentiments on Twitter, and one of the most important sentiments that was shared referred to what the youth perceived Nelson Mandela to stand for, often making references to him with statements such as, “the Bill flies in the face of all Madiba stood for, “Mandela would be dismayed”, “rolling in his grave”, “sorry Tata” or “keep Mandela’s legacy alive”. Their expressions were aligned with an image of the ANC in the past against the image of the ANC today. This indicates that distrust of the ANC has been building up over the years.

During the crisis, the youth continued to show their support for a free flow of information and democracy with the majority of their political comments. It wasn’t surprising that political comments showed the highest percentage of the use of Twitter, because the Secrecy Bill constitutes as a political crisis. This category shows that the most important use of Twitter among youth was directly related to the issue.

Citation from link or video

Citation from a link or video was another widely used category on Twitter. Tweets in this category (n = 750, 25%) provided URLs to articles, videos, photos and national news websites. There were numerous links directing users to any resources that included valuable information about the Secrecy Bill. URLs are typically how users share information with each other on Twitter. The common trend among users was to add their own commentary to a citation. For example,



Of the total sample (n = 750) of information sharing tweets, almost half (n =364, 48%) included citations from URLs, videos, news websites, blogs or other resources.



Darryn van der Walt @darrynvdwalt · 5 Apr 2012

Such blatant propaganda by our government. Videos on why we *need* the **Protection of State Information Bill**. Shocking [youtube.com/watch?v=0oWWP9...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oWWP9...)

[View summary](#)

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)



Paul Scott Meinhold @DrSirius · 5 Apr 2012

3 Protection of State Information Bill adverts? An insult 2 our intelligence! #ANC does not deserve to govern. [youtube.com/watch?v=0oWWP9...](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oWWP9...)

[View summary](#)

[Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#) [More](#)

Due to Twitter's character limit, tweets would often include citations accompanied by links. The link-based nature of many tweets can additionally be analysed as a form of creating shared conversation. In many cases, the phrasing used in citations would capture attention of other users. By using phrases such as, "an insult to our intelligence", anyone following this user would be curious to know what this suggested. Citations especially make people aware of events, even when they do not access the link. By referencing information included in the video or article, people are able to form a perception of events without any contribution. These tweets served as pointers to resources that followers might find interesting or important.

Emotional Reactions

17% of the tweets (n = 500) contained emotional content related to news of the Secrecy Bill. Users commented on events, statements or articles relating to the Secrecy Bill with an emotional sentiment. These tweets were considered an emotional reaction when they included any emotionally loaded word. The general feelings were of concern, shock and worry that the Secrecy Bill would make growing tensions in media freedom debates much worse. Popular phrases and words used to express emotion were, "very disappointing", "it sickens me", "sad day for transparency", "alarming" and many more in the same tone.

Due to the fact that only 17% of youth tweeted emotional content, it highlights that in regard to the Secrecy Bill; Twitter may not have been the platform to share personal messages. Twitter in this instance was used to disseminate information. An example of an emotional reaction can be found below,



Elbie van Eeden @ElbieMUAHair · 22 Nov 2011

It sickens me to think that today might be the end of freedom of speech for media in South Africa. m.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov... #blacktuesday

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More

News Notification

With 14% (n = 425) of the total tweets covering news notifications, users often shared news frames in their own words or with an attribution, mostly through using URL's. The researcher did not come across many news notifications that rejected the frame; however the tweets that did reject the frame were also not in support of the Secrecy Bill. They stated more that the Secrecy Bill wasn't the worst event affecting freedom in South Africa. This suggests that young people are aware of other situations or events that, to them, are worse than the Secrecy Bill.

News notification tweets frequently mentioned passively receiving information about the crisis through traditional media sites. This was either by using quotations for followers to know the content originated from another source or including media outlets in their tweets. For example,



ecotechnologist @ecotechnologist · 22 Nov 2011

"If this bill is passed..any claims that South Africa is a healthy democracy will be void of credibility" #blacktuesday news24.com/SouthAfrica/Po...

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Other

The tweets categorised as "other" made up 9% (n = 275) of the tweets. "Other" refers to anything that fell outside of these categories but was still of importance to understanding the use of Twitter in discussing the Secrecy Bill. This study found humorous and sympathetic tweets to fit in this category. Examples can be found below,



My Surname Is Khan @ejaz_k · Apr 26

South Africa is trending worldwide! But we can't tell anyone because of the secrecy Bill..wait why are you arresting me ? I was kidding !!

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More



Natasha Joseph @TashJoeZA · Dec 12

Very clever. RT @MemorialSigner: [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

[censored]

#POSIB

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More



MemorialSigner @MemorialSigner · Dec 12

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

[censored]

#POSIB

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Humour was intended as a way to poke fun at the situation and outcomes of the Secrecy Bill as a whole. It was not surprising that some users added humour to the situation. Youth are usually quick to make jokes about serious events, especially on Twitter. There is a possibility that this is a coping mechanism (Beeston, et al., 2014)

Media Reaction

Reactions to media content, headlines or stories made up 8% (n = 244) of the tweets. As reports of the Secrecy Bill's controversy filtered through mainstream media outlets, online users were eager to hear regular updates on any progress. Tweets in this category usually included questions, for example,



Mohau Bosiu @mohau_bosiu · Nov 13

Is this the way to go? RT"@eNCAnews: Parliament passes **Secrecy bill**. Next: President Zuma's signature. > enca.com/south-africa/s..."

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More



Renata Avila @avilarenata · Dec 12

URGENT Secrecy Bill passed in South Africa killing whistleblowing. Will media care? #transparency @bella_velo cc @wikileaks

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More

The other characteristic of tweets included in this category was neutral notifications. Neutral notifications suggest that few users remained updated with news of the Secrecy and each time there was a new development, they would post it to their homepage. In some cases, users would update the progress and outcomes themselves. For example,



Sentletse @Sentletse · 24 May 2012

In 2008, South Africa was ranked 33rd in terms of 'press freedom' and it slipped to 38th in 2011. It will probably be worse in 2012.

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More

Common criticisms of the mainstream media included statements such as, “this will stop journalists asking their annoying questions” but there were few criticisms of mainstream media on Twitter. Most media reactions were related to story progress and updated information.

Recommendation

Only 2% (n = 56) of the tweets made up for the recommendations category. A minimal number of tweets consisted of recommendations of actions South Africans should take to ensure the Secrecy Bill in its state was not passed as a law. This again highlights the use of Twitter as an information-sharing platform rather than a discussion platform in relation to the Secrecy Bill. A few users did try to mobilise support online by encouraging followers to sign petitions against the Secrecy Bill, read about the implications, defend free speech by raising their voices or generally to support media freedom. Tweets in this category mostly included the word, “please”, accompanied by exclamations, which perhaps were used to add urgency and emotion to the requests. In other cases, users who asked for action to be taken would provide information in one or two words that would explain the importance of taking action. “Fight for South Africa’s democracy” was one of the examples. A generic example can be found below,



Alexander Dowding @dowding_a · May 21

Help defend free speech in South Africa. Please add your voice to say NO to the Secrecy Bill! fb.me/2zLuS7eYr

View summary

Reply Retweet Favorite More

6.1.1. Trends of the Types of Tweets

The two common characteristics of Twitter that were used to start discussions of the Secrecy Bill or share information were the use of retweets, URL’s and hashtags. While retweets and URL’s received more traffic than hashtags, hashtags are considered important in this study because they were used to track information. In each of the categories discussed above, users would often retweet what they found to be relevant information and links to informative articles. On Twitter hashtag

conversations such as #SecrecyBill and #POSIB were used to mediate a wide range of practices of political participation among a diverse group of social media users from observation and information sharing referred to “ambient journalism” by Hermida (2010).

Hashtag conversations also included the #BlackTuesday hashtag to share details about protests organised against the Secrecy Bill or generate support by encouraging people to spend their day wearing black as symbol of mourning. This is how Twitter users were connecting their comments to add to the wider discussion. Bruns and Burgess (2012) found that using a hashtag is seen as an explicit attempt to address an imagined community of users. Even though the use of hashtags on Twitter is conversational, it was found that in regards to the Secrecy Bill it was mainly used for information sourcing. There was a community of people on Twitter sharing information about the Bill, many of whom shared the same sentiments. However, it was rare to find discussions happening through the hashtag, except for #BlackTuesday. This hashtag acted as a means of a "strike" and it is often during strikes that people come together for a common cause.

From the above discussion it is clear that Twitter was used by the youth for a number of reasons. Sometimes each reason was used concurrently e.g. political with the use of citations and links or emotional with the use of citation and links and so on. It was discovered therefore that the use of Twitter could be dependent on the user. Youths selected whichever method worked for them during a discussion or particular moment. It could have been retweeting, including a URL or adding content with a trending hashtag. Characteristics of tweeting were not subjective to any user. Most crises require information distributing, and social networks like Twitter have made that easier. This was the case with the Secrecy Bill. Other crises however require action, and other social networks may be more useful in those regards. As this thesis discussed both blogs and Twitter, the findings in relation to blogs as crisis communication tools follows.

6.2 BLOGS AS A CRISIS COMMUNICATION TOOL

There were a total of 20 collected blogs from young authors. When coding each blog, the categories used are nonexclusive. Since only 20 blogs were included in the sample, some blogs were included in multiple categories. For example, one post may include both an emotional reaction and political comment. This is mostly because blog posts are more detailed than tweets. There is no limit to the amount of information one post contains. The study found the most frequent use of blogs during deliberations of the Secrecy Bill was news notification with (n = 30%). The second frequent use of blogs was emotional reactions with (n = 20%). Following emotional reactions, were blogs including media reactions, citations from link or video and political comments uses each with (n = 15%), other uses of blogs with (n = 5%) and lastly recommendations with (n = 0%). Similar to the presentation of findings on Twitter, the following section discusses each category from the most frequent to least frequent.

Table 3: Blog Categories

<i>Categories</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>News Notification</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Emotional Reactions</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Media Reaction</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Citation from link or video</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Political Comments</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0%</i>

News Notifications

As mentioned above, news notification was the most widely used category in the blogosphere. Blogs in this category with 30% (n = 6) mainly consisted of detailed posts supporting the news frame. In most cases, authors would write accounts based on stories they had read on government websites or in mainstream media. Evidence of this is the constant references to other publications, “statements by Right To Know”, “this article written by” or “the Mail & Guardian”. This also indicates where the influence of the frame came from. One of the biggest organisations fighting against the Secrecy Bill was the Right To Know campaign, which was founded for that particular purpose. The impact and projects of the Right To Know campaign were

very popular among bloggers. In many of the posts that included new notifications, the writer made references to the Right To Know, and added their press statements to the original post.

In their news notifications, bloggers would often tell a story about an event or give detailed accounts of events pertaining to the Secrecy Bill. One blogger, Kate Omega, shared her experience as one of the protestors on the 11th of September 2011. She wrote about the threats the Bill posed to democracy, how she found it to be a “draconian piece of legislature”, her contribution to the marches to parliament and talks from public officials, Ronnie Kasrils and Max Price in her own words and from her own experience. To create a picture in the reader’s mind, her posts included quotes and imagery of the events. If it were a talk at a university or a march she used snippets of important information and photos to accompany her words.

Emotional Reactions

With 20% (n = 4) discussing emotional commentary, the purpose of blogs during political crises remains the same as daily purposes of blogging. The posts that included emotional reactions were mostly in reference to “Black Tuesday”, the day South Africans had chosen to symbolise their rebellion towards the President signing the Bill. Posts in this category typically included emotionally loaded words. The most common phrase was, “this is a sad day for democracy”. Bloggers who were keen to share their emotions would often ask their readers, “How do you feel about this?”

Media Reactions

Media reactions made up 15% (n = 3) of blogs. Posts included in this category made either neutral notifications or enquiries of progress or included criticisms of the media. One of these posts mentioned the Media Appeals Tribunal supporting the frame that South African media do have their problems. However, even when bloggers criticised mainstream media, they still found that the government’s methods of dealing with the media are not the way forward. Bloggers believed that the media should not be seen as the enemy of the government and its people.

Citations from a link or video

Citations from a link or video made up 15% (n = 3) of blogs. These posts were primarily passing along information about what the media was talking about and what the government was doing. Filtering was a primary function of these blogs, which were used to pass on official news. Some of the information came from traditional media sources; other information came from press releases or university talks. These links could either be found in the body of text sometimes in the form of hyperlinks, or at the end of post used as a reference for the post.

Similar to the above categories, political comments made up only 15% (n = 3) of blogs. Given the government's involvement in the crisis, political comments are a distinct category. In this case, the government, at all levels, was criticised. One author engendered emotion in her post about government accountability, asking her readers, "How can they say that the Bill is not a threat to transparency and accountability in South Africa?" "How can they ask people to trust them?" "How can it be that the government that was elected by the people have secrets?" In addition to commenting on the specifics of the government's responses to the Secrecy Bill, these posts used the issue as a launching pad for views on other related topics, from the lack of engagement among public officials to issues of service delivery.

Bloggers in this category would often share quotes from government officials, perhaps as a way to support how bad they thought the situation was. An example, taken from a blog titled, "Little Miss Medic", was a quote from The Guardian, which can be found below:

"The state security minister, Siyabonga Cwele, rejected calls to include a "public interest" clause to allow for the revealing of secrets, saying: "The foreign spies continue to steal our sensitive information in order to advantage their nations at the expense of advancement of South Africa and her people."

Following the quotes added to posts, bloggers would often include their own commentary. In this particular post, the author wrote, "I as a South African, am grateful to the press and media, as I am able to keep myself informed and it holds our ruling party accountable for their actions. Now that information will be kept "secret", who knows what shenanigans will go on?"

Other

Only 5% (n = 1) made up for posts categorised as “other”. Similar to the uses of Twitter, “other” referred to posts, which were related to the topic and added value to the study. The post that was included in this category was an analysis of one of Zapiro’s cartoons. Zapiro is known to share ideas through satire. The cartoon featured in the post involves three gates, the first one is Nkandla gate, the second is Car gate and lastly Gupta gate. The question reads, “what do these gates have in common?” and the answer is, “The Secrecy Bill – if it were already signed into law, you’d know nothing about any of them.” Readers who don’t support the Secrecy Bill may find the cartoon comical. It illustrates the outcomes of the Secrecy in one drawing and sums up the mood of those who treasure free speech. The blogger intends to share important information in a satirical way. The points of the Secrecy Bill are not lost in the post, there are only put forward in a lighter tone.

Recommendations

The study found 0% of blog posts included any recommendations. These findings are similar to those found on Twitter where users hardly issued recommendations about how to deal with the Secrecy Bill. One could ask whether it is because social media tools might not allow for it. Or whether it is because the youth did not have faith that any action they would take would assist in changing the minds of others?

The results from the use of blogs were very different to the results from Twitter. The most common use for blogs during crises was news notifications and for Twitter, political comments were most common. Twitter received 2% of recommendations, while blogs received 0%. Where recommendations are concerned, this indicates that younger generations might find recommending action to others online would not make a difference. It might be that off-line this is different. Both social media platforms show that where discussions are occurring, youths are keen on participating. Although the rates of participation among bloggers are relatively lower than participation on Twitter, blogs had one feature that was absent from Twitter. Bloggers were given the platform to tell a full story. Even if it was in response to a media publication, the writer wanted to share background information. Longer posts gave writers room to be more creative. There were some blog posts that were written like poetry or music.

6.3 APPLYING THE SMCC MODEL

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the SMCC model is used as a reference in this study. The one dimension of the SMCC model that assisted this research is the crisis information form. The SMCC model states that influential social media creators affect social media followers. Data answering the research question provides insights on how the form of crisis information affects information seeking behaviours. Using this model, Twitter has emerged as youth's preferred information form. Similar to influential blogs, it provides "issue-fit opinion leadership that addresses followers' information needs during a crisis" (Jin, et al., 2010). The SMCC model explains how these platforms, especially Twitter, distribute information directly or indirectly. This means that people who generate crisis information, social media creators, can disseminate information and opinions directly to social media followers and indirectly to social media inactives.

The one difficulty in applying the SMCC model to this case is that a clear crisis origin and source have not been identified. In other cases, the SMCC is used to explain how audiences seek out crisis information in a crisis where the organisation or traditional media form the key publics of the study. It is a theory grounded in relationships among social media, traditional media and off-line word of mouth. However, Figure 1 is useful to explaining the flow of information. Instead of two-way interactions between social media creators, organisations or traditional and social media followers a pre-dominantly one-way interaction was supported by this study. For example, Twitter users picked up on the latest updates discussed on traditional media and commented on them or shared them with other public's online.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Findings show that during a crisis, people want information and in turn share that information with other via social networks (as seen with the case of Twitter and Blogs above). It was discovered that the main use of these social networks was to disseminate both off line and online information, rather than share their personal feelings about the Secrecy Bill. The SMCC model indicates that selecting the appropriate messages is a function of form and source (Jin & Liu, 2010; Liu, et al., 2012). Youth presence on Twitter have become accustomed to its features, sharing

messages for others to consume online fits the daily Twitter features and structure (e.g. retweets). They continue to communicate using Twitter and the appropriate content for this particular medium. Blogs are also considered as crisis information form, but findings show that young South Africans use of blogs during crises is relatively low. However, the exchange of tweets online, Twitter and blog posts is an example of the flow of communication presented in Figure 1. The next chapter includes a technical analysis focusing on observations made by the research during the course of study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

7.1 USES OF TWITTER AND BLOGS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the previous chapter, the findings were presented through a primary analysis using the data set categories combined with the characteristics of Twitter. This chapter focuses mainly on the observations that were made by the researcher throughout the term of the study relating to the literature. This study confirms previous research (Sundar, Kalyanaraman & Brown, 2003) that interest in a topic is the most important factor in online interactivity. South Africans, particularly the youth in South Africa, have embraced social media enthusiastically. According to the 2011 Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University study, 90% of young people use social networking sites. The fastest growing group using online social media platforms were the 18-26 year olds. With this in mind, it is important to note that, the youth use the media differently than older age groups (Tapscott, 2009).

While older age groups are likely to be more involved in political conversation both offline and online, younger age groups are not. According to a statistic provided by the market-research company, IPSOS South Africa, one in three South Africans between the ages of 18 and 20 have no interest in politics or voting. This is not to say that South African youth are uninterested in local social and cultural issues, as is evidenced in the above chapter through the discussion of political uses of Twitter, it is only minimal. Youth instead turn to topics of their interest. The study found that themes of youth interest usually followed: 'news', 'music', 'celebrities', 'sports', 'technology', 'media', 'entertainment', and 'politics' (often in that order of popularity) (Hargittai & Litt, 2009). Some of the most followed accounts on Twitter include people and organisations related to some of the aforementioned themes of entertainment, sports, politics, and media. It was therefore important for the reader to highlight some of the uses in this regard as crucial to the study of social media use by youth, as well as highlight the reasons why the youth may not have participated in the discussion of the Secrecy Bill online as expected.

The following sections will provide an analysis of both political and non-political uses of Twitter that highlights how the different levels on interactivity during crises

depends on the level of interest. The impact of media coverage of a crisis follows these sections then an overall analysis of South African social media trends.

7.2 POLITICAL USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING CRISES

What this study has found is that during political crises, Twitter is the popular medium of discussion generally used to promote content from journalists, i.e. sending users back to traditional media publications and websites. Current affairs and news stories are frequently debated through the service. Where blogs are concerned, it was noted that in relation to crises occurring worldwide the coverage of crises in South Africa whether major or minor, do not receive a lot of interactivity, in the blogosphere. This observation is not to say that South African youths are not frequent bloggers. There are millions of South African bloggers, but not many have appeared to discuss crisis related information. Thelwall & Stuart (2007) describe blogs as typically individual and personal and in South Africa the statistics above support that blogs are commonly used for entertainment purposes or individual writing.

Consequently, when researching the implications of the Secrecy Bill, the researcher came across minimal blog content. This highlights the use of 20 blogs in the sample compared to the 3, 000 tweets that were sourced. Without promoting a blog on various platforms it is difficult to find any data representing any issues covered in the blogosphere. People typically find blogs through other blogs, word of mouth or inclusion of the blog URL on a home page, tweets or other profiles (Nardi, et al., 2004). This limits the amount of audiences blogs receive. The blogs that have been discussed within these findings were mainly used as mediums to replicate the stories covered by organisations or traditional news media. Evidence of this is seen at the bottom of blog articles that refer readers to the site where the news originated. Only a few of the blogs published shared personal expression or entertainment features. It was challenging to make a multiplicity of observations of uses of blogs during crises for several reasons. First, it is not possible to know how many times a blog post was viewed without contacting the blogger. Second, if a reader does not use the share options or leave a comment on the post there is no confirmation of whether the post has contributed to crisis communication.

(i) Participate in News discussions

The main use of Twitter during political crises is the distribution of news. During deliberations of the Secrecy Bill, South Africans were more interested in representing an issue and belonging to a community than communicating personal insight. Evidence for this claim includes the common use of retweets and hashtags, which automatically associates users. Their interactivity online provides a sense of community that transcends anything offered by mainstream media. Newsworthy events receive a lot of discussion on Twitter, which are often triggered by mainstream reporting, first hand coverage by Twitter or established interests within the community. While South Africans participation in discussions regarding the Secrecy Bill did not draw attention to their use of social media, it does not mean that there are no cases in South Africa, which may occur that would not generate mass participation online. The interaction on Twitter specifically consists of a broader commentary intended as a user's contribution to current events. This was noted in another political crisis involving the South African Police Service (SAPS).

On the 16th of August 2012, striking mine workers were gunned down by the SAPS at the Lonmin platinum mine in the Marikana area. 34 mine workers were killed and 78 injured during protests against low wages. This became reminiscent of the Sharpeville shootings in 1960, where 69 people were killed, and the Soweto shootings in 1976, where the police shot and killed hundreds of students who were protesting against the use of Afrikaans in the schools instead of English (Kilgore, 2013). Frequently referred to as the 'Marikana massacre', the incident that occurred at Lonmin became a dark day for South Africa's democratic history (Twala, 2012; Kilgore, 2013). As an issue affecting the community, the crisis has been discussed among many South Africans online since its occurrence. Examples from Twitter are,

@isizulu wrote: "will a by product of #Marikana Commission be the appointment of qualified police officers to leadership & remove politicians from SAPS? "

@MinersShotDown wrote: Can the police claim ignorance? Why were police units involved without the knowledge of the commanding brigadier? #Marikana #recklessSAPS

This type of interactivity is similar to Hermida's (2010; 2012) descriptions of 'ambient journalism', where the journalism itself becomes fragmented and omnipresent. Information that is shared is multi-perspectival and story narratives are constructed collaboratively. Posts are informative or conversational, or both at the same time. This suggests that during political crises youths online want to connect to the community. The way that Twitter has been used to create discussion and bring awareness to issues is worthy of attention. However, similar to news of the Secrecy Bill there was not enough attention paid to the thousands of the tweets expressing sympathy for the families who lost their loved ones as a result of the mine strike. Coincidentally, the crisis points towards the same underlying issues implicated by the Secrecy Bill. Issues that are reminiscent of apartheid, democracy and overall mistrust of the ANC.

7.3 NON-POLITICAL USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING CRISES

A few noteworthy examples are provided below as a way of showing how topics relating to these themes generate great social media discussion and debate, even during crises. These examples are, Woolworths, Oscar Pistorious and Durex SA.

(i) Woolworths

As mentioned above, this study found that one of the most common uses of Twitter during crises among youths is to keep up with local trends relating to topics of their interest. Youths online have a particular interest in what businesses and brands say and do, according to Tapscott (2009), they judge businesses by their integrity, workplace practices and concern for the environment. In relation to crisis communication this is important as Tapscott (2009) adds that the youth, 'can forgive genuine mistakes, but not deception or harmful practices.' This is evidenced in one local case involving the well-known South African food and retail brand, Woolworths, which experienced several crises that received wide social media coverage. During the period of study, Woolworths had 200, 737 people following their account on Twitter, which highlights that the brand has a large trusted following. However, on two separate occasions, tweets surfaced that could negatively affect the brand and increase the perceived risk of purchasing their products. For example,

certain tweets pointed to the fact that frogs were found in Woolworth's salad products. One of the incidents involved Maxim Magazines publisher, Dirk Steenekamp, a frequent twitter user who posted a tweet with a picture of a frog in his salad including the hashtags #WooliesFrogSalad and #Vomit. An example of the tweet is provided below:



An incident such as this could constitute as a crisis for Woolworths who were at risk of losing customers. Dirk Steenekamps' tweet was retweeted 682 times catching local media attention, The Citizen online, TIME, City Press and City Buzz, to name a few (Coetzee, 2014). With just over 30, 000 followers, Dirk Steenekamps' tweet reached thousands of South Africans alerting them to the incident. In the SMCC model, considered an influential social media creator, Dirk Steenekamps tweet is an example of how users are creating crisis information for users to consume. Social media followers responded to his tweet including Woolworths, the organisation in crisis. Judging from the views of Tapscott (2009) that see youth as people who judge businesses by their integrity, workplace practices and concern for the environment, it is not surprising that this incident received huge amounts of news and publicity. As a health concern, many users were interested in the reaction from Woolworths. The

brand was more than willing to engage with consumers to minimise the criticism and impact. Unlike the above-mentioned case of the Marikana Massacre, which experienced an information vacuum, Woolworths was willing to provide information to their followers. Quickly responding to Dirk's tweet they wrote,

@WOOLWORTHS_SA: “@Dirk_Steenkamp Dirk, that's terrible... we're so sorry. Can you DM us your details? We really want to get in touch.”

Replying to another user who tweeted them saying,

@InsaafDawood: “@Dirk_Steenkamp #BoycottWoolworths #SaveTheFrogs would really like to know what @WOOLWORTHS_SA did to try and fix this”

They responded,

@WOOLWORTHS_SA: “Hi Insaaf, we are very shocked to see this. We are in touch with Dirk to investigate the issue. Thank you for your concern.”

Besides sharing criticism, social media users enjoyed poking fun at the situation. Referring again to the work of Tapscott (2009), the author shares that youth online love to be entertained. Therefore, it is clear that Twitter has become a tool often used for entertainment purposes, and this present study argues that the same is true even during crises. When analysing the situation with Woolworths, one common theme that this study found linked to entertainment was that users often tweeted ironic or satirical tweets with the intent to insult, mock or amuse in relation to the frog in the salad (Riloff, et al., 2013). Seattle Coffee Co. is known for their creative use of their coffee foam. Shortly after the interactions on Twitter, they tweeted:

@Seattlecoffeeco: “Dear @WOOLWORTHS_SA Hope salad frog made it to the pond in the end, poor thing. Anyway it is COFFEE TIME! ;) Yay!”

Their tweet was accompanied by an image of a frog made of foam in a cup of coffee. This type of interaction is common among South African twitter users. In each of the crisis examples mentioned, sarcasm as a form of humour is always included as part of the situation.

(ii) *Oscar Pistorius*

On the 14th of February 2013, South African athlete Oscar Pistorius shot and killed his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. This incident was a major breaking story which created a lot of buzz on social media. A Google Trends search on Oscar Pistorius showed little online interest in the athlete in 2012, but on the day that his girlfriend was killed, there were over a million searches on Google for information on Pistorius and Steenkamp. On Twitter specifically it was noted, via Twitaholic, a tool that ranks Twitter users' followers, that Oscar Pistorius's followers grew from 237 505 on 14 February to 272 473 on 20 February – an increase of 14%. In relation to crises, this incident once again put South Africa, a country known for gun violence, on the map. The question was how the country will manage its reputation with regards to violence in the country, and possibly police corruption as the hearing went on. For Oscar himself this incident caused reputational challenges among his professional sponsors and fans. As this was evidently a major criminal and justice issue for the country, South Africans used Twitter to express their views on the subject, and make sense of the unfolding story as and when it happened. However, it is important to note that when it comes to crises, both political and non-political, there appears to be different ways in which people navigate crisis information; it is noted that once people have noticed a trend in their social media networks of a crisis discussion some are more likely to seek out traditional media coverage of these crises.

On Twitter, regarding the Oscar case, some expressed shock;

@KarlJCompton wrote: "I can't believe Oscar Pistorius has been found not guilty of murder. He intended to kill her, don't care what anyone says. #Disgusting."

Some expressed sympathy;

@AllisonPennell wrote: "This makes me so sad. Poor man. Be well. Be fruitful. Be safe."

However, as mentioned above, other users on Twitter used the platform to express sarcasm and humour at the situation. Users created a hashtag called

#ThingsLongerThanOscarsSentence, which received so much traffic it became a trending topic.

Below is an example:

@MizJagger: “The time it takes to read the iTunes terms and conditions. #thingslongerthanoscarssentence”

Coincidentally, Oscar’s trial occurred around the same that America held their 86th Academy awards otherwise known as The Oscars. A popular joke on Twitter became, “And the Oscar goes to...jail.” Different theories have attempted to explain the phenomenon of humour arising in situations of panic, stress, and crisis. The use of humour during a crisis is noted in this study as being a coping mechanism. Furthermore, its use on Twitter can be seen as a therapeutic activity to reduce the stress of others, the situation or on themselves. Essentially it is argued that social media is used a platform that enables individuals to show these coping mechanisms and share their emotions.

(iii) *Durex*

The condom brand Durex caused controversy in South Africa after a 2011 Twitter campaign of edgy sex jokes included a tweet that supported sexual abuse. The campaign was intended to raise awareness of its Twitter account using a number jokes, which included the following tweet:

Why did God give men penises? So they’d have at least one way to shut a woman up.
#DurexJoke

The tweet provoked a strong response from many; mostly negative. One user tweeted;

@SamanthaPerry: “...wow, did @durexsa really just tweet that?!? @FeministsSA #DurexJoke”

Another also tweeted;

@MellAttree: Bad taste & spelling & ‘trended’ for wrong reasons, major rep nightmare *@durexsa* (‘recent pic’ on profile doesn’t help either) IDIOTS

More responses were issued with the same sentiments among the youth and well-known media houses. This created a crisis for the brand because they issued this tweet on the eve of South Africa’s international awareness event 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children. More specifically, their jokes promoting sexism were seen as "part of the system that promotes rape" and many were encouraged to boycott the brand. Similar to the above mentioned case, Durex’s Twitter account received a large number of new followers during the controversy and became a trending topic. This example highlights the particular attention to the youth, as they are arguably the ones most affected through the rape of women and children.

From the above, it is concluded that interaction online and the use of social media (in this case Twitter) cannot be said to be for either political or non-political reasons, but a combination of both. As mentioned above, youth turn to topics of their interest, which usually follows themes of ‘news’, ‘music’, ‘sports’, ‘celebrities’, ‘technology’, ‘media’, ‘entertainment’, and ‘politics.’ Essentially, the communication online is dependent on the issue and the level of interest that the issue generates. The examples provided above show that the use of Twitter during crises depends on the effects of the crisis, the coverage and the impact. Referring back to the Secrecy Bill, from my own observations, the impact of the Secrecy Bill affects people in business more than it would affect youths who are often politically apathetic. The main concern among the youth online was that news of the Secrecy Bill would affect democracy, media freedom, freedom of speech and most importantly Nelson Mandela’s legacy. There was not much information shared among users that included detailed information about the implications of the Secrecy Bill and its limitations regarding their own access to information. This type of information was mostly shared among journalists whose practice is mostly affected by the Secrecy Bill. Furthermore, the researcher observed that Twitter’s structure and functions have appealed both to South African youths also generating the interest of traditional media sources. As stated previously users engage in topics that are of interest of them.

There have been three trends discovered through the analysis of the use of Twitter in discussing the Secrecy Bill, the first is information sharing as mentioned in Chapter Six, the second is news curation, and the third is sense making. All of which will be discussed in relation to Twitter and blogs below.

7.4 MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CRISIS

One of the many direct links to social media coverage is traditional media coverage. During crises, traditional media plays a pivotal role. Discussions and trends in social media networks are often fuelled by media coverage of a crisis. It was noted through observations in the discussions about the Secrecy Bill that social networking platforms such as Twitter are of particular interest to news providers, e.g City Press, News 24. Latonero and Shklovski (2011), Vultee and Vultee (2011), Bruns and Burgess (2011; 2012) and Wright and Hinson (2012) have noted Twitter's capabilities as a medium commonly used for breaking news updates. It is for this reason that with respect to news, social media has become a transformative force that is not a replacement for traditional news sources, but a different media on its own. This is an observation made in the case of the Secrecy Bill. Besides information sharing (noted also in the previous chapter) many users on Twitter (particularly) also devote a substantial amount of time and effort to news curation. It employs a process similar to Bruns (2005) descriptions of highlighting, sharing and evaluating material released by other sources in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding. A discussion follows.

(i) News Curation

News has become a participatory activity with the help of Twitter. During debates of the Secrecy Bill, South Africans would interact with online news outlets in many ways, one of them being sharing content. When important news breaks, discussions spread across Twitter, passed along from user to user at a speed reflecting each user's level of interest in the story. Bruns and Burgess (2012) identified an important aspect of news discussion practices on Twitter as the curating of information related to specific stories. Given Twitter's features, trending topics make it easier for users to filter through material. Trending topics are a convenient way of identifying recently emerging conversations on Twitter's stream. The Secrecy Bill was a frequent trending

topic in the South African Twitter community. As was noticed with the Secrecy Bill, users find, share, and (sometimes) comment on newsworthy information and events. Essentially, they publicise rather than publish news stories. This process can be described as collaborative news curation by online user communities. Users frequently engage in gathering and sharing what they perceive to be relevant materials, for example tweeting links to further information or retweeting relevant posts of other users. Such collective efforts can result in forms of news coverage that are as detailed as those achieved by the traditional media industry. Below are a few examples.



nyanakanongqawuse @O_Cafe_ · Dec 13

RT @eNCANews TOP STORY: **Secrecy Bill causes a stir** > bit.ly/1dvpRVK

Expand

↩ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More



Keith Somerville @KSAfricaHack · Nov 12

South Africa secrecy bill ready for presidential assent wp.me/p1OTFE-5ef

Expand

↩ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More



Michael Brooks @_michaelbrooks · Sep 12

South Africa secrecy law surprise as Zuma rejects controversial bill
gu.com/p/3tyyy/tw via @guardian

📄 View summary

↩ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More



Paul Pitura @CBCPaulPitura · Jul 25

South Africa passes bill which could see whistle blowers, journalists who publish classified info jailed for 25 yrs. fw.to/6bJttdl

📄 View summary

↩ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More

While there was plenty of Twitter activity covering the news, it should be noted that users who are engaged in organising and curating newsworthy information, have no ability to control any of these channels. The idea of gatekeeping and gatewatching were discussed in the earlier chapters. This is arguably why information provided on Twitter or blogs, encouraged South Africans to share their opinions through any medium of their choice. This personalised perspective adds value to social media, and provides something different from, for example, Google News', and traditional media. On Twitter the way the Secrecy Bill was curated by users were through hashtags. As mentioned in Chapter Six, hashtags were used mainly to search for information. Users would hashtag important tweets, specifically those made by news organisations and well-known bloggers, in order to make it easier for people to access

the news story and share and comment if they wished. Essentially the use of hashtags was to curate tweets into meaningful themes.

Even though the use of Twitter in this case has pointed to curation as a major trend (Liu, 2010), there has been little research which concentrates on social media curation, particularly in the South Africa. While research into the impact of social media on news creation as a first-hand information source has increasingly been subject of research (see for example Newman, 2009), social media curation has not been considered in sufficient manner yet. The engagement of online users and news content suggests that many individuals have the expectation of being considered as part of an interpretive community. By collecting information through social media, users create a democratic news gathering process that can be culturally relevant.

(ii) Information Sharing

Uses of blogs and Twitter are typically informative. Information remains a key use of media during any type of crisis. Its creators, for example, have described Twitter, as a real-time information distribution network. In this study, information sharing and distribution was important to note.

During the critical period of the crisis, when there was much noise made in the media about the introduction of new laws, the study observed individuals primarily posting tweets that contained information. By purposely adding hashtags to their tweets and retweeting other users, users were contributing information to the collective conversation. Similarly, several blogs (both internationally and locally) have also received media attention for timely and biting coverage of social and political issues. It was discovered on with the blogs in this case study, that many blogs were ahead of the mainstream media when reporting on the Secrecy Bill. The use of blogs were highlighted because generally blogs are useful for research and monitoring of societal issues. When the Secrecy Bill was at its most crucial stage, people were able to use blogs for information, reader sentiment, links to other useful information, etc. An example of this occurred on the 12th of December 2013, when news broke that President Jacob Zuma had signed the Protection of State Information Bill into law. Shortly after the news broke, South Africans took to their blogs (and Twitter), sharing updates of information about the matter causing what various media outlets, that

picked up on the tweets, have called a “twitter storm”. By directly engaging with influential social media creators (e.g. @barrybateman), users shared outrage through replies and retweets.

Another example is when United States TIME magazine published an article on the Secrecy Bill. The reception to the tweet was quick. One user expressed shock that South Africa appeared on the U.S radar indicating that the situation may be a lot worse than people seemed to realise.



There was something about international media outlets sharing news of the Secrecy Bill that interested many South Africans who may have felt obliged to chime in, some even sharing their sarcasm.



The findings show that information sharing dominates micro-blogging communications during a crisis. This is consistent with previous research highlighted in Chapter Two and Three. As people shared the information that they knew or found, they purposely added the appropriate hashtag to their tweets so that others could follow and find the information as it was posted.

(iii) Sense Making

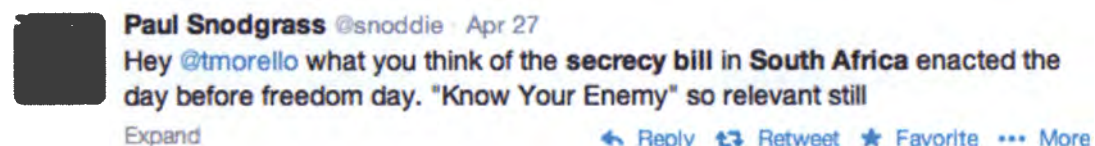
Although the sense-making theory was included as a complementing theory for this research, findings show that it is more applicable to the behaviour of young South Africans online. Twitter’s structure enables users to gather in one setting to have a

discussion on issues that are of interest to them and important to them. During crises, Twitter plays a vital role in collective sense making. Research by (Heverin & Zach, 2012) finds that during sense making, communication between and among individuals has always played an important role in the responses, decision making, and actions of those impacted by crises. This is very similar to the behaviour of South African youths online. Crises often create a need for interaction and compassion. The openness of the online community allows users to ‘listen in’ to a wide range of accounts and gain multi-faceted understandings of an event, experience or incident. Through participation and engagement in a large space, users have allowed themselves to become part of a broad dialogue. Much of the information that has been shared by users allows them to make sense of the outcomes affecting their community as a result of the Secrecy Bill.

By engaging with media or other users, people began to understand in more detail the implications of the Secrecy Bill. Additionally, Twitter’s personal style of communication drives a sense of emotional involvement to events. This drives users to reflect on or even make sense of events using their own perspective. Palen and Liu (2007) also found that this type of engagement allows users to validate and interpret information they receive. By asking rhetorical questions such as, “did we just go back 50 years?” users are making sense of events in their own perspective. Example included below.

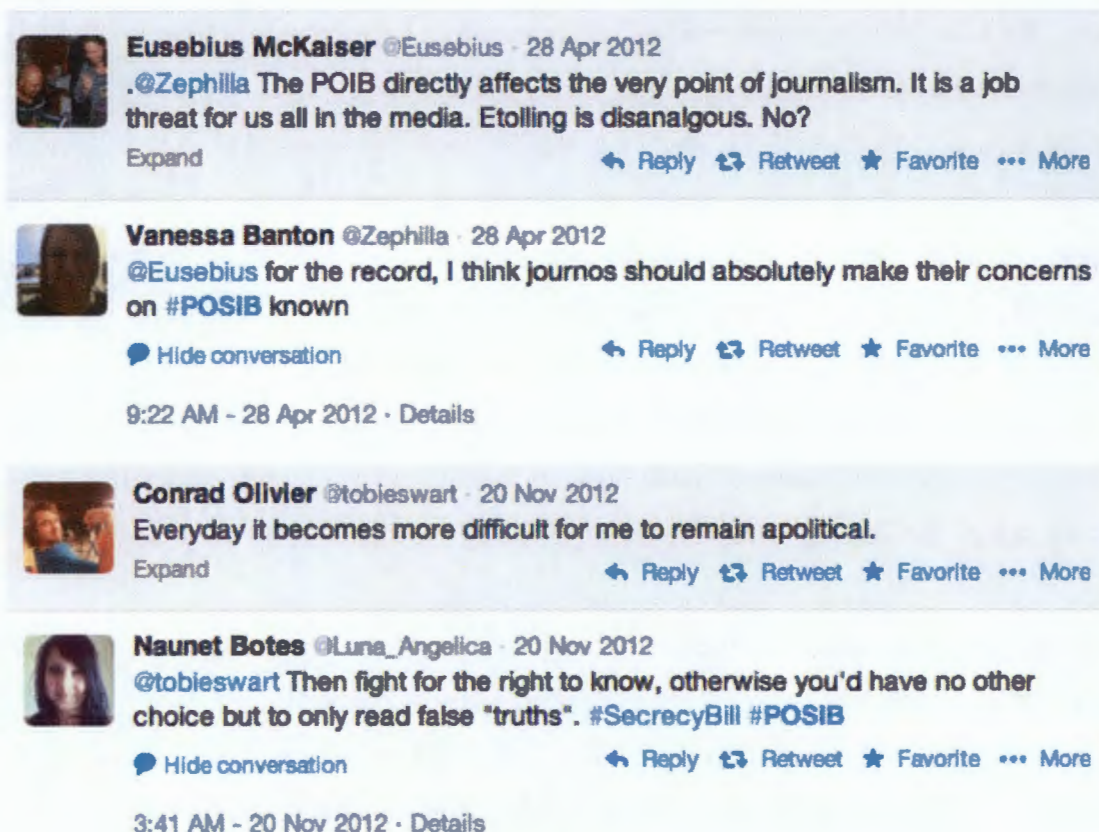


In some cases, users would post direct questions about the crises. Tweet to follow.



By asking what Zhang and Gao (2014) have found to be a conversational question, this user seeks interaction as a means to put the situation into context. Gaps in cognitive understanding are often filled during discussions and many gaps in knowledge appear in the form of questions.

A post from one individual influences the post of another as well as their thought process.



According to Heverin and Zach (2012), crisis situations are often too complex for one individual to see the whole picture on his or her own. The examples of interaction between the users above signify the process where individuals fill their cognitive gaps. As they receive information from formal sources, users begin to engage with each other to validate and interpret information that they receive. By following the hashtags, new information contributes to a user's sense making of events. The shared information helped youths build a picture of the different ways the Secrecy Bill affected media freedom or South African democracy.

Tweets do not always receive replies. Especially in this case, most of Twitter's activity included the use of hashtags or retweets, not many direct replies to tweets. In such a situation, Solomon (1997) finds that even when a response is not granted self-expression contributes to sense-making processes. A common practice among youths is to tweet while either watching the news, reading a newspaper, website, or blog. Drawing from Dervin's (1999) research, this is referred to as a "talking cure" that also

assists an individual make sense of a situation. The talking cure was used among many youths online. An example is provided below.



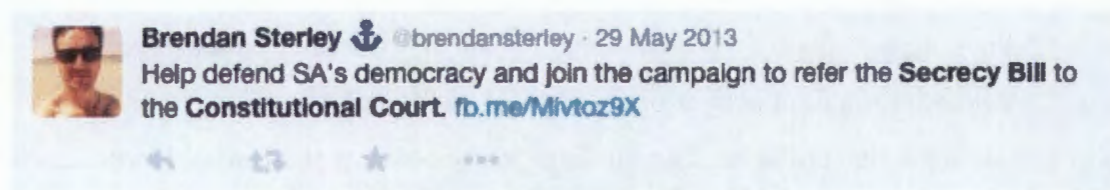
In this example, the user expresses her sorrow regarding the unfolding events and how it affects what is expected to be a day of celebration and cheer. The tweet provides the user with a method of voicing her inner thoughts while also contributing to collective understanding.

The findings above support the sense making theory where tweeting is seen as a process where information sought or received is put to use by making sense of it in order to address the problem. The findings are also consistent with Heverin and Zach's (2012) study, which show that social media can play a valuable role in collective sense making. However, research by Zhang and Gao (2014) raises concerns of the difficulty of sense making with social media as a result of unverified information, rumours and spams also circulating. There are some cases where each of these could make it difficult for people to make sense of large amounts of information. Opportunely, news of the Secrecy Bill was very simple and direct. The basic understanding among youths was that it was an intended law hampering access to information journalists required to hold the government accountable. The common trend in discussions occurring online was to share links to articles, which limited the possibility of rumours circulating. Use of humour and sarcasm are the only two difficulties users could have faced through sense making in this circumstance. The findings show that a loosely connected group of people can come together to understand a situation. The collaboration among different types of users may help to best utilise social media as a platform for reducing uncertainty and promoting information openness and transparency in such emergent cases.

7.5 THE SECRECY BILL DEBATE

This section demonstrates how the Secrecy Bill debate has demonstrated this study's premise. The discussion in Chapter Four indicates that during the media freedom debate, South African media professed to play a vital role in ensuring transparent

democracy. The coverage of the crisis online, through Twitter and blogs, suggests that South African media have stuck to their goal. The large scale use of URL's often linked to traditional media websites, indicates that young people have kept themselves involved in the on going debate through media channels. Traditional media has played an important role in the coverage of the Secrecy Bill. Information sharing was also noticed as one of the most frequent uses of Twitter during the on going crisis. The information shared, largely came from traditional sources. When the media would publicise articles declaring that the Secrecy Bill be taken to the Constitutional Court, tweets would follow in the same tone. For example,



It was the same for quotes issued by government officials. When the Minister of State Security, Siyabonga Cwele made remarks about the Secrecy Bill saying it would “strengthen democracy while balancing transparency and protecting our national security and national interests” (Chapter Four, p. 63), users tweeted in response to his comments. Most users who followed the debate closely, would curate the news or upload links further information as provided in the examples in the earlier paragraphs of these findings. A few examples can be found below.



They were also aware of the decline in South Africa's media and freedom rankings,



Sentletse @Sentletse · 24 May 2012

In 2008, **South Africa** was ranked 33rd in terms of 'press freedom' and it slipped to 38th in 2011. It will probably be worse in 2012.

Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More

During the decline in media freedom, a lot of the discussions online focused on both the effects of the MAT and the Secrecy Bill. When the debates became more intense, a lot of users would reference the ANC Polokwane Conference in 2007 (Chapter Four, p. 75) as the turning point for the ANC. For example,



uMshula NguMfowethu @Mshula · Jan 7

Hay no. Back in 2007, after the polokwane conference the **Anc** was saying they need to go back to basics. In 2014... fb.me/6Y8PUbyO3

IOL News

It was at this conference when the hostility towards the media intensified. Additionally, the content online often referred to the importance of Nelson Mandela's democratic discourse. An example of this was discussed in political comments section 6.1 which presented findings of the use of Twitter during the crisis. The negative feedback also received wide coverage online.

In the category labelled news notification (which typically included URL's), the signifiers included news framed in own words, framed with attribution, own words but in the frame of the topic and rejecting the frame. The frame of the debate presented in the Chapter Four Case Study matches the frame of the discussions present online. The same outrage the media shared was shared by active youth online. The debate was a major occurrence in the South African media landscape. This study has provided the youth perspective that was missing from literature of the debate. One of the most important uses of social media in crisis communication of the Secrecy Bill was to stay updated with current affairs.

7.6 SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

As a developing country with an emerging economy, South Africa is home to many bloggers within the community. It has become pervasive, transforming the way young people communicate with each other, discover news and share information. South Africans have embraced social media enthusiastically, which has had many

implications on business practices especially in public relations. Many companies have embraced Twitter using it for various marketing, publicity and customer service tasks. The emergence of social media has changed the way organisations communicate with their audiences which in turn has opened many channels for communication. For crisis communication, it means that interactions online can serve as agents that accelerate news cycles. As crises create a need for information, youths are increasingly turning to social media for this particular need. There are a few trends that were observed during the study that differ in some cases to the relevant literature. Social media activity in South Africa does not always match trends in previous studies. Most of the research in crisis communication and social media centres on the capacity of new technologies as tools for breaking news mediums or eyewitness reporting, during emergent situations or activist debates. The following section provides an analysis on observations of social media trends in South Africa.

(i) Local trends versus International trends

The primary findings of this research show that the impact of social media on crisis communication practice is significant in South Africa. Although it is significant, the study brought on the observation that its impact is not similar to the impact demonstrated by social media in other countries. The difference is not that South Africa has different values, beliefs and customs, which do play a role in determining what type of literature and communication models can be applied to South African practices. Perhaps the difference is in the types of crises, because research studies have found that South Africa continues to develop along Western lines as their public relations practice subscribes to international practices. Despite the numerous tweets providing information of the Secrecy Bill and links to articles that were either shared or retweeted, the interactivity on South African twitter profiles in this particular case differs from the attention paid to Twitter in other communities during similar crises. In other cases, the volume of chatter online often flows into traditional media streams serving as a powerful medium assisting in raising crisis awareness.

For example, Twitter allows its users to post messages that are not more than 140 characters. By encouraging shorter posts, users spend less time thinking of what to say or how to phrase it, which also means that there is a chance for posts to be more frequent. The frequency in updates results in limitless and sustained discussions of

major events attracting public attention. By this, social media as a news sources has become a global trend. It could be that the political uses of social media in South Africa have not made traditional media headlines because the crises that have been discussed within this study have not occurred in real-time. The Secrecy Bill is a case that has been drawn over a period of three years (2011-2013) making periodical appearances in the news. In this case, the study found that during crises, Twitter's capabilities are more effective in crisis communication when users are offering eyewitness reports as they unfold in real-time.

Even though South African traditional media outlets have embraced social media, by opening up accounts to share news stories with their audiences, there have been few articles published on the 'twitter storm' occurring on the 12th of December 2013. As a whole South African traditional media has not fully covered the use of Twitter in deliberations of the Secrecy Bill unlike during the Arab spring, where Arab and international media covered stories on how publics were documenting the protests and sending outcries to the world for assistance (Bruns, et al., 2013). The Arab Spring is one of the most frequently referenced examples in considerations of the impact of social media in crisis communications because the protests and unrest in countries from Tunisia to Syria generated a substantial amount of social media activity. Twitter was especially used as a tool for coordination and mobilisation of public protests (Khamis & Vaughn, 2011; Wilson & Dunn, 2011; Bruns, Highfield & Burgess, 2013). In other communities (the United States of America, India, Nigeria, Egypt, Iran, Haiti) twitter has emerged as a platform popularly used for breaking news updates and for people to share news about major events. Each of the countries listed above has faced an incident (see Chapter Three) where Twitter was the first source to provide news information attracting national and international headlines.

There is also the noticeable difference in the media coverage of an organisational crisis and a political crisis. When tweets referencing both incidents that occurred involving Woolworths surfaced, traditional media outlets were quick to pick it up and cover stories of the unfolding events online. It was the same during the Oscar Pistorius trial. However, the same media outlets were not as quick to cover the online discussions of the Secrecy Bill except for one incident that occurred on the 12th of December 2013 when false news had spread that President Jacob Zuma had signed

the Secrecy Bill into law. It is a possibility that traditional media were motivated to cover the tweets from the 12th of December 2013 because many highly respected journalists were among the sources of the breaking news.



Nicholas Dawes ✓

@NicDawes

Follow

Pres. Zuma has taken advantage of a big news week to sign the Protection of State Information Bill, so its now the secrecy act.

1:58 PM - 12 Dec 2013

130 RETWEETS 1 FAVORITE



Nicholas Dawes is Chief Editorial and Content Officer for the Hindustan Times, chairman of the South African National editor's Forum, a political columnist and public policy and economics editor.



Chris Roper

@ChrisRoper

Zuma: in honour of Madiba, I'm going to shit on the democracy he fought for. "#SecrecyBill has been signed into law"

A YEAR AGO

Chris Roper is the editor-in-chief of the Mail & Guardian.



Lebogang Mashego

@LebzMashego

"@barrybateman: Cheeky Zuma sneaks through the Secrecy Bill amid Madiba distraction. We see what you did there." He punished us for booing 🙄

A YEAR AGO REPLY RETWEET FAVORITE

Barry Bateman is a senior reporter for Eyewitness News.

There were no tweets from South African youths that were covered by traditional media sources, yet on that day there were hundreds of tweets discussing the news

headlines and comments posted by the influential social media creators listed above. The comments and reactions by South Africans are the main sources of the term 'twitter storm' but their engagement did not receive media attention. It is the same situation with the Marikana massacre. The Mail & Guardian covered a story, "No Mr Deputy President, we are not responsible for Marikana", which included 26 tweets from prominent researcher and analyst Nomboniso Gasa. Her tweets were a plea to the government to listen to what South Africans have been saying and allow their contribution. Where political crises are involved, the social media activity receiving attention in South Africa involves prominent or respected figures within the community.

Since social media has become a major discussion forum for youths to deliberate news and events, the media as a conduit of information is expected to empower youths. There is a need for media to recognise that younger generations are as relevant and important as public officials even during political crises. Based on the literature, though social media offers an alternative news source, critics remain sceptical about their hype questioning the amount of unsubstantiated information and dismissing social media platforms as frivolous services (Arceneaux & Weiss, 2010). With a wide diversity of opinions an immediate problem is credibility. For journalism, verifying information is an important part of their practice. Regarding political crises, journalists appear hesitant to rely on social media views. There are possibly other channels of communication used to address the youth's contribution to democratic processes. However, without engaging media outlets for a more detailed explanation, there is no sure way of confirming this observation.

(ii) Digital Divides

An important issue to consider around social media, especially in South Africa, is the point that social media use is mostly popular among a privileged minority. Although Twitter may seem like a timely, accessible medium for crisis information, it is not always appropriate for communicating with all audiences. Through observation, the study found that South Africans deal with cases like the Secrecy Bill through protesting rather than addressing it online. South Africa is known for high rates of public protest concerning cases that affect the community. Protesting is dated back to South African history, as a means to draw attention to issues and achieve democratic

change (Nleya, Thompson, Tapscott, Piper & Esau, 2011). There was plenty media coverage of the marches to Parliament demanding that the Bill not be passed into law. This includes what protesters called “Black Tuesday” on the 22nd of November. Interactivity online and offline are both occurring within South Africa, but one is more limited than the other. Online, users tweeted self-expressions of solidarity by informing followers that there would be organised protests in different provinces, changing their display pictures to complete black, or expressing that they would spend the day wearing black attire. A few examples can be found below.



Derick Hewetson @derickhewetson · 22 Nov 2011

I am wearing black to protest against the **#POIB**. The bill is an affront to the struggle for democracy in South Africa. **#blacktuesday**

Expand

↩ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More



Mark Haze @MarkHaze12 · 22 Nov 2011

#Blacktuesday in South Africa today - wear black to protest against the **Secrecy Bill!** The public has the right to know.

Expand

↩ Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More

There is no way to confirm whether the people who tweeted about the protests were among the protestors. No evidence was found of tweets sharing information of being present during protesting. It is possible that the majority of people involved in protests are marginalised by new technologies. These marginalised populations often lack or have limited access to Internet connectivity making access to social media a socially stratified practice. People that are socioeconomically marginalised are more likely to use the Internet for simple tasks (often email) and remain oblivious to being ‘internet savvy’. Similar to the ‘Marikana massacre’, the discussions online were based on media coverage and no comments from the workers themselves.

This tells us that where political crises are concerned, online activism is still growing. The attention given to uses of new technologies is limited. Off-line activism and protests still receive more outcomes and change than any discussions that have occurred online. Another important observation, which needs to be made in terms of digital divides, is that access to social media platforms is different for different users. People select certain types of media based upon the functions relevant to them. For someone who is seeking connection, Facebook would be his or her preference over

Twitter. Especially considering gaining followers on Twitter is not as easy as adding friends on Facebook. This matches Austin's, Liu and Jin's (2012) claims that these forms of media tend to match audiences' perceptions and ways of thinking. Their research applies gratifications theory suggesting that individuals use media that meets a number of their combined needs, whether it is information seeking, socialisation or self-expression. Unfortunately, the study did not observe other social networks, which may have gained more traffic and interactivity generating news of the crises occurring in South Africa.

(iii) Participatory Culture

Overall the activity online contributes to a broader form of participation. There is a high rate of youth participation online. Through social media, young people have managed to include themselves in collaborative deliberations and debates. What became apparent during these events was the out pouring support within the community. During any type of crisis, use of social media was associated with a sense of connectedness. The posts and updates analysed in this study further explore the idea presented in previous research (Procopio & Procopio, 2007) that social media can help maintain and even build a strong sense of community. This tells us that a sense of community is important to youths in South Africa. The access that youth have through social media has opened their space to limitless information, diverse viewpoints and representations.

To summarise the research findings, social media sites are becoming more and more interactive. Users contribute and participate in discussions that they come across, that they find interesting, affect them directly or their community as a whole. Media democracy and freedom are at the heart of South African democracy. Coming from an especially restricted path, freedom in South Africa has meant a great deal to the community, including the youth. Since 1994, South Africans have hoped for democratic freedom favouring national unity. Judging from the tone of tweets or posts, youths are very compassionate about the freedom of South Africa. Often making references to freedom and democracy, their interactivity online is seen as their contribution to current events and media freedom debates occurring in policy making. The compassion is evident in the way youths promote traditional media news. Sharing information regarding the Secrecy Bill shows support for the role media is expected to

play within a democracy. Their engagement with technology is evidence that young people are paying attention to what happens in their surroundings. Using social media makes youths aware of crises and how a crisis potentially affects them. The next section provides a conclusion of the thesis, summarising the main findings of this research.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the potential and growing impact of social media in the process of crisis communication, particularly among youth in South Africa. Building on existing literature which states that social media has changed the way people communicate during crises, this study explored what this constitutes in a South African context, by exploring the use of blogs and Twitter in particular. South Africa was chosen for this study, in order to identify the trends of social media activity in developing countries. Furthermore, with a number of crisis situations gaining high profile attention in South Africa, such as the Secrecy Bill it seemed fitting for the study.

The Secrecy Bill formed the basis of this research as a case study. The research found that the Secrecy Bill has not been received positively by all members of society, including the youth. Its implications on media freedom and access to information have affected South Africa's current media landscape as shown in Chapters One, Four, Six and Seven. Essentially, the Secrecy Bill was considered as a crisis case study because it highlights 1) a negative outcome for media freedom in South Africa, 2) has received extensive media coverage both nationally and internationally and 3) has caused social disruption within the South African community. The Secrecy Bill can be categorised as an affecting crises posited by Hilse & Hoewner (1998) who have described an affecting crisis as a crisis, which includes critical scrutiny by stakeholders. The government of South Africa has become the subject of scrutiny and public discussion with a negative impact.

The research shows that many South Africans have embraced social media enthusiastically. Through a qualitative approach, the findings of this study show that many young South Africans view Twitter as a valuable tool for communication during crises. Twitter is their preferred medium of choice generally used as a tool for them to follow online discussions, make sense of a situation and share information around an event. In regards to blogging, it was noted that South Africans engagement with blogs is not as frequent as their use of Twitter. Statistics from the market-

research company, IPSOS, have shown that blogging within the community is mainly entertainment based. Additionally, their social media activity shows that users are more likely to engage in topics of their interest, which usually follows themes of 'news', 'music', 'celebrities', 'sports', 'technology', 'entertainment' and 'politics' (Hargittai & Litt, 2009). This is the most important finding in the research as it factors in understanding online interactivity. Therefore, the examples in this study show that the use of Twitter during crises largely depends on the effects of the crisis, the coverage and the impact. This is seen in examples of the online engagement during the Oscar Pistorius trial and the Marikana shootings. That being said, their use of social media cannot be said to either be political or non-political but a reflection of topics of their interest. Essentially, youth communication online is dependent on the level of interest the issue generates.

Although their uses of social media platforms during crises have not yet received wide attention, there are opportunities for incorporating social media in crisis communication studies focusing on South Africa. Today, young South Africans uses of social media have not only diffused into their everyday life but also into their awareness of professional practices (e.g. political processes). Social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube etc. have provided these age groups with channels for engagement and deliberations over political issues. Through these platforms, users are communicating in dynamic ways. Most crises require information distributing, and social networks like Twitter and blogs in this case were mainly used as information sharing tools, unlike other cases where social media has been used as a tool for live updates or breaking news stories. In South Africa, social media has made access to information easier. It is mostly used among youth to find out more about events affecting them or members of their community. This explains why traditional media coverage of an event remains an important factor for youth online. One of the observations made by the researcher was the level of activity online after an update of the Secrecy Bill was featured in mainstream media or shared online. The role of the media in South Africa has always been to keep the public informed.

Even though social media is noted as a preferred communication tool among younger audiences, they still rely on traditional media for crisis information. When they have received crisis information through traditional media channels, they engage with peers

within their respective online communities and further consume peer reviews of mainstream media coverage. On Twitter, users would promote content published by journalists, using URL's, sending users back to traditional media content. Their interactivity using Twitter has proven that youth would rather engage with like-minded people during crises, to form a full picture of the occurring event. They also still rely on off-line communication (e.g. protests) as their form of contribution to political processes. Where political crises are concerned, off-line activism and protests is part of South African history. This explains the relatively steady growth of social media as a crisis communication tool. These results contribute to understanding information behaviours and sense making in the crisis context. These observations prove that there is growing potential for social media and crisis communication in South Africa. Uses of social media in South Africa have become pervasive, transforming the way young people communicate with each other, discover news and share information.

This study benefits South African communication research by bringing a diverse view to questions related to information behaviours. It benefits crisis communication studies by providing a model of youth's contributions to political processes using micro-blogging. In a country where political crises occur frequently, understanding more about the impact of real-time communication tools can help researchers, crisis communication practitioners and even governments and organisations design robust crisis management tools. Being that research in this area is fairly new to South Africa; advances in understanding social media use will enable communication researchers to contribute to this rapidly growing field.

8.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the sample within this study was representative of the uses of social media during political crises, it was relatively small especially regarding blogs. This is often appropriate for qualitative research, where a single case can be used for explanatory purposes (Heverin & Zach, 2012). The major limitation regarding blogs is that finding blogs online depends on the author's use of tagging key words to make a post visibly available. Without tagging, it is difficult to find relatable posts. This is a possible explanation of the low statistics representing use of blogs during crises. Additionally,

this study only included two social networking platforms as examples. There are possibly more uses of social media during crises on other platforms that were not addressed in this study, for example the use of Facebook, which is one of the most popular social media tools in South Africa. The final limitation is that the discussions provided in this study have not accounted for advantages and disadvantages of using social media in political crises, especially for youths who have also used it as a tool for entertainment.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The recommendations for future research in crisis communication will focus on the practice within the context of the study and not crisis communication studies as a whole. This is because in South Africa there has not been a lot of focus on social media platforms; therefore there is a need to develop a wide body of literature in this context. As the popularity of social media is still increasing in South Africa, it is important for scholars and practitioners to pay attention to the potential of social media during crisis events. As an emerging economy, research on social media uses in South Africa would be beneficial to contributing to international relations and public diplomacy. Drawing from the limitations of this study first, future research should first build on discussing the advantages and disadvantages of using social media during crises in South Africa as a whole. Studies should address how these tools affect crisis communication both positively and negatively. These studies should also incorporate other social media tools as examples. This would involve a larger sample and deeper focus to impact of all social media platforms in crisis studies.

Secondly, it would be useful for researchers to study the relationship between traditional media and social media in South Africa. One of the findings indicated that there is a gap in communication between traditional media and social media. In most cases where crises draw wide attention, South African media have often covered uses of social media relating to public officials and neglected to include events or discussions involving young professionals. The youth's contribution to crises affecting their future is one of importance, especially within this study. Therefore future studies should address this gap. Lastly, a major extension of this research would include addressing the uses of social media during professional practices.

Many global studies in crisis communication have discussed practitioner's uses of social media in crisis mapping, planning and management, whereas this study chose to focus on audience engagement during crises.

Adding to the limited literature on crises in South Africa and building on from this research particularly, studies should focus on crisis communication from a government's point of view and provide an analysis of government communication during the debates about the Secrecy Bill. This type of research should also discuss the uses of social media as a tool for communication with younger audiences, who are proven to be frequent users of the Internet. Many South African public officials and ministers have embraced social media and often post new developments to speak to the public. The parliament of South Africa also has an active Twitter account. This provides the basis of studying the government uses of social media during crisis communication.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdellatif, M. A. (2003). Good Governance and its Relationship to a Democracy and Economic Development. *Democracy, Economic Development, and Culture*, (pp. 1-27). Seoul.

Abusharif, N. I. (2014). *Parsing "Arab Spring"*. Retrieved from issuu.com/nuqatar/docs/arab_spring_white_paper_web?e=9737146/7314122

Acar, A., & Muraki, Y. (2011). Twitter for Crisis Communication: Lessons learned from Japan's tsumani disaster. *Int. J. Web Based Communities*, 7 (3), 392-402.

Acreneaux, N., & Weiss, S. A. (2010). Seems stupid until you try it: press coverage of Twitter, 2006-9. *New Media Society*, 12 (8), 1262-1279.

Adams, D. (2006). Journalism, citizens and blogging. *Proceedings 2006 Communications Policy and Research Forum*, (pp. 1-26). Sydney.

Allan, S., Sonwalker, P., & Carter, C. (2007). Bearing witness: citizen journalism and human rights issues. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 5 (3), 373-389.

An, S.-K., & Gower, K. K. (2009). How do the news media frame crises? A content analysis of crisis news coverage. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 107-112.

Anthony, G. M., & Thomas, J. R. (2010). 'This is citizen journalism at its finest': YouTube and the public sphere in the Oscar Grant shooting incident. *New Media & Society*, 12 (8), 1280-1296.

Asur, S., Huberman, A. B., Szabo, G., & Chunyan, W. (2011). Trends in Social Media: Persistence and Decay. *Weblogs and Social Media*, (pp. 434-437).

Atkinson, J., & Cooley, L. (2010). Narrative capacity, resistance performance and the "shape" of new social movement networks. *Communication Studies*, 61, 321-338.

Atton, C. (2001). *Alternative Media*. London: Sage.

Austin, L. L., Liu, F. B., & Jin, Y. (2012). How Audiences Seek Out Crisis Information: Exploring the Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 40 (2), 188-207.

Bakshy, E., Mason, A. W., Hofman, M. J., & Watts, J. D. (2011). Everyone's an influencer: Quantifying Influence on Twitter., (pp. 65-74). Hong Kong.

Baldauf, S. (2011, November 22). *South Africa's assembly passes 'secrecy bill,' stirring journalists' fears*. Retrieved August 10, 2013, from The Christian Science

Monitor: www.csmonitor.com/world/africa/2011/1122/South-Africa-s-assembly-passes-secrecy-bill-stirring-journalists-fears

Banda, F. (2010). *Citizen Journalism & Democracy in Africa* . South Africa : Highway Africa .

Barauah, D. T. (2012). Effectiveness of Social Media as a tool of communication and ts potential for technologu enabled connections: A micro-level study. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* , 2 (5), 1-10.

Barker, R. (2011). Online Crisis Communication Response: A case study of fradulent banking transactions in South Africa. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communications Theory & Research* , 37 (1), 118-136.

Barnett, C. (1999a). Broadcasting the Rainbow Nation: Media, Democracym and Nation-Building in South Africa . *Antipode* , 31 (3), 274-303.

Barnett, C. (1999b). The limits of media democratisation in South Africa: politics, privitisation and regulation . *Media, Culture & Society* , 21, 649-671.

Baron, G., & Philbin, J. (2009). Social media in crisis communication: start with a drill. *Public Relations Tactics* , 16 (4), 12.

Barry, S. *Citizen Media and Investigative Journalism*. Queensland: Honours Thesis. Creative Industries - Media and Communication.

Baumer, E., Sueyoshi, M., & Tomlinson, B. (2008). Exploring the Role of Reader in the Activity of Blogging ., (pp. 1111-1120). Florence.

Baumgartner, C. J., & Morris, S. J. (2010). MyFaceTube Politics: Social Networking Web Sites and Political Engagement of Young Adults. *Social Science Computer Review* , 28 (1), 24-44.

Baviskar, S., & Malone, T. F. (2004). What Democracy Means to Cltizens- and Why It Matters . *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* , 76, 3-23.

Beaumont, C. (2009, January 16). *New York plane crash: Twitter breaks the news again* . Retrieved September 1, 2013, from The Telegraph: www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/twitter/4269765/New-York-plane-crash-Twitter-breaks-the-news-again.html

Beck, K. (2012). *South Africa: Democracy, Rule of Law, and the Future*. Retrieved November 2, 2013 , from Freedom House: www.freedomhouse.org/blog/south-africa-democracy-rule-of-law-and-future#.

Beeston, G., Urrutia, L. M., Halcrow, C., Xiao, X., Liu, L., Wang, J., et al. (2014). Humour Reactions in Crisis: A Proximal analysis of Chinese posts on Sina Weibo in Reaction to the Salt Panic of March 2011. (pp. 1043-1048). Seoul: IW3C2.

Bennett, L. (2003). New Media Power: The Internet and global activism. In N. Couldry, & J. Curran, *Contesting media power: Alternative media in a networked world* (pp. 17-37). Rowman and Littlefield .

Bennet, L., & Lawrence, G. R. (2008). Press freedom and democratic accountability in a time of war, commercialism, and the Internet. In A. D. Graber, Bennet, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The Logic of Connective Action: Digital media and the personalisation of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15 (5), 739-768.

Bennett, S. (2014). *Millennials Love Social Media and User Generated Content*. Retrieved January 31, 2015, from Social Times: www.adweek.com/socialtimes/millennials-social-content/502984

Benoit, W. L. (1997). Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication. *Public Relations Review*, 23, 177-186.

Bentley, H. C., Hamman, B., Ibold, H., Littau, J., & Meyer, H. K. (2006). Sense of Community as a Driver for Citizen Journalism. *Civic and Citizen Journalism Interest Group of the AEJMC 2006 Annual Convention*. San Francisco.

Bentley, H. C. (2008). Citizen Journalism: Back to the Future? *Carneige Knight Conference on Future of Journalism* . Cambridge.

Berger, G. (2011). Empowering the youth as citizens journalists: A south African experience . *Journalism*, 12 (6), 708-726.

Berelson, B. (1959). *Content Analysis in Communication Research* . Glencoe: The Free Press.

Bernoff, J., & Li, C. (2010). Harnessing the Power of the Oh-so social Web . *Engineering Management Review*, 38 (3), 8-15.

Birchall, C. (2011). Introduction to 'Secrecy and Transparency' The Politics of Opacity and Openness. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28 (7/8), -25.

Bosch, T. (2010). Digital Journalism and online public spheres in South Africa . *Communication: Journal for Cmmunication Theory and Research*, 36 (2), 265-275.

Blood, R. (2004). How Blogging Software Reshapes the Online Community . *Communications of the ACM*, 47 (12), 53-55.

- Boulianne, S. (2009). Does Internet Use Affect Engagement? A Meta-Analysis of Research. *Political Communication*, 26, 193-211.
- boyd, d. (2008). Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media* (pp. 119-142). Cambridge: MIT press.
- boyd, d. (2009, February 26). "Social Media is Here to Stay...Now What?". *Microsoft Research Tech Fest*.
- boyd, m. d., & Ellison, B. N. (2008). Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13, 210-230.
- boyd, d., Golder, S., & Lotan, G. (2010). Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational aspects of retweeting on Twitter. *Proceedings of the 43rd Hawaii Conference on Social Sciences* (pp. 1-10). IEEE.
- boyd, d., Golder, S., & Lotan, G. (2010). Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting on Twitter., (pp. 1-10). Hawaii.
- Bowman, S., & Willis, C. (2003). *We Media*. Reston: American Press Institute.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101.
- Bruns, A. (2008). News Blogs and Citizen Journalism: New Directions for e-Journalism. BR Publishing.
- Bruns, A. (2008). The active audience: Transforming journalism from gatekeeping to gatewatching. In C. Paterson, & D. Domingo, *Making online news: The ethnography of new media production* (pp. 171-184). New York: Peter Lang.
- Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. (2012). Researching News Discussion On Twitter. *Journalism Studies*, 13 (5-6), 801-814.
- Bruns, A., & Highfield, T. (2012). Blogs, Twitter, and breaking news: The produsage of citizen journalism. In R. Ann Lind, *Producing Theory in a Digital World: The Intersection of Audiennces and Production* (pp. 15-32). New York: Peter Lang.
- Bruns, A., & Burgess, E. J. (2011). New medthodologies for researching news discussion on Twitter. *The Future of Journalism*, 8 (9), 1-13.
- Bruns, A., Highfield, T., & Burgess, J. (2013). The Arab Spring and Social Media Audiences: English and Arabic Twitter Users and Their Networks. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57 (7), 871-898.

- Buckingham, D. (2008). *Youth, Identity and Digital Media* . (D. Buckingham, Ed.) Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Burns, A., & Eltham, B. (2009). Twitter Free Iran: An evaluation of Twitter's Role in Public Diplomacy and Information Operations in Iran's 2009 Election Crisis. *Records of the Communications Policy & Research Forum* , 298-310.
- Buzeck, M. *Micro-blogging services: An approach to supply situated Public Displays with user-generated content*. Thesis in Geoformatics .
- Carpenter, S. (2008). How Online Citizen Journalism Publications and Online Newspapers Utilise the Objectivity Standard Rely on External Sources . *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* , 85 (3), 531-548.
- Carpenter, S. (2010). A study of content diversity in online citizen journalism and online newspaper articles . *New Media & Society* , 12 (7), 1064-1084.
- Catone, J. (2008, February 26). *Earthquake in UK? News Broken on Twitter*. Retrieved May 2, 2014, from readwrite.com/2008/02/26/earthquake_in_uk_news_broken_on_twitter
- Ceron, A., Curini, L., lacus, M. S., & Porro, G. (2013). Every tweet counts? How sentiment analysis of social media can improve our knowledge of citizens' political preferences with an application to Italy and France. *New Media & Society*, 16 (2), 340-358.
- Chi, D.-J., & Hung, H.-F. (2011). Crisis Management of the pricing mistakes committed by Dell . *Management Decisison* , 49 (6), 860-873.
- Cho, H. S., & Gower, K. K. (2006). Framing effect on public's response to crisis: Human interest frame and crisis type influencing responsibility and blame. *Public Relations Review* , 32, 420-422.
- Chong, K. M. (2010). Using Blogging to enhance the initiation of students into academic research. *Communication & Education* , 55, 798-807.
- Clark, D., Goldstein, E., & Berendes, C. (2013). Intergrating News Media, Citizen Engagement, and Digital Platforms Towards Democratic Ends. *America Speaks* , 1-5.
- CNN. (2009, January). *Airplane crash lands into Hudson River* . Retrieved September 1, 2013, from www.cnn.com/2009/US/01/15/new.york.plane.crash
- Coetzee, M. (2014). *Twitter reacts to frog in Woolies salad*. Retrieved January 8, 2015, from The Citizen: citizen.co.za/276768/twitter-reacts-frog-woolies-salad/

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.

Colby, E. W. (1976). Intelligence Secrecy and Security in a Free Society. *International Security*, 1 (2), 3-14.

Coleman, S., & Spiller, J. (2003). Exploring new media effects on representative democracy . *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 9 (3), 1-16.

Coleman, S. (2005). Blogs and the Politics of Listening . *The Political Quarterly*, 273-280.

Coleman, S. (2012). It's Time for the Public to reclaim Public Interest . *Television & New Media*, 13 (1), 7-11.

Conway, T., Ward, M., Lewis, G., & Bernhardt. (2007). Internet Crisis Potential: The Importance of a Strategic Approach to Marketing Communications . *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 13 (3), 213-228.

Coombs, T. W., & Holladay, J. S. (1996). Communication and Attributions in a Crisis: An Experimental Study in Crisis Communication . *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 8 (4), 279-295.

Coombs, T. W. (1999). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Coombs, T. W., & Holladay, S. (2002). Helping Crisis Mangers Protect Reputational Assets: Initial Tests of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 16 (2), 165-186.

Coombs, T. W. (2004). Impact of Past Crisis on Current Crisis Communication: Insights From Situational Crisis Communication Theory. *Journal of Business Communication*, 41 (3), 265-289.

Coombs, T. W. (2007, October 30). Crisis Management and Communication. Gainesville, Florida: Public Relations Essential Knowledge Project.

Coombs, T. W. (2011). *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing and Responding*. Sage.

Cooper, M. (2012, September 7). *South Africa's Secrecy Bill: A threat to press freedom or an awakening?* Retrieved August 25, 2013, from UNCUT Free Speech on the Frontline: uncut.indexoncensorship.org/2012/09/south-africa-secrecy-bill/

Covello, V. (2010). *Effective Risk Communications for the Counter Improvised Explosive Devices Threat*.

Coronel, S. (2005). *The role of media in deepening democracy*.

Cuthbertson, G. (2008). South Africa's democracy: from celebration to crisis, . *African Identities* , 6 (3), 293-304.

Dahlberg, L. (2001). The Internet and Democratic Discourse: Exploring The Prospects of Online Deliberative Forums Extending the Public Sphere. *Information, Communication & Society* , 4 (4), 615-633.

Dahlgren, P. (2013). Online Journalism and Civic Cosmopolitanism . *Journalism Studies* , 14 (2), 156-171.

Daily Maverick. (2012). *Young professionals must take centre stage to help shape the future of South Africa*. Retrieved January 22, 2015, from Daily Maverick: www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2012-06-17-young-professionals-must-take-centre-stage-to-help-shape-the-future-of-South-Africa#

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. No. 108 of 1996. (1996-1997).

Dalton, J. R., Shin, C. D., & Jou, W. (2007). Understanding Democracy: Data From Unlikely Places. *Journal of Democracy* , 18 (4), 142-156.

Daniels, G. (2011). The role of media in a democracy: Unravelling the politics between the media, the state and the ANC in South Africa .

Daniels, G. (2012). *Fight for Democracy: The ANC and the media in South Africa* . Johannesburg : WITS University Press .

Deane, J. (2005). Media, democracy and the public sphere. In O. Hemer, & T. Trufte, *Media and Global Change. Rethinking Communication for Development* (pp. 177-192). Buenos Aires.

Defence Web. (2010, November 18). *Public Protector reviewing "secrec" Bill*. Retrieved August 4, 2013, from www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10652:public-protector-reveiwing-secrecy-bill&catid=49:National%20Security&Itemid=115

Dervin, B. (1983). An overview of sense-making resaerch: Concepts methods, and results to date. *Annual Metting of International Communication Association* . Dallas.

- Dervin, B. (1999) Sense-making's theory of dialogue: A brief introduction. *Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association*. San Francisco.
- Dervin, B. (2003). Chaos, order, and sense-making: A proposed theory for information design. In B. Dervin, L. Foreman-Wernet, & Lauterbach (Eds.), *Sense-making methodology reader: Selected writings of Brenda Dervin* (pp. 325-340). Hampton Press.
- Deuze, M., Bruns, A., & Neuberger. (2007). Preparing for an age of Participatory News. *Journalism Practice*, 1 (3), 332-338.
- Diani, M., & McAdam, D. *Social Movements and Networks*. New York : Oxford University Press.
- Diga, M., & Kelleher, T. (2009). Perceptions of decision-making power, and public relations roles. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 440-442.
- Domingo, D., Quandt, T., Heinonen, A., Paulussen, S., Singer, B. J., & Vujnovic, M. (2008). Participatory Journalism Practices in the Media and Beyond. *Journalism Practice*, 2 (3), 326-342.
- Domingo, D., & Heinonen, A. (2008). Weblogs and Journalism: A typology to Explore the Blurring Boundaries. *Nordicom Review*, 29, 3-15.
- Downey, J., & Fenton, N. (2003). New Media, Counter Publicity and the Public Sphere. *New Media & Society*, 5 (2), 185-202.
- Downing, D. H. (2003). Audiences and Readers of Alternative Media: The Absent Lure of the Virtually Unknown. *Media Culture Society*, 25, 625-645.
- Drezner, W. D., & Farrell, H. (2004). The Power and Politics of Blogs. 1-27.
- Drury, G. (2008). Opinion Piece: Social Media: Should marketers engage and how can it be done effectively?. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 9, 274-277.
- Du, S. H., & Wagner, C. (2006). Weblog success: Exploring the role of technology. *Int. J. Human- Computer Studies*, 64, 789-798.
- Duncan, J. (2011). The ANC's poverty of strategy on media accountability. *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, 32 (2), 90-105.
- Edigheji, O. (2007). *Rethinking South Africa's Development Path: Issues and Actors* (Vol. 20). (O. Edigheji, Ed.) Johannesburg.

- Ellison, B. N., Steinfeld, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* , 12, 1143-1168.
- Elo, S., & Kynga, S. H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* , 62 (1), 107-115.
- Erasmus, L. (2012). *The increased application of social media in the South African Public Relations Industry* . McCom Communication Management: University of Pretoria .
- Erickson, I. (2008). The Transulence of Twitter . 64-78.
- Eysenbach, G., & Till, E. J. (2011). Ethical issues in qualitative research on internet communities. *BMJ* , 323, 1103-1105.
- Eyrich, N., Padman, L. M., & Sweetser, D. K. (2008). PR Practitioners use of social media tools and communication technology. *Public Relations Review* , 34, 412-414.
- Falkheimer, J., & Heide, M. (2009). Crisis Communication in a New World: Reaching Multicultural Publics through Old and New Media. *Nordicom Review* , 30 (1), 55-65.
- Fanselow, J. (2008). Community Blogging: The New Wave of Citizen Journalism . *National Civic Review* , 24-29.
- Fanselow, J. (2009). Community blogging: the new wave of citizen journalism. *National Civic Review* , 97 (4), 24-29.
- Fearn-Banks, K. (2011). *Crisis Communication: A casebook approach* (4th Edition ed.). New York : Routledge.
- Fenton, N., & Barassi, V. (2011). Alternative Media and Social Networking Sites: The Politicas of Individuation and Political Participation. *The Communication Review* , 14 (3), 179-196.
- Ferdign, E. R., & Trammell, D. K. (2004). Content Delivery in the Blogosphere. *The Journal Online* .
- Fernando, A. (2008). Citizen-powered journalism fills void. *Communication World* , 25 (1), 8-9.
- Ferreira, E. (1999). Public Relations practice and education in Africa. *Communicare* , 18 (1).

- Ferreira, B. (2003). *Vocationally orientated public relations education in glocalised contexts: An analysis of technician level public relations education*. Doctoral Dissertation.
- Flew, T. (2007). A Citizen Journalism Primer. *Proceedings Communications Policy Research Forum 2007, 24-25*, pp. 1-30. Sydney.
- Flew, T., & Wilson, J. (2010). Journalism as social networking: The Australian youdecide project and the 2007 Federal election. *Journalism*, 11 (2), 131-147.
- Flew, T., Bruns, A., & Burgess, E. J. (2013). Social media and its impact on crisis communication: Case Studies of Twitter use in emergence management in Australia and New Zealand. *ICA Regional Conference: Communication and Social Transformation*. Shanghai.
- Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, A. L. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review*, 37, 90-92.
- Freedom House. (2012, September 20). *South Africa: Secrecy Bill puts free expression at risk*. Retrieved October 17, 2013, from Freedom House: www.freedomhouse.org/article-south-africa-secrecy-bill-puts-free-expression-at-risk#
- Freud, S. (1957). *Five lectures on psycho-analysis*. New York: Norton.
- Fuchs, C. (2010). Alternative Media and Critical Media . *European Journal of Social Theory*, 13 (2), 179-192.
- Gallagher, S. (2013, May 22). *South Africa's secrecy bill signals growing political intolerance*. Retrieved September 28, 2013, from Xindex: www.indexoncensorship.or/2013/SouthAfrica
- Garden, M. (2011). Defining a Blog: A fool's errand or necessary undertaking . *Journalism*, 13 (4), 483-499.
- Garrett, R. K. (2006). Protest in an Information Society: A review of literature on social movements and new ICTs. *Information, Communication & Society*, 9, 202-224.
- George, C. (2006). *Contentious Journalism and the Internet: Towards Democratic Discourse in Malaysia and Singapore*. Singapore University Press.
- Glasser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine.

- Glenn, I., & Mattes, R. (2011). Political Communication in Post-Apartheid South Africa. In H. Semetko, & M. Scammell (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Political Communication*. London: Sage Publication.
- Goggin, C., & Newell, C. (2003). *Digital disability: the social construction of disability in new media*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Gonzalez-Bailon, S., Borge-Holthoefer, J., Rivero, A., & Moreno, Y. (2011). *The dynamics of protest recruitment through an online network*. Scientific Reports.
- Gonzalez-Herrero, A., & Smith, S. (2008). Crisis Communications Management on the Web: How Internet Based Technologies are changing the Way Public relations Professional Handle Crises. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 16 (3), 143-153.
- Goode, L. (2009). Social news, citizen journalism and democracy . *New Media & Society*, 11 (8), 1287-1305.
- Gordimer, N. (2013, October 28). *Gordimer and the secrecy Bill: Gag the mouth and block the ears*. Retrieved from Mail & Guardian: mg.co.za/article/2013-10-28-gag-the-mouth-and-block-the-ears
- Greer, F. C., & Moreland, D. K. (2003). United Airlines' and American Airlines' Online Crisis Communication Following the September 11 Terrorist Attacks . *Communication Faculty Publications*, 29 (4), 427-441.
- Grossman, L. (2009, June 17). Iran's Protests: Why Twitter Is the Medium of the Movement .
- Greenhow, C., & Gleason, B. (2012). Twitteracy: Tweeting as a New Literacy Practice . *The Educational Forum*, 76 (4), 464-478.
- Grunig, J. E. (1983). Basic Research provides knowledge that makes evaluation possible. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 28 (3), 28-32.
- Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing Public Relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Grunig, J. E. (2006). Furnishing the Edifice: Ongoing Research on Public Relations as a Strategic Management Function. *Public Relations Research*, 18 (2), 151-176.
- Grupp, R. (2000). Public Relations must control the website. *Public Relations Strategist*, 5 (4), 32-34.

- Guidry, J., & Messner, M. V. (2014). From #mcdonaldsfail to #dominossucks: An analysis of Instagram images about 10 largest food companies. *the 17th International Public Relations Research Conference*. Institute for Public Relations.
- Gumbrecht, M. (2004). "Blogs as Protected Space".
- Haas, T. (2004). Research Note . *Journalism Studies* , 5 (1), 115-121.
- Haas, T. (2005). From "Public Journalism" to the "Public's Journalism"? Rhetoric and reality in the discourse on weblogs. *Journalism Studies* , 6 (3), 387-396.
- Habermas, J. (1974). *Theory and Practice* . London : Heinemann.
- Hanna, R., Rohm, A., & Crittenden, L. V. (2011). We're all connected: The power of the social media. *Business Horizons* , 54, 265-273.
- Harber, A. (2014). Accountability and the Media . *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* , 652, 206-221.
- Harcup, T. (2005). "I'm Doing this to Change the World": Journalism in alternative and mainstream media . *Journalism Studies* , 6 (3), 361-374.
- Hargittai, E., & Litt, E. (2009). The tweet smell of celebrity success: Explaining variation in Twitter adoption among diverse group of adults. *New Media & Society* .
- Heath, R. L. (2006). Best practices in crisis communication: Evolution of practice thorough research. *Journal of Applied Communication Research* , 34 (3), 245-248.
- Heath, R. L., & Palenchar, M. J. (2009). *Strategic issues Management*. California: Sage.
- Hermida, A. (2010). Twittering The News. *Journalism Practice* , 4 (3), 297-308.
- Hermida, A. (2012). Tweets and Truth: Journalism as a discipline collaborative verification. *Journalism Practice* , 1-10.
- Hermida, A. (2013). #Journalism. *Digital Journalism* , 1 (3), 295-313.
- Herring, C. S., Scheidt, L. A., Kouper, I., & Wright, E. (2004). A Longitudinal Content Analysis of Weblogs: 2003-2004. In M. Tremayne (Ed.), *Blogging, Citizenship and the Future of Media* . London: Routledge.
- Herring, C. S., Scheidt, L. A., Bonus, S., & Wright, E. (2004). Bridging the Gap: A Genre Analysis of Weblogs. Indiana: School of Library and Information Science.
- Herring, C. S., Kouper, I., Paolillo, C. J., & Scheidt, L. A. (2005). Conversations in the Blogosphere: An analysis "From the Bottom Up". *Proceedings of the 38th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, pp. 1-11

- Herskovitz, J. (2011, November 22). *S.Africa secrecy bill alarms investors, whistleblowers*. Retrieved October 15, 2013, from Reuters: in.reterus.com/article/2011/11/22
- Heverin, T., & Zach, L. (2010). Microblogging for Crisis Communication: Examination of Twitter Use in Response to a 2009 Violent Crises in the Seattle-Tacoma, Washington Area., (pp. 1-5). Seattle.
- Heverin, T, & Zach, L. (2012). Use of Microblogging for Collective Sense-making During Violent Crises: A Study of Three Campus Shootings. *Journal of the American Society for Information Sciene and Technology* , 63 (1), 34-47.
- Hilding-Hamann, S. (2012). *The effects of social nedia on crisis communication: A caxe study of the response strategy performed by Research in Motion*. Marketing and Management Communication. Aarhus University.
- Hilse, L. H., & Hoewner, J. (1998). The communication crisis in the Internet and what one can do against it. In M. Crimp (Ed.), *Interactive Enterprise Communications* (pp. 137-154). Frankfurt: IMK.
- Hjorth, L., & Kim, H. (2005). Being there and being here: Gendered customising of mobile 3G practices through a case study in Seoul. *Convergence* , 11 (2), 49-55.
- Ho, M. B., Yong, X. A., Dong, J., Lau, T., & Pang, A. (2011). Enduring Image: Toward a Conceptualisation Capturing Defining Moments in Crises and How These Impact Organisations . *Corporate Communication* , (p. 30).
- Holmes, W. (2011). *Crisis Communication and Social Media: Advantages, Disadvantages and Best Practices* . MA Thesis: University of Tennessee .
- Holtsi, O. R. (1969). *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* . Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Holtzhausen, D. R., Petersen, K., & Tindall, T. J. (2003). Exploding the myth of symmetrical/asymmetrical dichotomy: Public relations models in the new South Africa. *Journal of Public Relations Research* , 15, 305-34.
- Holtzhausen, D. R. (2005). Public Relations practice and political change in South Africa. *Public Relations Review* , 31, 407-416.
- Hookway, N. (2008). 'Entering the blogosphere':some strategies for using blogs in social research. *Qualitative Research* , 8 (1), 91-113.
- Horn, E. (2011). Logics of Political Secrecy. *Theory, Culture & Society* , 28 (7/8).

- Howard, N. P., & Hussain, M. M. (2011). The Role of Digital Media. *Journal of Democracy*, 22 (3), 35-48.
- Howard, N. P., & Parks, R. M. (2012). Social Media and Political Change: Capacity, Constraint & Consequence. *Journal of Communication*, 62 (2), 359-362.
- Howell, V. J., & Taylor, M. (2012). When a crisis happens, who turns to Facebook and why? *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, 12 (1).
- Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, E. S. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15 (9), 1277-1288.
- Huberman, A. B., Romero, M. D., & Wu, F. (2008). Social Networks that matter: Twitter under the microscope. 1-9.
- Huelss, H. (2012). A Force for Good Governance? The European Union's Normative Power and Standards of Appropriate Governing. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 17 (1), 93-112.
- Hughes, L. A., & Palen, L. (2009). Twitter Adoption and Use in Mass Convergence and Emergency Events. Gothenburg.
- Human Rights Watch. (2013, April 29). *South Africa: 'Secrecy Bill' Improved but still flawed*. Retrieved from Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/29/south-africa-secrecy-bill-improved-still-flawed
- Hutton, L. (2009). Secrets, spies and security: An overview of the issues. In L. Hutton (Ed.), *Secrecy & Democracy*.
- Hvass, K. (2014). Tourism Social Media and Crisis Communication: An Erupting Trend. In A. Munar, S. Gyimothy, & L. Cai (Eds.), *Tourism Social Media: Transformations in Identity, Community and Culture* (pp. 177-191). Emerald Group Publishing.
- Illia, L. (2003). Passage to cyberactivism: How dynamics of activism change. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 3 (4), 326-337.
- Inman, P. R. (2012). *Understanding the Democratic Transition in South Africa*. National Bureau of Economics Research.
- Jack, M. (2009). The Social Evolution of Citizen Journalism. *Canadian Journal of Media Studies*, 6 (1), 95-158.
- Jacobs, S. (1999). *Tensions of Free Press: South Africa after Apartheid*. Cambridge.

Jacobs, R. L. (2001). Manipulators and Manipulation: Public Opinion in a Representative Democracy. *Journal of Health Politics*, 26 (6), 1361-1374.

Java, A., Finin, T., Song, X., & Tseng, B. (2007). Why We Twitter: Understanding Microblogging Usage and Communities. *Proceedings of the 9th WebKDD and 1st SNA-KDD 2007 workshop on Web mining and social network analysis*. San Jose: ACM.

Jin, Y., & Liu, F. B. (2010). The Blog-Mediated Crisis Communication Model: Recommendations for Responding to Influential External Blogs. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22 (4), 429-455.

Jin, Y., Liu, F. B., & Austin, L. L. (2014). Examining the Role of Social Media in Effective Crisis Management: The Effects of Crisis Origin, Information Form, and Source on Public' Crsis responses. *Communicatin Research*, 41 (1), 74-94.

Jones, J. P. (2012). Parody, peformativity, and play: The reinvigoration of citizenship through political satir. In J. Hartley, J. Burgess, & A. Bruns (Eds.), *Blackwell companion to new media dynamics*. London: Blackwell.

Kaplan, A., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users f the world, unite! the challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53, 59-68.

Kaufhold, K., Valenzuela, S., & Gil de Zuniga, H. (2010). Citizen Journalism and Democracy: How User Generated News Use Relates to Political Knowledge and Participation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 87 (3-4), 515-529.

Kaye, K. B. (2010). Going to the blos: Toward the Development of a Uses and Gratifications Measurement Scale for Blogs. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 18 (4), 194-210.

Kenix, J. L. (2009). Blogs as Alternative. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 14, 790-822.

Kent. (2008). Critical Analysis of Blogging in Public Relations. *Public Relations Review*, 34, 32-40.

Khamis, S., & Vaughn, K. (2011). Cyberactivism in the Egyptian Revolution: How Civic Engagement Tilted the Balance. *Arab Media & Society*, 13, 1-25.

Kilgore, J. (2013, January 14). *After the Marikana Massacre: A Luta Continua*. Retrieved November 30, 2014, from Dissent: www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/after-the-marikana-massacre-a-luta-continua

- Kim, H. (2005). Blogs as New Media on the Internet. *Review of Communication* , 5 (2-3), 100-108.
- Kim, E. *The Role of Social Media in Crisis Communication - A Case Study of Starbucks*. Graduate Council of Texas State University.
- Kisoon, C. (2009). PAIA and public participation. In L. Hutton (Ed.), *To spy or not to spy? Intelligence and democracy in South Africa* (pp. 67-76).
- Krippendorff, K. (2012). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. London: Sage.
- Kwak, H., Lee, C., Park, H., & Moon, S. (2010). What is Twitter, a social network or a News Media? *Int'l World Wide Web Conference*. Raleigh .
- Laad, G., & Lewis, G. (2012). *Role of Social Media in Crisis Communication* .
- Landau, D. A. (2011). *How Social Media is Changing Crisis Communication: A Historical Analysis*. New Jersey: Masters Thesis, Fairleigh Dickinson University.
- Lansdown, G. (2001). *Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision-Making*. UNICEF.
- Lansdown, G. (2005). *Can you hear me? The right of young children to participate in decisions affecting them* . The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation .
- Lasica, D. J. (2003). Blogs and Journalism Need Each Other. *Nieman Reports* , 70-74.
- Latonero, M., & Shklovski, I. (2011). Emergency Management, Twitter, and Social Media Evangelism . *International Journal of Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management* , 3 (4), 1-16.
- le Roux, T., & Naude, A. (2011). A Profile of South African public relations practitioners in top performing organisations . *Journal of Public Affairs* , 11 (4), 303-315.
- Leeuwen, v. L. (2012). The Recent Decline in Press Freedom in South Africa . *Global Media Journal: African Edition* , 6 (1).
- Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010). Social media and mobile Internet use among teens and young adults. *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, (pp. 2-61).
- Lewis, C. S., Kaufhold, K., & Larsosa, L. D. (2010). Thinking about Citizen Journalism: Perspectives on Participatory News Production at Community Newspapers. *Journalism Practice* , 4 (2), 163-179.

- Liu, L. B., Cheung, M. K., & Lee, K. M. (2010). Understanding Twitter Usage: What Drive People Continue to Tweet. *PACIS 2010 Proceedings*, (pp. 928-939).
- Liu, F. B., Austin, L. L., & Jin, Y. (2011). How publics respond to crisis communication strategies: The interplay of information and source. *Public Relations Review*, *37*, 345-353.
- Liu, F. B., Horsely, S., & Yang, K. (2012). Overcoming Negative Media Coverage: Does Government Communication Matter? . *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *22* (3), 597-621.
- Lombard, M., Snyder-Duch, J., & Bracken Campanella, C. (2002). Content Analysis in mass communication, assessment and reporting in intercoder reliability. *Human Communication Research*, *15* (4), 587-604.
- Macias, W., Hilyard, K., & Freimuth, V. (2009). Blog Functions as Risk and Crisis Communication During Hurricane Katrina . *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *15*, 1-31.
- Macnamara, J. (2005). Media content analysis: Its uses; benefits and best practice methodology . *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, *6* (1), 1-34.
- Malin, J. B. (2011). A very popular blog: The Internet and the possibilities of publicity. *New Media Society*, *13* (2), 187-202.
- Mandelli, A., & Mari, A. (2012). Relationship Between Social Media Conversations and Reputation During A Crisis: The Toyota Case. *International Journal of Management Cases*, *14* (1), 456-489.
- March, J. G., & Heath, C. (1994). A primer on decision making: How decisions happen . New York : Free Press .
- Marra, J. F. (1998). Crisis Communication Plans: Poor Predictors of Excellent Crisis Public Relations . *Public Relations Review*, *24* (4), 461-474.
- Massey, L. B., & Haas, T. (2002). Does Making Journalism More Public Make a Difference? A Critical Review of Evaluative Research on Public Journalism. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *79* (3), 559-586.
- Matlala, G., & Khanyile, G. (2010, October 24). *Media 'not reflecting transition to democracy'*. Retrieved November 2, 2013, from HighBeam Research: www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-240224138.html
- Matthews, L. (2008). *Human Rights act: changing lives*. London: British Institute of Human Rights.

- Mattes, R. (2002). South Africa: Democracy Without People? *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (1), 22-36.
- Mayfield, T. D. (2007). What is social media? 1 (4).
- Mayfield, T. D. (2011). A commanders strategy for social media . *Joint Force Quarterly*, 60.
- Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Social Research*, 1 (2).
- McDonald, D. P. (2011). The present is another country: A comment on the 2010 media freedom debate. *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, 32 (2), 122-134.
- McQuail, D. (2003). *Media Accountability and Freedom of Publication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McQuail, D. & P. Norris (Eds.), *Politics of News. The News of Politics*. Washington: CQ Press.
- Mei, S. A., Bansal, N., & Pang, A. (2010). New media: a new medium in escalating crises? . *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15 (2), 143-155.
- Media Monitoring Africa (MMA). (2010). *State of South Africa's Media: A media monitoring perspective presentation*. SANEF.
- Mehta, A., & Xavier, R. (2012). Tracking the defining moments of crisis process and practice. *Public Relations Review*, 38 (3), 376-382.
- Meintjes, C., & G de Wet, N. (2009). An exploration of South African Corporate Communication . *Communicare*, 28 (2), 59-81.
- Miller, R. (2008). The New Journalism: Its Audience Participation Time . *EcontentMag* .
- Mogul, P. (2012). *The Secrecy Bill*. (K. Easton, Editor) Retrieved July 26, 2013, from Cape Chameleon : www.capechameleon.co.za/printed-issue/issue-15/news-story16
- Moore, M. (2009). Critique of the Protection of Information Bill. In L. Hutton (Ed.), *To spy or not to spy? Intelligence and democracy in South Africa* (pp. 77-84).
- Moyo, D. (2009). Citizen Journalism and the Parallell Market of Information in Zimbabwe's 2008 Election. *Journalism Studies*, 10 (4), 552-567.
- Moyo, L. (2011). Blogging down a dictatorship: Human Rights, citizen journalists and the right to communicate in Zimbabwe. *Journalism*, 1-16.

- Muiu, w. M. (2004). South Africa at Ten: Readings on Post-Apartheid South Africa. *African Studies Review*, 47 (3), 191-199.
- Murthy, D. (2008). Digital Ethnography: An Examination of the Use of New Technologies for Social Research. *Sociology*, 42 (5), 837-855.
- Murthy, D. (2011). Twitter: Microphone for the masses? *Media, Culture & Society*, 33 (5), 779-789.
- Mythen, G. (2010). Reframing risk? Citizen journalism and the transformation of news. *Journal of Risk Research*, 13 (1), 45-58.
- Naidoo, J. (2010, October 14). *What type of South Africa do we want to build?*. Retrieved from Jay Naidoo: www.jaynaidoo.org/what-type-of-south-africa-do-we-want-to-build/
- Nardi, A. B., Schiano, J. D., & Gumbrecht, M. (2004). Blogging as a Social Activity, or, Would you let 900 million people read your diary?, 6, pp. 222-231.
- Nathan, L. (2010). Intelligence Bound: the South African constitution and intelligence services. *International Affairs*, 86 (1), 195-210.
- National Catholic Reporter. (2002, February 15). *Overzealous secrecy threatens democracy*. Retrieved from NCR Online: natcath.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2002a/021502.021502q.htm
- Naude, A. M., Froneman, J. D., & Atwood, R. A. (2004). The use of the Internet by ten South African non-governmental organisations - a public relations perspective. *Public Relations Review*, 30 (1), 87-94.
- Netzley, B. S., & Hemmer, M. (2012). Citizen Journalism Just as Credible as stories by Pros, Students Say. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 33 (3), 49-61.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Newman, N. (2009). *The rise of social media and its impact on mainstream media*.
- News24. (2013, April 25). *Controversial Secrecy Bill Passed*. Retrieved from News24: www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/Parliament-passes-controversial-secrecy-bill
- Nleya, N., Thompson, L., Tapscott, C., Piper, L., & Esau, M. (2011). Reconsidering the origins of protest in South Africa: some lessons from Cape Town and Pitermaritzburg. *Africanus*, 50 (1), 14-29.
- Freedom House. (2014). *Freedom in the World 2014*. Freedom House.

- Nip, Y. M. (2006). Exploring the Second Phase of Public Journalism . *Journalism Studies* , 7 (2), 216-236.
- Nyathi, S. (2011). *The lindaba Ziyafika Project: A New Community of Practice?* Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies. Rhodes University .
- O'Donnell, S. (2001). Analysing The Internet and The Public Sphere: The Case of Womenslink. *Javnost* , 8 (1).
- Oh, S. (2011). Methods of Social Media Research: Data Collection & Use in Social Media.
- Olukotun, D., & Louw, R. (2013, May 16). *Dispatch from South Africa: Whats Wrong with the Secrecy Bill?* Retrieved from Pen America : www.pen.org/dispatch-south-africa-whats-wrong-secrecy-bill
- Ornebring, H. (2013). Anything you can do, I can do better? Professional journalists on citizen journalism in six European countries . *The International Communication Gazette* , 75 (1), 35-53.
- Palen, L., & Liu, B. S. (2007). CitizenCommunications in Crisis: Anticipating a Future of ICT-Supported Public Participation. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, (pp. 727-736). San Jose.
- Palen, L., Starbird, K., Vieweg, S., & Hughes, A. (2010). Twitter-based Information Distribution during the 2009 Red River Valley Food Threat . *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science* , 36 (5).
- Palen, L., Anderson, M. K., Mark, G., Martin, J., Sicker, D., Palmer, M., et al. (2010). A Vision for Technology-Mediated Support for Public Participation & Assistance in Mass Emergencies & Disasters. *Proceedings of ACM-BCS Visions of Computer Science* (pp. 1-12). British Informatics Society .
- Palme, J. (2002). *Anonymity on the Internet*. Stockholm University .
- Palys, T. (2008). Purposive Sampling . In M. L. Given (Ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (Vol. 2, pp. 697-698). CA: Sage: Thousand Oaks.
- Pang, A. (2013). Social Media Hype in Times of Crises: Nature, Characteristics and Impact on Organisations. *Asia Pacific Media Educator* , 23 (2), 309-336.
- Pang, A., Hassan, B. B., & Chong, C. Y. (2014). Negotiating crisis in the social media environment. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* , 19 (1), 96-118.

- Parker, C., Saundage, D., & Lee, Y. C. (2011). Can Qualitative Content Analysis be Adapted for use by Social Informaticians to Study Social Media Discourse? A Position Paper. *ACIS 2011: Proceedings of the 22nd Australian Conference on Information Systems: Identifying the Information Systems Discipline*. Sydney: Association of Information Systems.
- Pasek, J., More, E., & Romer, D. (2009). Realising the social Internet? Off-line social networking meets online civic engagement. *Journal of Information, Technology and Politics* .
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* . Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Paulussen, S., Heinonen, A., Domingo, D., & Quandt, T. (2007). Doing It Together: Participation In the Professional News Making Process . *Observatorio* , 3, 131-154.
- Paulussen, S., & Ugille, P. (2008). User Generated Content in the Newsroom: Professional and Organisational Constraints on Participatory Journalism . *Westminsters Papers in Communication and Culture* , 5 (2), 24-41.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The virtual sphere: The Internet as a public sphere. *New Media & Society* , 4 (1), 9-27.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2009). The virtual geographies of social networks: a comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld. *New Media & Society* , 11 (1 & 2), 199-220.
- Papacharissi, Z., & Oliveira, M. (2011). The Rhythms of News Storytelling on Twitter: Coverage of the January 25th Egyptian Uprising on Twitter . 1-30.
- Perry, C. D., Taylor, M., & Doerfel, L. M. (2003). Internet-Based Communication in Crisis Management. *Management Communication Quarterly* , 17 (2), 206-232.
- Pew Internet & American Life Project. (2006). *Social Media and Crisis Communication* . Retrieved from Pew Research Center.
- Pillay, D. (2004). Media diversity and the contested character of the post-apartheid state . *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* , 31 (2), 167-184.
- Pleijter, A. R. *Typen en logica van kwalitatieve inhoudsanalyse in de communicatiewetenschap*. Dissertation. Radboud University.

- Poell, T. (2009). Conceptualising forums and blogs as public sphere. In M. V. Van de Boomen (Ed.), *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology* (pp. 231-251). Amsterdam University Press .
- PRISA. (2012, September 20). *PRISA expressed severe disappointment at passing of 'Secrecy bill'*. Retrieved from PRISA: www.prisa.co.za/component/content/article/37-mediareleases/216-prisa-expresses-severe-disappointment-at-passing-secrecy-bill
- Procopio, C. H., & Procopio, S. T. (2007). Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans? Internet communication, geographic community, and social capital in crisis. *Journal of Applied Communication Research* , 35 (1), 67-87.
- Protection of Information Bill* . (2010). Ministry of State Security ISBN 978-1-77037-630-4.
- Quarantelli, E. L. (1998). *What is disaster? Perspectives on the Question* . London: Routledge.
- Quirk, P. (2009). Irans Twitter Revolution . *Foreign Policy* .
- R2K (2010). *Right2Know*. Retrieved from Who is R2K?: www.r2k.org.za/about
- R2K. (2013, April 10). *The "Secrecy Bill" is far from fixed!* Retrieved October 22, 2013, from R2K: www.r2k.org/
- Rai, M., & Cottle, S. (2007). Global Mediations: On the changing ecology of satellite television news. *Global Media and Communication* , 3 (1), 51-78.
- Reese, D. S., Rutigliano, L., Hyun, K., & Jeong, J. (2007). Mapping the blogosphere: professional and citizen-based media in the global news arena . *Journalism* , 8 (3), 235-261.
- Reich, Z. (2008). How Citizens Create News Stories . *Journalism Studies* , 9 (5), 739-758.
- Rennie, E. (2006). *Community Media: A Global Introduction* . Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Reporters Without Borders. (2010, September 23). *Authorities Urged to drop Two projects that threaten Media Freedom*. Retrieved November 5, 2013, from Reporters Without Borders: en.rsf.org/south-africa-nouvel-urged-to-drop.html
- Reporters Without Borders. (2011, November 22). *Will Secrecy Approved by Parliament end Investigative Journalism?* . Retrieved September 27, 2013, from Reporters Without Borders: en.rsf.org/south-africa-secrecy-law-approved.html

Reporters Without Borders. (2013, April 26). *National Assembly Passes Controversial Secrecy Bill*. Retrieved November 4, 2013, from Reporters Without Borders: en.rsf.org/afrique-du-sud-national-assembly-approves-26.html

Reynolds, B., & Seeger, M. (2005). Crisis and emergency risk communication as integrative model. *Journal of Health Communication International Perspectives* , 10 (1), 43-55.

Reporters Without Borders. (2013). *World Press Freedom Index*. Retrieved July 18, 2013, from Reporters Without Borders: [ww.en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1054](http://www.en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1054)

Freedom House. (2011, November 22). *Draconian Secrecy Bill A Blow to Press freedom in South Africa* . Retrieved October 17, 2013, from Freedom House: www.freedomhouse.org/article/draconian-secrecy-bill-blow-to-press-freedom-south-africa#

Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. G. (2005). *Analysing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research* (2nd Edition ed.). New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates .

Reporters Without Borders. (2014). *World Press Freedom Index 2014*.

Riloff, E., Qadir, A., Surve, P., De Silva, L., Gilbert, N., & Huang, R. (2013). Sarcasm as Contrast between a Positive Sentiment and Negative Situation. *Proceedings of the 2013 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing* .

Rioba, A. *Media in Tanzania's Transition to Multiparty Democracy: An Assessment of Policy and Ethical Issues*. Tampere: Licentiate thesis. University of Tampere.

Robinson, S., & DeShano, C. (2011). 'Anyone can know': Citizen journalism and the enterpretive community of the mainstream press . *Journalism* , 12 (8), 963-982.

Roper, C. (2012). *South Africa & The Media: Looking Back to 2011, Looking Ahead to 2012* .

Rosenthal, U., & Kouzmin, A. (1997). Crisis Management: Toward Comprehensive Government Decision Making. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* , 7 (2), 277-304.

Russo, A., Watkins, J., Kelly, L., & Chan, S. (2007). Social media and cultural interactive experiences in museums . *Nordisk Museologi* , 1, 19-29.

SAHRC. (2006). *Report of the Public Hearing on the Right to Basic Education*. South African Human Rights Commission.

- Saleh, I. (2013). 'Convergence Culture' and Youth Activism in Egypt. *New Social Movements on the Block* . In U. Carlsson, & H. S. Culver (Eds.), *Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue* (pp. 201-213). Nordicom: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media .
- Samarasinghe, A. S. (1994). Democracy and Democratisation in Developing Countries. *Data for Decision Making Project* , 1-42.
- Sarkin, J. (1999). The Drafting of South Africa's Final Constitution from a Human-Rights Perspective . *American Journal of Comparative Law* , 47 (1), 67-87.
- Semple, E. (2009). Update your crisis communication's plan with social media. *Strategic Communication Management* , 13 (5), 7.
- Schaefer, D., & Dervin, B. (2001). Dialoguing in electronic public spheres: Reconceptualising participation as verbing micro-practices. *Rochester Intercultural Conference* . Rochester : Institute of Technology.
- Schauer, F. (2001). Free Speech and the Social Construction of Privacy. *Social Research* , 68 (1), 221-232.
- Schultz, T. (1999). Interactive Options in Online Journalism: A content analysis of 100 US Newspapers. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* , 5 (1).
- Schultz, F., Utz, S., & Goritz, A. (2011). Is the medium the message? Perceptions of and reactions to crisis communication via twitter, blogs and traditional media . *Public Relations Review* , 37, 20-27.
- Seeger, W. M. (2006). Best Practices in Crisis Communication: An Expert Panel Process . *Journal of Applied Communication Research* , 34 (3), 232-244.
- Sellnow, T. L., Seeger, W. M., & Ulmer, R. R. (2002). Chaos theory, informational needs, natural disasters . *Journal of Applied Communication Research* , 30 (4), 269.
- Shaheen, A. M. (2008). Use of social networks and information seeking behaviour of students during political crises in Pakistan: A case study. *the International Information & Library Review* , 40 (3), 142-127.
- Shklovski, I., Palen, L., & Sutton, J. (2008). Finding Community Through Information and Communication Technology During Disaster Events. *Proceedings of the ACM 2008 conference on Computer supported cooperative work* (pp. 127-136). ACM.
- Shirky, C. (2011). The Political Power of Social Media . *Foreign Affairs* , 1-9.

Clever, N., Kirchner, A., Schray, D., & Schulte. (2009). User-generated Content. 1-3.

Siah, J., Bansal, M., & Pang, A. (2010). New media: a new medium in escalating crises? . *Corporate Communication: An International Journal* , 15 (2), 143-155.

Silberstein, M. (2013, March 28). *South African Press Freedom Under Threat* . Retrieved August 1, 2013, from Fair Observer : www.fairobservers.com/region/africa/south-african-press-freedom-under-threat/

Singer, B. J. (2006). Stepping back from the gate: Online Newspaper Editors and the Co-Production of Content in Campaign 2004. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* , 83 (2), 265.

Skinner, C., & Mersham, G. (2008). Corporate social responsibility in South Africa: emerging trends. *Society and Business Review* , 3 (3), 239-255.

Smith, G. B. (2010). Socially distributing public relations: Twitter, Haiti, and interactivity in social media. *Public Relations Review* , 36, 329-335.

Smith, D. (2012, June 6). *ANC's Secrecy Bill seen as assault on South African press freedom*. Retrieved from the guardian: www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/06/south-africa-secrecy-bill-press-freedom

Solleveld, G. *Reporting the Protection of Information Bill: A qualitative content analysis about the POI reported in the Mail & Guardian and the Sowetan in South Africa* . Master Media & Journalism. Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication .

Solomon, P. (1997). Discovering information behaviour in sense making: III. The person. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* , 48 (12), 1127-1138.

Soule, A. (2010). *Fighting the Social Media Wildfire: How Crisis Communication Must Adapt to Prevent from Fanning the Flames*. North Carolina: Masters from School of Journalism & Mass Communication. Chapel Hill .

Southall, R. (2000). The state of democracy in South Africa . *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* , 38 (3), 147-170.

Sparks, C. (2011). South African media in comparative perspective, . *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* , 32 (2), 5-19.

- Stabird, K., & Palen, L. (2010). Pass it On?: Retweeting in Mass Emergency. *Proceedings of the 7th International ISCRAM Conference*. Seattle .
- Starbird, K., & Stamberger, J. (2010). Tweak the Tweet: Leveraging Microblogging Proliferation with a Prescriptive Syntax to Support Citizen Reporting . Seattle.
- Stassen, W. (2010). Your News in 140 chracters: Exploring the role of social media in journalism . *Global Media Journal African Edition* , 4 (1), 116-131.
- Steensen, S. (2011). Online Journalism and the Promises of New Technology. *Journalism Studies* , 12 (3), 311-327.
- Steenveld, L., & Strelitz, L. (2010). Trash or popular journalism? The case of South Africa's Daily Sun . *Journalism* , 11 (5), 531-547.
- Steenveld, L. (2012). The pen and the sword: Media transformation and democracy after apartheid. *International Journal of Communication Ethics* , 9 (2-3), 125-140.
- Stocker, K. (1997). A Strategic Approach to Crisis Management. In *The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications* (pp. 189-203). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Storck, M. (2011). *The Role of social media in political mobilisation: A Case Study of the January 2011 Egyptian Uprisings*. MA Thesis .
- Sundar, S. S., Kalyanaraman, S., & Brown, J. (2003). Explicating website inteactivity: Impression-formation effects in political campaign sites. *Communication Research* , 30 (1), 30-59.
- Sutton, J., Palen, L., & Shklovski, I. (2008). Backchannels on the Front Lines: Emergent Uses of Social Media in the 2007 Southern Californina Wildfires. In F. Fiedrich, & B. Van de Walle (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 5th International ISCRAM Conference*. Washington.
- Sweetser, D. K., & Metzgar, E. (2007). Communication during crises: Use of blogs as a relationship management tool. *Public Relations Review* , 33, 340-342.
- Tapscott, D. (2009). *Grown Up Digital. How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*.
- Technorati . (2011). *State of the Blogosphere 2011*. Retrieved from technorati.com/state-of-the-blogosphere-2011/

- Thelwall, M., & Stuart, D. (2007). RUOK? Blogging Communication Technologies During Crises. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* , 12, 523-548.
- Thompson, F. D. (1999). Democratic Secrecy. *Political Science Quarterly* , 114 (2), 181-193.
- Thurman, N. (2008). Citizen Journalists? Adoption of user generated content initiatives by online news media. *New Media Society* , 10, 139-157.
- Tilley, E., & Cokley, J. (2008). Deconstructing the discourse of citizen journalism: Who says what and why it matters. *Pacific Journalism Review* , 14 (1), 94-114.
- Tonkiss, F. (1998). Analysis Discourse. In *Researching Society and Culture* (pp. 245-260). London: Sage Publications.
- Trammell, D. K., & Keshelashvilli, A. Examining the New Influencers: A Self-Presentation Study of A-List Blogs . *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* , 82 (4), 968-982.
- Twala, C. (2012). The Marikana Massacre: A Historical Overview of the Labour Unrest in the Mining Sector in South Africa . *Southern African Peace and Security Studies* , 1 (2), 61-67.
- UNESCO. (2013). *Global Initiative for Excellence in Journalism* .
- United Nations. (1948, December 10). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Retrieved May 15, 2013, from www.un.org/Overview/rights.html
- United Nations . (2010). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Retrieved September 10, 2013, from UN: www.un.org/en/documents/udhr
- Utz, S., Schultz, F., & Glocka, S. (2013). Crisis Communication online: How medium, crisis type and emotions affected public relations in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster . *Public Relations Review* , 39, 40-46.
- Van der Westuizen, C. (2012, December 14). *South African public broadcaster embraces censorship to protect President Zuma*. Retrieved September 6, 2013, from [UNCUT Free speech on the frontline: uncut.indexoncensorship.org/category/south-africa](http://uncut.indexoncensorship.org/category/south-africa)
- van Dijck, J. (2009). sers like you? Theorising agency in user-generated content. *Media Culture Society* , 31 (1), 41-58.
- Vatikiosis, P. (2004). Communication theory and alternative media . *Communication and Culture* , 1 (2), 4-29.

- Veil, R. S., Buehner, T., & Palenchar, J. M. (2011). A Work-In-Process Literature Review: Incorporating Social Media in Risk and Crisis Communication. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 19 (2), 110-122.
- Vielhaber, E. M., & Waltman, L. J. (2008). Changing Uses of Technology: Crisis Communication Responses in a Faculty Strike . *Journal of Business Communication*, 45 (3), 308-330.
- Vieweg, S., Hughes, L. A., Starbird, K., & Palen, L. (2010). Microblogging During Two Natural Hazards Events: What Twitter May Contribute to Situational Awareness. *Crisis Informatics*, (pp. 1079-1088). Atlanta.
- Vis, F. (2013). Twitter As A Reporting Tool For Breaking News . *Digital Journalism*, 1 (1), 27-47.
- Voltmer, K. (2008). The media, Government Accountability, and Citizen Engagement. *Roles in Media Conference* .
- Vultee, F., & Vultee, M. D. (2011). What We Tweet About When We Tweet About Disasters: The Nature and Sources of Microblog Comments During Emergencies. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 29 (3), 221-242.
- Wan, S., Tan, W., Koh, R., Ong, A., Lim, R., & Pang, A. (2013). Parody Social Media Accounts: Influence and Impact on Organisations during Crisis. In T. Lee, K. Trees, & R. Desai (Ed.), *Refereed Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference: Global Networks-Global Divides Bridging New and Traditional Communication Challenges*. ISSN.
- Wang, R., & Owyang, J. (2010). Social CRM: the new rules of relationship management . Altimeter Group .
- Ward, C. (2011). *Social Media and Crisis Communication: Are Organisations using Social Media in times of crises?*. Indiana: Master of Arts. Ball State University .
- Wasserman, H., & de Beer, S. A. (2005). A Fragile Affair: the Relationship Between the Mainstream Media and Government Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 20 (2-3), 192-208.
- Wasserman, H., & de Beer, A. (2005). Which Public? Whose Interest? The South African Media and its role during the first ten years of democracy. *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 19 (1-2), 36-51.

- Wasserman, H. (2011). Mobile phones, popular media and Everyday African Democracy: Transmissions and Transgressions. *Popular Communication: The International Journal of Media and Culture*, 9 (2), 146-158.
- Wasserman, H. (2013). Media Ethics in a New Democracy: South African Perspective on Freedom Dignity and Citizenship.
- Weick, E. K. (1993). The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organisation . *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 628-652.
- Welzel, C., & Inglehart, R. (2008). The Role Of Ordinary Citizens in Democratisation . *Journal of Democracy*, 19 (1), 126-140.
- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What Kind of Citizen? The Politics Of Educating For Democracy . *American Educational Research Journal*, 41 (2), 1-30.
- Westerman, D., Spence, R. P., & Van Der Heide, B. (2012). A social network as information: The effect of system generated reports of connections on credibility on Twitter. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 28, 199-206.
- Wigley, S., & Zhang, W. (2011). Study of PR Practitioners' Use of Social Media in Crisis Planning . *Public Relations Journal*, 5 (3), 1-16.
- Wilson, C., & Dunn, A. (2011). Digital Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Descriptive Analysis from the Tahrir Data Sets. *International Journal of Communications*, 5, 1248-1272.
- Woodly, D. (2008). New competencies in democratic communication? Blogs, agenda setting and political participation. *Public Choice*, 134, 109-123.
- World Wide Worx. (2014). *South African Social Landscape 2014*.
- Wright, K. D., & Hinson, D. M. (2008). How Blogs and Social Media are changing Public Relations and the Way It Is Practiced. *Public Relations Journal*, 2 (2), 1-21.
- Wright, K. D., & Hinson, D. M. (2012). Examining How Social Media and Emerging Media Have Been Used in Public Relations Between 2006 and 2012: A Longitudinal Analysis. *The 12th Annual BledCom Conference*. Bled.
- Yang, Y., Cai, J., Liu, Z. J., & Fang, Z. (2013). Repair purchase intention in product harm crisis. *Advanced Materials Research*, 655, 2266-2269.
- Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. (2009). Thematic content analysis. In B. Wildemuth (Ed.), *Applications of Social Research to Questions in Information and Library Science* (pp. 308-319). Westport: Libraries Unlimited.

Zhang, P., & D, G. (2014). Collective Sense Making in Social Media: A Case Study of the H7N9 Flu Pandemic in China. *iConference 2014 Proceedings*, (pp. 844-849).

