Strengthening participation of young people in South Africa’s electoral and democratic processes

Surveying the understandings of political parties

by Susan Booysen
Strengthening participation of young people in South Africa’s electoral and democratic processes:
Surveying the understandings of political parties

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ACRONYMS

ANC: African National Congress
DA: Democratic Alliance
EFF: Economic Freedom Fighters
IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party
IDC: Industrial Development Corporation
MPs: Members of parliament
MPLs: Members of Provincial Legislatures
NFP: National Freedom Party
NYDA: National Youth Development Agency
StatsSA: Statistics South Africa
VAP: Voting age population
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project and report establish groundwork for a Freedom House project to strengthen participation of young people in South Africa’s democracy. The research generally assesses youth attitudes towards democracy and its core ingredients of voting, accountability, and political parties’ actions to tap into the youth’s political orientations. The overall research project comprises two stages. First, the study explores the political parties’ perspectives on communication and channels of accountability. Second, it dwells on the views and experiences of the youth of South Africa. The first stage is dealt with through a selection of interviews with political parties at national and provincial levels in South Africa. These research findings are the subject matter of the current report.

A total of 13 party political interviews were conducted. These produced valuable insights from party political vantage points. Five of the interviews were conducted at the national level, and there were two interviews conducted for each of the four case study provinces of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, and Western Cape.

The political parties vary in impressions as to the specificity (or not) of issues that concern the youth. The issues are both substantive (concerning aspects of public policy and government action) and procedural (relevant to participation in elections and politics). Some parties claim all of their policies are youth-centric; others focus on issues that concern the youth specifically, including education, work opportunities, gangsterism, community safety, or substance abuse. The parties recognise the changing race-class base of South African society – with evidence that segments of the black-middle class have a waning affiliation with the ANC, and the black working class has demonstrable support for left-of-the-ANC opposition parties. These nuances complicate messaging and targeting.

Parties strive to expand their use of social media. However, the diverse demographic backgrounds of their supporters dictate that they will use a mix of traditional media (pamphlets, newsletters, speeches, door-to-door grassroots visits), intermediary electronic media (SMS and email), and social or new media (Twitter, Facebook, Mxit, WhatsApp, Google broadcasts, podcasts).

All of the political parties in this project have used most of these social media recently, especially at the time of the 2014 election. Sustained high-level and well-targeted, well-designed usage, however, requires in-house capacity, high-level skills, and thus substantial budgets. Only the ANC and DA have this type of capacity. The EFF competes in the same league due to the skill and social media orientation that come from its youthful leadership.

A host of barriers affect the use and potential expansion of social media use. Cost and lack of access to smart phones, cost of accessing data, and an imperfect national signal grid are foremost amongst the barriers. Additional constraints are that most of the political parties do not have sufficiently skilled in-house staff, mostly do not have the resources to employ such staff, and even less so have full-time employees with the commensurate skill.

The political party interviews highlighted multiple ways in which social media help build representative democracy. (Political parties obviously are motivated primarily by building their own profiles and securing support bases, but in the process democracy generally benefits). The interviews pointed to the following benefits for democracy: social media provide access to politicians; satisfy citizens’ need for information and expand awareness of party political options; offer two-way, interactive communication; can contribute to ‘direct democracy’; help ascertain responses to government actions; enable politicians to identify new pressing issues; and, assist in demystifying politics and enlarging citizen participation. Furthermore, social media could help enhance party capacity for outreach due to cost efficiency. To illustrate, audiences of substantial size could be reached with minimal technical output costs attached to postings.

The political parties in this research all welcomed the idea of a new social media app that could be used to help strengthen democracy and specifically multiparty democracy in South Africa. Even the parties who are leaders in the field – the ANC, DA and EFF – share this sentiment. The parties offered a rich set of suggestions as to possible functions and general characteristics for the envisaged app. Foremost are that it should be anchored in real political trends and processes, facilitate access to politicians, offer useful and relevant data, incorporate pertinent links, have no cost-implications, be engaging (even fun) and easy to use.
1 Introduction – objectives, methodology, political context

1.1 Objectives and focus of the research project and report

The participation of young people in South Africa’s electoral and democratic processes is an issue that is of great importance to future political trends in the country. Generally, and in terms of the 2011 Census, approximately 20 million of South Africa’s 52 million citizens were in the four five-year age bands for South Africa’s 15-34 year youth category1 (StatsSA released the statistics in these five-year age bands).2 This constitutes roughly 36 percent of the South African population. Close to 50 percent of the potential electorate, including both registered and unregistered citizens, are of the ages 18 to 35 years.3

Moving from population statistics to voter and voter registration details, on the eve of the 2014 election StatsSA advised that South Africa’s voting-age population (VAP) was 32.6 million.4 Youth registration for South Africa’s election 2014 was lower than figures for other age categories, as illustrated in voter registration breakdowns in the run-up to the 2014 election (Table 1).

This project and report establish some groundwork for a Freedom House project to strengthen participation of young people. The research will assess youth attitudes towards democracy and its core ingredients of voting, accountability, and political parties’ actions to tap into the youth’s political orientations.

The overall research project comprises two stages. In the first place, the study explores the political parties’ perspectives on communication and channels of accountability. The second phase dwells on the views and experiences of the youth of South Africa. The first stage is dealt with through a selection of interviews with the political parties at national and provincial levels in South Africa. The research findings are the subject matter of the current report. The second stage uses focus group discussions with a broad demographic selection of young people in South Africa. This aspect will be reported on in a second phase of the research and research report.

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2 In South Africa the IEC, Census and Population Register data are not aligned; in addition different age bands are used in the different data sets. See, for example, http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022014.pdf; also see the summaries in Census 2011 at https://www.statssa.gov.za/Census2011/Products/Census_2011_Methodology_and_Highlights, accessed 12 January 2015.


Strengthening participation of young people in South Africa’s electoral and democratic processes: Surveying the understandings of political parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category (years)</th>
<th>StatsSA VAP</th>
<th>Registered voters as of 11 November 2013</th>
<th>Percentage voter registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>1,926,127</td>
<td>434,370</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>9,481,294</td>
<td>5,168,441</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>6,895,947</td>
<td>6,018,575</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>5,301,005</td>
<td>4,912,242</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>3,867,469</td>
<td>3,692,158</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>2,255,911</td>
<td>2,189,719</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>1,172,634</td>
<td>1,136,477</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>533,647</td>
<td>560,432</td>
<td>105.0^5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The current project covers the modalities for engagement between community members and their Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Provincial Legislatures (MPLs), as interpreted by politicians and other functionaries of political parties who have the task of establishing communication links between the political parties and citizens of South Africa, specifically also the youth. The research is equally aimed at establishing a mechanism to start engaging political parties represented in the parliament and provincial legislatures that commenced their terms in 2014 with regard to the introduction of a new platform, including a website and mobile applications.

A mobile application (or app) can be defined as a digital tool that is available on mobile phones and tablets. A mobile app can feature a program on a smartphone and can include SMS and USSD functions available on all phones, including smartphones and feature phones. The combined website and mobile app platform is to be developed as one of the final phases of the overall project. The platform will aim at facilitating engagement between representatives and citizens. It will also offer a mechanism for accountability.

Detailed objectives – developing mechanisms for active representation and accountability

The main objective of this interview stage of the research is to survey political parties’ understandings about representing the needs of constituents, in particular youthful constituents, in relation to the use of social media. The emphasis is on active representation of these communities and hence on the mechanisms of representation that the parties have been using to establish contact and dialogues with the young voters and young voting age citizens more generally. For example, what do the political parties see as their obligation(s), and their abilities, to deliver active and interactive representation? In addition, it is important to establish what these actors regard as facilitators or barriers to realizing representation and effective two-way communication. Social media is a consistent focus.

The five biggest political parties to emerge from South Africa’s election 2014 were targeted for the interviews. They

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5 These are the figures and the percentage as provided; they obviously indicate problems in aspects of the StatsSA population calculations.

6 USSD codes can encompass once-off requests or interactive navigation with a menu-based application. It is effective when targeting lower LSM categories of citizens, given that it is supported by all handsets and networks. It requires no internet to connect. Hence it has good reach. USSD campaigns allow for a two-way exchange of a sequence of data. See http://www.channelmobile.co.za/ussd-ppc/?gclid=CKGM op4x8ICFW3htAodXBoAwg, accessed 29 November 2014. SMS refers to ‘short message service’, which is a text messaging component of phone, Web, or mobile communication systems. This service uses standardized communications protocols. It is used to exchange short text messages on fixed line or mobile phones.
are the African National Congress (ANC), the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and the National Freedom Party (NFP).

Given that young people frequently use social media – or new media – and this project concerns mainly youth, social media and two-way communication via social media assume a centre position. The project also has an action research orientation. It aims at developing a platform, incorporating social media, to enhance mutual communication and citizen representation. It aspires to make a contribution in helping representatives with representation and accountability along with providing citizens the means to strengthen representatives' knowledge of grassroots needs.

The geographical focus of the study is on the four provinces of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, and Western Cape. Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal are South Africa's two most populous provinces and had the highest proportion of voters in election 2014. The Western Cape is of interest not simply because it is the only one of South Africa's nine provinces that is not under ANC control, but also a province where two racial minority groups – coloured and white South Africans – are present in high proportions of the overall voting population. All three of these provinces also have high proportions of metropolitan populations. South Africa's metropolitan areas often suffer high level of service delivery deficits given growing and unsettled populations, largely due to in-migration from other parts of South Africa. This study, however, wanted to ensure that it also gets insights from more marginal provinces. North West was selected because it is an area that is well-known for governance and service delivery problems, with large rural areas and holds few opportunities for its young citizens. The conditions of the youth in rural areas of North West are comparable to those in KwaZulu-Natal's rural areas.

1.2 Methodology and reporting of the interview findings

The data for this stage of the research have been gathered through the conduct of individual interviews with representatives of political parties. The interviews were with party leaders, elected representatives, provincial caucus leaders, national communication heads, spokespersons and campaign communicators that are now deployed to government (for example in research or communication departments). A total of 13 interviews were conducted. These produced valuable insights from party political vantage points. Five of the interviews were conducted at the national level, and there were two interviews conducted per case study province. In each of the four provinces the first provincial level interview was with a representative of the majority party, and the second provincial interview was with an opposition party in that province.

The five parties represented in this research are the five biggest parties in parliament (Table 2) and are also the top three parties in each of the provinces that are covered in the study: Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, North West, and Western Cape (Table 3). The interviews were conducted in the period from September to early December 2014.

The interview guide was developed to guide the conduct of the interviews. The interviews were all done telephonically, mostly because it was logistically more feasible, given the busy schedule of politicians at the start of the new administration. Face-to-face format interviews would have been more time-consuming. Most of the interviewees requested indications of the questions before the interviews were agreed to. For this purpose the researcher also developed a synopsis of the interview schedule (Appendix A).

The interviews are reported by political party. Because it is the party, rather than the views of individuals within that party that is important for the study, the individuals are not cited by name in the report.

'Limitations' of the current research and report

The current research and associated research report concern obtaining and analysing specific interviews with a set of five South Africa political parties. The interviews were guided by a specific interview schedule, drafted in terms of a contractual agreement of a relatively short duration. Hence, the interviews had a specific focus and did not explore a wider range of political themes.

The report does not do a comparative ‘real-life’ study of the parties’ social media use. The report is based on interview responses. This is stated explicitly throughout the report. It is also not the task of the research and report to do statistical analyses of the youth voting data. The interview responses are the totality of the data used in this report.
1.3 Brief political context

The interview research unfolded in the early phases of South Africa’s fifth democratic parliament (and provincial legislatures), in the period after the national and provincial elections of 7 May 2014. The political parties had just emerged from a period of intense campaigning and mostly had vivid recollections of how they had been using social media in their campaigns. It had made their lives easier, in many respects. Yet, they had also been confronted with limiting aspects of new social media campaigning.

All of the political parties felt they had some important achievements in the 2014 election. The African National Congress (ANC) reckoned its campaign was successful given that it had emerged with 62 percent of the national vote. This was a decline of four percentage points from the previous national election, yet it was remarkable at an overall level. The Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) both made notable inroads. The DA increased its vote by close to six percentage points compared with the preceding national election result in 2009, and the EFF grew by just over six percentage points off a zero base (Table 2). Both of these two opposition parties changed the party political game – and legislative politics in the period after the election. In parliament especially, the EFF and DA mounted vehement campaigns against corruption in government. This was symbolised in their insistence on holding President Jacob Zuma to account for public funds that were used for improvements to his private residence. This campaign raised tensions in parliament, where the ANC often appeared to be under pressure.

The fourth and fifth biggest political parties in parliament, also included at the national level in this project, were the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the National Freedom Party (NFP). Both of these parties were relatively small provincial players from KwaZulu-Natal (the NFP being a 2011 split-off from the IFP). Along with a range of other micro-parties in parliament (Table 2) they were also bolstered by a united opposition front in parliament. This process gave them more of a profile. The leader of the NFP, Ms. Zanele KaMagwaza-Msibi, retained a low profile in the process, probably for having accepted a deputy-ministerial position from the president in his May-June 2014 cabinet reshuffle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA (DP+NP*)</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FF+ (FF+CP)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cope</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACDP</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>ID</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agang SA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 presents aspects of the provincial results of election 2014 – result trends over three elections in the nine provinces, with specific reference to the four provinces in this study. The details demonstrate the ANC’s 10 percentage point decline in Gauteng, and a drop of six percentage points in the North West. The North West’s position for the ANC nevertheless remains strong. In the Western Cape the ANC improved by one percentage point from election 2009 to election 2014, while the DA consolidated its position as the governing party. The ANC in KwaZulu-Natal further strengthened its position, although with the growth momentum losing steam.
Youth and politics in South Africa – party political perspectives

2.1 Definition of youth and importance of youth to political parties

South Africa’s political parties have no doubt about the centrality of youth to their future electoral prospects. They also emphasise the fact that this young group of citizens profoundly have an impact on their operations both in electoral and non-electoral periods. They often feel compelled to speak to the needs of this demographically defined population group. Youth spur the political parties to use social media for a range of reasons relating to both individual party fates and the practice of democracy in South Africa in general.

A commonly accepted definition of youth in South Africa is that it encapsulates all citizens in the age group between 14 and 35 years. The South African Poverty Reduction Network (SAPRN) summarises: 7

The national Youth Policy defines youth as any person between the ages of 14 and 35 years. This is a very broad definition of youth. It is a definition that embraces varied categories of the youth, which have been exposed to different socio-political and historical experiences. A 35-year-old youth lived during a period of heightened political conflicts, when he or she was a learner in school, while a 14-year-old youth is growing up in an environment when many of the new reforms and achievements of the struggles are being realized.

The National Youth Policy 2009-2014 continues: 8

The National Youth Policy 2009-2014 is used inclusively to refer to young people as those falling within the age group of 14 to 35 years. This is based on the mandate of the National Youth Commission Act 1996 and the National Youth Policy 2000. This inclusive approach takes into account, both historical as well as present-day conditions. Although much has changed for young people since the advent of democracy in 1994, the motivation for 35 years as the upper age limit of the youth has not yet changed since historical imbalances in the country are yet to be fully addressed ...

When political parties speak of their electoral support from the youth, they refer to a large subgroup of overall youth in South Africa, namely the group of 18 to 35 years of age.

2.2 Estimated proportions of youth support

The political parties in these interviews had variable experiences as to youth support in election 2014. Some estimated that close to 80 percent of support came from the youth. Others were prepared simply to give anecdotal evidence that testified to at least some support from the youth in the national and provincial elections of May 2014. 9

These were the main points that the five political parties in this project shared on their estimated levels of youth support:

ANC: ‘A huge proportion of our support came from young people’; ‘It is very strategic to keep on focussing on the youth.’

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9 Note that the interviewees were not pushed to obtain the specific information in preparation for the interview. The question was used to create the setting for the subsequent set of questions.
DA: ‘At best 5 percent of our 22 percent national support was from the youth.’

EFF: ‘The bulk of our support is from the youth’; ‘The ratio of older members to youth in the EFF is probably about 1:4’ (or up to 80 percent young people).

IFP: ‘A sizeable proportion of the IFP’s support in election 2014 came from the youth... we could see that in the young volunteers who turned up to help in the campaign.’

NFP: ‘We estimate that 60 percent of our support in election 2014 was from the youth (18-34 years old) ... 60-65 percent of NFP membership is young people.’

2.3 Important youth issues for the political parties

The political parties in this project have variable impressions as to the specificity (or not) of issues that concern the youth, and that therefore need to be addressed specifically in order to gain youth attention or support. These issues are both substantive (concerning aspects of public policy and government action) and procedural (relevant to participation in elections and politics).

The details in Table 4 demonstrate how political parties conceptualise ‘youth issues’ in their party political work generally and in approaching the youth through social media specifically. Each of the rows in Table 4 coheres (there is no vertical correspondence).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substantive issues on which the youth request information</th>
<th>Procedural issues on which the parties engage the youth</th>
<th>Youth generational issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issues are generic: all policies are youth-centric; youth are encapsulated in the general policy positions.</td>
<td>A mixture: policies are in essence a mixture of the exclusive and generic issues.</td>
<td>The time for ‘old politics’ is over, and young leaders are taking over. This is evidenced in parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive youth issues: there are many issues that concern the youth specifically and issues on which they seek information, including education, work opportunities, gangsterism, community safety, substance abuse.</td>
<td>Mobilisation for electoral registration and voting in elections: the EFF, for example, argues it had failed to use its wide social media access to mobilise young South Africans to register.</td>
<td>Youth will be targeted for registration – motivated by the message that it is through registration that the new South Africa will emerge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing of party events: rallies, meetings, community-walk-abouts, and ‘meet the leader’ gatherings, thus open-ended besides being directed by a specific party.</td>
<td>Recruitment: specific ‘cajoling’, persuasion, and propaganda.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Phrases and observations as used in the party interviews.
First and on the substantive issues, the EFF emphasises that it treats its supporters as mature South Africa citizens. They do not single out young people through dedicated issues that specifically concern the youth and no-one else. They recognize that the bulk of their youth-band supporters experience the issues of poverty and unemployment (shared across age groups), along with a range of additional issues that are also common concerns of South Africans across the age categories. The ANC emphasises that its policies are commonly youth-centric, and claims therefore there is limited reference needed to the specific youth nature of particular policies when these arise. There is evidence nevertheless of the ANC highlighting the youth dimension of a range of its policies. Most of the parties, however, specify a set of issue concerns that are of particular importance to their youth supporters (Table 4, top row). The rest of the parties interviewed in this study – the DA, IFP and NFP – place the youth in both categories – seeing them as citizens that have a set of unique policy interests, yet also recognising that youth issues are common to all age groups.

The party interviewees – across political parties interviewed – generally specified education (over a broad spectrum), work opportunities, quality of life and substance abuse as issues on which their youth supporters expect specific action. It was notable in the ANC interviews that the ANC and its public representatives get contacted for government-related information on opportunities. The opposition parties, in contrast, were engaged on general positions and advocacy, plus comments or assessments of government. The ANC argued that the young and educated class needs specific attention. It also observed that people from different racial backgrounds increasingly have experiences in common – a trend which complicates communication on youth issues. For example, political parties like the ANC mobilise on struggle issues and stress how the inequality of the past gave effect to the uneven contemporary socio-economic patterns. It is notable, however, that young people from different race group designations often report the same present-day problems.

There were two main points of controversy in ANC identification of youth issues – first, of the relevance of history and struggle, and, second, of corruption. An ANC interviewee argued that:

The new, young voters have no memory of apartheid except what they are told – and this poses serious challenges to the ANC ... we can no longer use history as mobilising platform ... for the young people it is more about the immediate issues that affect their lives in the present.

Another ANC interviewee notes, regarding corruption:

From personal canvassing in election 2014 we know that young people are preoccupied with the information they get about scandals in the ANC. Most of the things they hear on the social media are very negative. This creates negative attitudes towards the ANC ... Young people also want to hear the good things on the social media.

The ANC, EFF and NFP all singled out corruption as an issue that is of specific interest to the youth. The youth were interested prior to the EFF’s parliamentary activism, and the EFF used the ‘pay back the money’ campaign to further conscientize young people:

It was through information we put out on the social media that they learnt how we link the “pay-back” issue to our fight against corruption. The essence is that we generate connections and give opportunities for interaction ...

The NFP linked corruption to tenders and service delivery and found a good reception for these ‘hot’ campaign points.

There are differences between the political parties as to the importance of the bread and butter issue to the youth, both in election 2014 and beyond. On the one hand, one of the ANC interviewees points out that they focused on bread and butter issues, when, instead, supporters wanted to hear what was happening around Nkandla. The EFF, in contrast, gives details on how the party enjoys grassroots credibility because it shares the pain and suffering of many of the deprived citizens. It is in this context that the EFF speaks to young people about free education up to tertiary level, and jobs. The IFP found that the youth were keen to listen to alternatives to ‘being set-up’ for failure

10 For example, the Employment Tax Incentive which was introduced in 2014 and was aimed mainly at the youth; NYDA disbursed R25 million to youth owned micro enterprises in the 2014-15 financial year and also partnered with the IDC and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency in a partnership to generate a fund for young people.
through unusable poor-quality education. Youths wanted to hear what they can do to make headway in life. They want to hear about education that will open doors and lead to employment.

The DA criticizes itself for not having had ‘enough hunger’ to understand what young people want: ‘Young people voted for Julius Malema because he came across as relevant and brought something new to politics.’
3 Social media and the youth – usage, barriers, expansion plans

3.1 Party communications in cross-currents

South Africa’s political parties find themselves in cross-currents when it comes to communicating with their followers. First, there are youthful followers who are on social media and can be ‘captured.’ However, most of the political parties still need to cater for older generations of followers who are not on social media, may not be able to afford smart phones (a factor which still largely determines connectivity), or are in outlying geographical areas where both infrastructure and personal access to phones and computers is limited. Hence, political parties need to embrace the new media yet cannot afford to neglect mainstream or traditional media.

For the youth, the pull is unambiguously towards the increased use of social media. Political parties recognize this. Increasingly, it is especially the ‘big three’ of the political parties – the African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA), and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) that are equipping themselves.

The parties’ moves towards more attention to social media would have been seamless, had it not been for limited resources (see section 3.2). Political parties use variable mixes of professional assistance with the application of social media to internal and external party communications. Some parties have far more resources than others. This is visible in the infrastructure and in-house expertise in social media that they can afford.

3.2 Hierarchy of political parties’ media usage

South Africa’s main political parties have all slotted social media into their repertoires of media usage. The different parties vary in the emphasis they place on each of the categories of media – with the categories ranging from traditional media, to standard electronic media, to social or new media:

- **Traditional media**: pamphlets, newsletters to constituencies, speeches delivered in-person by leaders, door-to-door grassroots community visits.
- **Intermediary electronic media**: SMS and email communications.
- **Social or new media**: Twitter, Facebook, Mxit, WhatsApp, Google broadcasts, podcasts.

All of the parties stress that it is a question of balance between using social media and believing that social media cannot substitute for in-person and in-community grassroots political work. The ANC is emphatic that ‘we as the ANC will never neglect grassroots work. Action with individual voters is what is important to us.’

3.3 Political parties’ range of social media usage

Most of the parties are in a social media learning curve. Either they learn as they go along, or they employ specialists to help in getting improved expertise. Both styles of learning lead to greater internal party/in-house staff expertise. The smaller parties, nevertheless, do not always have sufficient numbers of internal staff who remain on site to take forward all of the learning once the election period finishes.

Political parties’ openness about sharing the details of specialist help varies. All of the parties talk about their ‘revolutions’ (or approximate equivalents) in using social media, especially when they compare their activities of 2009 to 2014.
Table 5:
The range of political parties' social media usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Mxit</th>
<th>WhatsApp</th>
<th>YouTube</th>
<th>Broadcasting on Facebook</th>
<th>Web page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (4)</td>
<td>X (1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>X (2)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (3)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Source: Information provided in interviews.

The details in Table 5 demonstrate the prevalence of Twitter and Facebook in the political parties' preferences for social media. Instagram, Reddit, Vine, and Google Hangouts are some of the additional media mentioned, especially by the DA, as options for the future. In their choice of social media and consequent high versus modest level usage, political parties consider factors such as ease of access, cost of usage, ability of the medium to carry out its message, having approximate control over the communication dissemination, and whether their target youth audiences will relate to the fashion status of the application.

Some of the trends depicted in Table 5 are also highly seasonal – great or fair social media use at election time could often not be sustained. To illustrate, the NFP is one of the small parties that has been unable to sustain the election period usages in the post-election period. At election time it was able to let their experts (occasional appointees) create trends on Twitter, thus increasing their following. Specifically, they created awareness of the leader’s speeches and details of the leader’s campaign trail. The NFP president herself engaged on Facebook. By late 2014 these activities had become much reduced.

### 3.4 Barriers to social media usage

Multiple barriers affect the political parties' usage of social media. These barriers have an impact on the choice of social media and the extent to which the parties will be relying on social media in their future operations (Table 6). The most notable barriers relate to national infrastructure (signal unavailability in outlying areas), and modest access to smartphones (due to poverty and unemployment largely). Other significant constraints are the political parties' own modest resources and restrained in-house expertise.
The barriers that were identified in Table 6 are experienced by all political parties, although differentially so. The ANC appears most aware of the political risks associated with social media exposure (although it is the ANC that is seen by other parties, such as mentioned by the EFF when interviewed, as having an interest in infiltrating).

The DA follows in close suit, recognising the dangers of the openness of many DA leaders tweeting or Facebooking in the DA’s name. Incoherence can arise, the DA argues. The leaders who were interviewed note the dangers, but also the limited prospects that self-containment would succeed. Instead, the DA has focused on creating a strong national DA social media presence to let this serve as a center with pull. It also enjoys automatic authenticity and authority. The result is that it is likely to be the first point of reference for the corroboration of other messages.

The following composite points (covering the responses of several interviewees per party) detail the main thrust of the barriers that the parties experience (smaller parties also relate how they even struggle to use the mainstream media, let alone social media):

**ANC:**
- It is difficult to access people in rural areas via social media.
- Literacy and language are big constraints when it comes to using social media … Just look at the wide reach of African language radio, and it is clear that language affects social media usage.
- Cost is an issue; this is what makes Mxit more acceptable.
- Many people still do not have access to cell phones or internet (also see Appendix B).
- Besides the rural dimension, our constituency generally is working class or unemployed and they are often not well connected – hence we have to continue using more traditional media as well.

**DA:**
- We work against apathy, and the youth are often apathetic and not interested in politics. (Thus, even if a party like the DA had resources and staff, it does not guarantee effective connection with the youth on social media).
- The constraints of broadband signal need to be overcome – the cost of data is an issue.
EFF:

- The EFF deals with issues of infiltration by parties like the ANC – the ANC has the mission to ‘deal with’ opposition parties and hence the EFF is targeted. Infiltration comes through all of the time on the social media. ANC people pretend to be disillusioned EFF members, who now intend returning to the ANC and they broadcast this on social media.
- Cost is an issue – access is not entirely free and this affects our access to our target communities. If we can change the cost of communication, it will change the entire face of future election campaigns.
- Social media are deficient in that they still need the authority of sources – newspapers have this authority. It helps us to build on this authority when we communicate on social media. Then, for example, we retweet a newspaper report.
- We also suffer from no network coverage in some of the outlying areas. There is a huge burden on individual political parties in the legislatures to publicise the work they are doing. The provincial legislatures themselves are generally very poor at doing this. When they do, they prioritise the ANC.

IFP:

- Our constituency is diverse and many of our supporters still live in the rural areas. Others are elderly and do not use the modern media.
- Social media are high maintenance and we would have to ensure the necessary staff to run with it.

NFP:

- Our main barrier is that we do not have a full time person to bring together the information on how we engage with government where we are not in power, or in joint government.
- We also do not have the resources to offer the media houses something in return for covering our events. It is difficult for small parties to get coverage.
### Table 7: Internal party capacity in the use of social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Parties' observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **ANC** | We have a specialist unit, but we are also upscaling and building internal expertise.  
          | We are creating a permanent new media unit – both to transmit and monitor flow of information, debates and trends.  
          | KZN: We have one person who manages social media communications.  
          | WC: We do not have a dedicated person to work on social media. We are looking at starting a call centre. The DA operated a huge call centre and it was a success.  
          | NW: We do not have dedicated people at the moment; the provinces often depend on volunteers. |
| **DA** | The DA has permanent social media positions – they are not political people, and therefore do not assume positions of their own. They create interesting content.  
         | One year before election 2014 the DA created a direct marketing unit, guided by a Mxit specialist. This person was closely involved in developing Mxit in South Africa.  
         | We have a permanent employee at the national level who updates the DA’s twitter profile daily.  
         | We certainly have specialist help – it is essential for our survival in social media,  
         | We have two or three strong designers who know how to condense graphics in Twitter size messages, how to present graphics accessibly, present content so that it can be retweeted, so that it trends.  
         | When we go into media briefings we have the tweets lined up.  
         | We need more research on how to make our content more effective, how not just to get hits and trend, but also to follow through into conversion to the DA.  
         | WC: At election time we have a DA Western Cape account, but due to staff restrictions we could not keep it up. |
| **EFF** | We have never consulted on the use of social media.  
         | The EFF leaders bring their own personal knowledge and experience into our communication strategies. We do not have huge resources as a party. We don’t have in-house specialists. We need to bring in people to do poster design for us, design a video for us. We can learn a lot from the use of social media in the Obama campaign.  
         | GP: We rely on individual members to interact with our followers.  
         | NW: We handle the social media ourselves. |
| **IFP** | We had some general help through the IFP’s media unit.  
         | It is a small unit but we are looking to invest in it. |
| **NFP** | We hired three contract persons at the height of the 2014 election campaign. But now that the election is done we do not have them anymore. |

**Source:** Phrases as used in the party interviews.

### 3.5 In-house social media skills

There are widely divergent social media operations in the ranks of South Africa’s main political parties. The DA is the most highly skilled party, with substantial in-house expertise. The ANC matches the types of functions that the DA undertakes, but is less open in sharing all details. The ANC is more cognisant and wary about the fact that social media communications are substantially out in the open. The ANC recognises that both the DA and the EFF have high-level and high-profile social media presences and that the ANC operates virtually in ‘enemy territory’ when it enters, for example, the Twitter sphere.
The details in Table 7 show that there are three types of political parties in South Africa when it comes to the use and development of social media. First, there are the ‘big two,’ the ANC and DA. They buy in the requisite human resource skills, and have full units that handle this side of communications.

Second, there is the EFF, with young members who thrive in the use of the medium and lead the game seamlessly. The EFF is on par with the ANC and DA. The EFF’s leader, for instance, is often ahead of the DA in the major party leaders’ tweeting stakes (the ANC leader hardly tweets). However, the EFF lags behind the two big parties when it comes to systematic in-house capacity. The other two parties, the IFP and NFP, have virtually no social media capacity in the period beyond election 2014. The NFP did not have the resources to continue its relatively high election period engagement.

Table 8: Political parties’ plans to use social media to extend relationships with the youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Parties’ articulation of plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>Obviously we plan to expand, and extend our relationships with the youth. (The new ANCYL is taking shape and it will play an important role in building the ANC’s relationship with the youth.) We definitely plan to expand our social media usage. We are in a catch-22 – we want to expand but our target audiences for expansion are still not amongst the well-connected ones. Our expansion is aimed at improving the way in which we communicate with existing supporters and also to ensure that we continue growing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>We plan to expand both in election and non-election usage. We are growing our base, working on what the issues of concern for the youth are. We hope to expand our provincial profile [with reference to the Western Cape] for our social media use, especially with a view to the 2016 local elections. We shall probably be resurrecting our special provincial account. The next step will be to ensure that trending actually brings in votes for the DA,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>We already have high levels of social media connection with the youth, but more can be done. Perhaps LinkedIn will be our next step, but this is my personal opinion. It will be good for profiling the members of the legislatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>Expansion will help make the IFP less dependent on the South African Broadcasting Corporation. We have to build these alternative channels. We are confident that with social media we can again enter a growth phase. We have more potential supporters out there but they have not had access to our message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>We definitely want to expand but we dare not lose the balance between the connected ones and our supporters (large numbers) who are not yet connected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Phrases as used in the party interviews.

3.6 Expansion plans

Expansion plans abound for South Africa’s political parties with regard to their anticipated future use of social media (Table 8). As the points in section 3 on cross-currents suggest, for several of the parties there are conflicts between putting energy into expanding their use of social media and potentially leaving valuable audiences behind. All political parties see widespread benefits in expanding their social media usage nevertheless: it is non-negotiable.
4 Social media in advancing democracy and accountability

4.1 Linking party building and democracy advancement

South Africa’s political parties put social media to a wide range of uses in quests to build party political strength and simultaneously advance democracy, more generally.

In being accountable to their supporters, the parties hope to attract more supporters and members to their ranks. In this process democracy-building happens. All of the parties in this study use social media both for internal (organization building) and external (community outreach) purposes.

Most of the parties have started seeing social media as an indispensable building block in their roads ahead. It is, however, just an important building block and not a total new reality (section 3.4 deals with the relative barriers to embracing social media usage in South African politics and society).

4.2 Building democracy with the help of social media

A series of usages of social media that are outlined in the party interviews point to building of important aspects of representative democracy. Accountability is foremost, although political parties are pursuing the positive and advantageous positioning of their own organizations with nearly equal intent.

The frequently mentioned usages of social media that might benefit democracy in South Africa include the following interpretations, as extracted and inferred from the interviews. Social media:

- Provide access to politicians;
- Satisfy citizens’ need for information – get policy positions, successes in debates, government information out to citizens individually and in party political or civil society formations;
- Offer two-way, interactive communication;
- Expand awareness of party political options and alternative positions, thus they empower citizens;
- Can contribute in some respects to a model constituting direct democracy;
- Are available to ascertain responses to government and party political actions;
- Enable politicians to identify issues emerging as important and requiring political action;
- Assist in the process of demystifying and making politics accessible, enlarging citizen participation; and,
- Have the potential to enhance the de facto capacity of political parties due to cost efficiency.

Political parties are obviously an integral spoke in the multiparty democracy wheel. The well-being and performances of political parties will therefore also enhance democracy generally (provided it is in a context of non-authoritarianism). The parties use social media for a wide range of specific political actions – which concern both individual political parties and government via the governing party. These actions are, respectively:

**Political parties:**

- Get across policy positions and post key announcements;
- Satisfy the need for information – publicize policy positions, successes in debates, government information;
- Build their party profiles;
- Recruit by highlighting their own successes and limiting the perception of opposition successes;
- Motivate citizens to register for and vote in elections;
• Get supporters out to campaign events, for example to the ANC’s ‘Meet the leader’; and,
• Launch products such as campaign advertisements, for example by the DA.

**Government and the governing party:**¹¹

• Provide details on policy implementation;
• Direct citizens or supporters to public sector agencies that will help them address their issues or problems;
• Provide information about educational or employment opportunities (also specifics like timetables and application procedures); and,
• Offer opposition party assessments of how well (or not) the governing party is doing, e.g. living up to government programmes, or executing ethical government.

Table 9 demonstrates the interview narratives on how the political parties see social media as contributing to building democracy in South Africa in general. Political parties’ internal use of social media (section 4.3) helps strengthen political parties and therefore also potentially help build democracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Party views on social media enhancing accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ANC   | Some MPs use social media to be accountable to their constituents.  
We have been able to account to a large number of people at no cost.  
We see social media as opening new pathways for communication with constituents.  
We direct social media queries on services and delivery into the appropriate government departments.  
Social media should be used better to highlight the delivery and achievements of government (policy implementation). |
| DA    | Social media hold us to account. There is an expectation to know what we are doing.  
On social media we automatically engage large numbers of young people. We accept that they want information. We ensure that our tweets carry useful information.  
The social media have helped to demystify the DA – the DA’s takes on unfolding issues are now disseminated widely.  
Social media dissemination is valuable to young people who do not go to political meetings. They see that the DA is trending and then take a closer look at what is happening. This really helps the DA in the youth market. (Others in the DA warn that Twitter followings do not automatically convert into electoral support).  
The DA’s reach expands as these people tune in from time to time. |
| EFF   | Social media have encouraged people to become more involved in the issues of the day.  
The leaders have the immediate opportunity to demonstrate to the people what they have done in debates to make it tangible that they share in people’s pain.  
We educate and conscientise people on public issues.  
We have a concrete connection with young people and find it easy to do interactive communication.  
Through this interactive democracy we test our own ideas all of the time. We get the feel from the people. |

¹¹ This set of points captures, first, both the ANC nationally and across its provincial governments in the provinces in the study, and the DA in the Western Cape, and, second, opposition parties in relation to the governing party in question.
### 4.3 Parties' internal usage of social media

All of the political parties in this research also use social media for internal functions and organization. They use the social media widely not just for supporter mobilization, but to organize branches and target specific groups within the organization for communication and mobilization.

Only some of the parties emphasized the benefits they derive internally from access to social media. This section highlights the observations by the ANC, IFP, and NFP. Both the EFF and DA, despite not volunteering information on this aspect in their interviews, are known to also be using social media for internal communication and organizational purposes. The political parties generally gain benefits on the information side where they are provided with rapid feedback on inputs into debates, media briefings, and policy positions.

Some of the internal-organizational usages include:

**ANC:** We use it intensively in internal communications. Mobilization of communities into ANC networks, arranging branch meetings (both of branch executives and members) – the ANC for example creates groups of members of the branch. The ANC in the North West argues that this connectivity at the branch level can help counter a potential opposition party ‘revolution.’ ‘We create an impenetrable line,’ the ANC says. The ANC in KwaZulu-Natal ‘cajoles’ people via the social media to become ANC members.

**IFP:** With the help of social media the IFP got the confidence that we could get its membership to get the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>In this new form of popular democracy the multiplier effect works extremely well. We don’t just trend, we go viral! Social media are immediate in their impact. The social media are extremely important through cost-effectiveness, giving small and new parties like the EFF a chance against the ANC. It is cost effective. Social media put us in touch and help us keep in touch with the people, and remain accountable daily to the people who elected us. We can share rally information, make other constituencies feel they were part of those rallies. Social media allow us to connect directly – and that is the only way to build the human element at the heart of the party. People know where to find us – our leaders are on social media. They respond immediately and directly. We value being interactive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>As a cash-strapped party the social media helped us establish our presence in election 2014. We are miles ahead of where we were in previous elections. After the NFP formed in 2011 we were almost in paralysis. In 2014 we took greater strides again to connect with and revive our membership. We have been using social media to mobilise voters. We communicate even before we arrive in a community. Then we follow through. We have managed through social media to get conversations going, and not just to talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>Parties that are in government have the ability consistently to be in communities, connect and talk about what their parties are doing. The parties not in government cannot compete – at least social media have made competition with the governing party somewhat more feasible. (This is one of the reasons why the NFP went into alliances with the ANC – to help us get access to platforms to speak directly to citizens.) We hope to get to a point of putting rallies, or even ordinary meetings on YouTube and make it accessible to members in otherwise remote, far-apart, areas. Social media can bind us together (provided the cost of access is reduced).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Phrases as used in the party interviews.
work done. On the ground members could pick up on the themes and do campaigning.

**NFP:** Social media gave the NFP the confidence of knowing that they can reach out to their membership and connect with them, despite being severely resource-constrained. There are limits otherwise on how much the NFP could spend on communication.
5 Political parties’ suggestions for a platform

5.1 General support for the development of a democracy app

The political parties in this research all welcomed the idea to develop a new social media app that could be used to help strengthen democracy and specifically multiparty democracy in South Africa. Even the parties who are leaders in the field – the ANC, DA, and EFF – shared this sentiment. All recognize that there is a need for an imaginative, easy-to-use, relevant platform.

This is a selection of comments from the political parties:

**EFF:** If it holds benefits for our communication and there are no particular risks involved, we shall be interested. Yes, we shall definitely want to see it. We shall ‘jump on it’ because Mxit has numbers. We would like to add to our existing range.

**DA:** It could be a good invention, offering nice opportunities. It could be very useful to help link MPs and MPLs to their constituencies.

**IFP:** We shall completely favour such a platform.

**ANC:** We have opened up to organizations, analysts, interest groups when it comes to our engagements, also on policy – we see greater openness as an opportunity; all inputs are considered. We will certainly interact with anybody involved in this space. We have a lot to learn / in new media there is so much to learn. We will most certainly like to be informed.

5.2 Suggested features for the proposed app

The political parties had a host of suggestions as to what might be included in a new platform to help enhance the quality of democracy in South Africa. The details are presented in Table 10.

Specific functions, issues, or data bases that interviewees suggested may be useful include:

- Do voter education (EFF);
- Build in educational information, for example on democracy and accountability (EFF);
- Link policy themes to other platforms, like newspaper sites, so that newspaper opinion pieces could be dragged into this platform (DA); and,
- Have a data bank on ideologies (EFF).
Table 10: Suggested features for the proposed app

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural and democracy issues</th>
<th>EFF</th>
<th>ANC</th>
<th>DA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of democracy</td>
<td>Build in educational functions on citizen participation, activism, democracy and accountability. It must help overcome young people’s lack of interest in politics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build representatives’ knowledge of issues</td>
<td>It should help make representatives aware publicly of what developing community issues are.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Direct democracy’ and representation</td>
<td>Imagine MPs or MPLs can sit in their legislatures and get immediate feedback on how their constituencies are reacting to unfolding issues! It will help make it easier for MPs and MPLs to communicate with their constituencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Build in ‘games’ – to simulate voter registration processes (and other relevant aspects of elections), or committee work in parliament and the provincial legislatures.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access and affordability</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>IFP</th>
<th>EFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access and cost</td>
<td>Look into how access and cost will boost or undermined the app. Information on what happened in parliament (like rolling coverage of debates) should not be confined to those who can pay – could this app help make this difference (opening it up free of cost)? Bear in mind that cheap smart phones are becoming more affordable and cheap airtime too – this has implications for Mxit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>It must be very easy to use. Bear in mind that Facebook is developing fast, with capacity for messages, calls and pictures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Social media must differentiate languages – if not they will disappoint on reach.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data and links</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>IFP</th>
<th>EFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>It will make sense, be useful, if the platform could link issues to debates, to research and data bases on the topic. Will be great if it can bring data onto Mxit platforms (help reduce the cost). Help with access to facts, e.g. on land. Should link different platforms – bring in newspaper opinion pieces. Help bring e.g. parliamentary portfolio committee information free to users (so that it does not have to be downloaded at a price).</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Party websites</td>
<td>Build in links to party websites.</td>
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<td>Policy related actions</td>
<td>It will be useful to have details about the implementation of job programmes – but it will lack credibility if it simply repeats government information. Data will have to be balanced, neutral.</td>
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<td>Party statuses, government processes</td>
<td>Discussions about delivery have to be linked to real world like which is the governing party where, the opposition where. Opposition parties cannot do the same things as governing parties. It needs to be a concrete tool, anchored in political realities. It needs to take account of intricacies of decision-making and policy processes in government. It will be useful if it helps informs citizens of the work of government – work that unfolds cumulatively across spheres and institutions of the state.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Style and technical aspects</th>
<th>IFP</th>
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<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Ensure that it plays the ball and not the man, that it does not become a platform for insult, be constructive.</td>
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<td>Frequency and consistency</td>
<td>One needs to look at frequency and consistency in taking communication in South Africa to a new level.</td>
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I am Professor Susan Booysen, from Wits University, working on a consultancy project with Freedom House (FH). FH is a Washington-based international NGO, and it researches democracy worldwide.

We are interested to know your attitudes and approaches to interactive media tools and what experiences your party has had. FH anticipates feeding the interview information into the development of an interactive web/mobile/social media platform. The current interview is to extend and/or verify our desktop research. Should you be interested, Freedom House will be happy to be in touch when the project reaches the ‘platform stage’.

I hence ask for your kind cooperation, for a telephonic interview that could be done in 20-30 minutes.

2: SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1: How important are social media in your party’s overall communication strategy?

2.2: What do you use social media for primarily – is it to (a) provide information, (b) to receive information, or (c) both?

2.3: Which of the social media does your party use? Twitter, Facebook, Mxit, other?

2.4: Which of these social media do you find to be most effective?

2.5: Which of the social media has your party used in Election campaign 2014? Does it use in the periods between elections? Example/s of the latter?

2.6: Comparison of your 2014 use of social media - with 2011, 2009?

2.7: What benefits have you received as a result of using social media?

2.8: Do you hope to further expand your use of social media?

2.9: IF you hope to expand – will it be to get better interaction with existing supporters, or to build relations with new constituents?

2.10 Does your party employ specialists to manage these social media communications?
3: YOUTH AND TARGETING

3.1: What proportion of your party's support in Election 2014 came from the youth (18-34 years) (an estimate)?

3.2: Did you have a specific strategy to communicate with the youth?

3.3: Did you use pamphlets, speeches, door-to-door, email broadcasts, social media?

3.4: What message did you try to get across to the youth?

3.5: Does your party have specific plans to build long-term relationships with the youth?

4: DELIVERY ON MANDATES

Procedural

4.1: Now that we are in the post-election period, how fast can your constituents expect (a) feedback or updates, and (b) what mechanisms do you use to update your constituency?

4.2: Which specific groups do you target for social media interaction?

4.3: What mechanisms do you have in place to ensure interactive communication?

4.5: What are the main barriers to good interactive communication with your constituency?

Substantive

4.6: What in your opinion are the most important things that your party undertook in the Election 2014 campaign?

4.7: On what campaign undertakings on the youth do you think they would welcome (or demand) feedback?

5: THE INTERACTIVE PLATFORM

5.1: How would your party feel about a website and mobile phone app platform, generally accessible via cell phone, to use as a platform for regular two-way interaction between MPs or MPLs and their constituents? Would (a) your party, and (b) you personally find it useful?

5.2: Would your party be open to the idea of a public platform, or does it see communication with its constituents as a private matter?

5.3: Any suggestions on making a platform like this attractive to a political party like yours?

Thank you for your interest.
APPENDIX B:

Select Notes on Access to Mobile Phones in South Africa

Access to mobile devices in South Africa

For some the access to devices is still a problem; others point out that the problem is correcting itself quickly. South Africa’s All Media Products Survey (AMPS) of 2013 found:\(^\text{12}\)

- 97 percent of households have a cell phone;
- 87 percent of adults own a cell phone; and
- 36 percent of adults own a smart phone.

On access to the internet via cell phone, Statistics SA found:

- 41 percent of South African households have at least one member with access to the internet, but
- Only 10 percent of households have access at home, and
- In rural areas only 2 percent of households have access from home.
- 30 percent could access the internet via mobile phone; and
- 17 percent of rural households could access via cell phone.
