

**ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES FACULTY  
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degree of**

**Master of Arts**



**by**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this research project entitled “Assessing the use of ‘New Media’ as a communication tool by the ANC, DA and EFF in the run up to the South Africa’s 2019 provincial and national elections” is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university. All sources I have utilized or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

**Simone Matika**

*October 2020*



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this to Nosipo Matika and Abel Siteo, this one is for you! Thank you, Mom and Dad, for the support and always being there for me.



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## ABSTRACT

In May 2019, South Africa held its sixth democratic national and provincial elections. 48 political parties participated in this general election compared to the 19 that participated in 2014. Thus, the 2019 elections witnessed a significant broadening of political options that could appeal to the electorate. At the same time mechanisms for political parties to communicate and engage with voters have also evolved. Research has shown that ‘new media’, commonly known as social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for example), have increasingly become part of the political communication methods within electoral democracies. Given this, the study aimed to conduct a deep analysis of the use of Twitter as a communication tool by the African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) during the election campaign period of 2019. The study adopted a qualitative method, by having a virtual ethnography approach to collect Twitter feeds. In addition, a Twitter survey was conducted in order to understand how the users received the political campaigns on the platform. The analysis was guided by the theoretical framework of Foot and Schneider (2006) which outlines and discusses four pillars (or functions) of online campaigning namely: “informing, involving, connecting and mobilizing”.

The research findings indicate that the ANC, DA and EFF have utilised the ‘informing’ function sufficiently throughout the 2019 election period. The ANC and the DA have yet to fully harness the power of Twitter for engaging with voters. With regards to ‘involving and connecting’, the EFF came out the strongest. They managed to establish a relationship with the Twitter users by engaging on twitter on a regular basis and they were tweeting more than the other political parties investigated in this study. Furthermore, the leaders were visibly active on twitter by making sure they tweet about the party and what they were doing, they promoted the tweets from the official account by retweeting and tweeting the same information to their personal accounts. The study reveals that political parties primarily used Twitter to inform voters. Twitter can however be used in a far more dynamic way to also involve, connect and mobilize voters. Given the worrying statistics declining voter participation among young voters, it is incumbent on political parties to fully embrace and use social media platforms to engage more thoroughly with voters.

**Key Words:** Political Communication, Democracy, Elections, New Media, Political Parties, Election Campaigns, Online Campaigns, Twitter, ANC, DA, EFF.

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# 1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

On the 8th of May 2019 South Africans went to the polls to vote in the country's sixth national and provincial elections. Of particular concern in the South African 2019 national and provincial elections was the lack of involvement of young voters. In total 26.7 million people registered to vote. However, while registration increased, "over 9 million potential qualified voters most of them young people, remained unregistered" (Schulz-Herzenberg and Southall, 2019:7). As Schulz-Herzenberg (2019:60) noted, "younger voters generally turnout at lower rate primarily because the broader social costs of voting are highest for this population group, they are only starting to establish social networks that mobilize them, and their party identification is weaker". Schulz-Herzenberg (2019:60) further noted, "if turnout among young people continues to decline dynamically even slightly over time, there will be additional negative effects on aggregate turnout rate". The rate at which young people vote, or do not vote, will eventually affect the electoral rate.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the 2019 election was fraught with uncertainty in particular whether voters would turn out to cast their ballot. It is in this context that campaigning through digital platforms has become more and more important.<sup>2</sup>

This study reveals that while the chosen political parties all made extensive use of Twitter in the run up to their campaign launches, they could have used the platform more optimally. The EFF was most interactive in establishing a relationship with their users on the platform they maintained posting on the platform on a daily. Furthermore, the leaders of the EFF constantly used this platform with tweets that were directly speaking to what the party was doing by having all the tweets from the official account to their own personal accounts. The ANC and DA ran effective

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<sup>1</sup> This focus on the youth is for the purpose of setting out the context of the study. The study does not focus on youth participation.

<sup>2</sup> Digital campaigning will become even more important following the Covid19 pandemic. Political parties will need to develop a campaign method which minimizes physical contact.

Twitter campaigns in terms of keeping their followers informed and up-to-date with campaign-related events but lost an opportunity to engage with their followers in two-way communication.

There is a need to have platforms created for the youth to understand the importance of voting and being part of this democratic process as well as receive political information through the channels that they are accustomed to using. This mode of communication plays a crucial role during the period of electioneering because this is the time the political parties want to connect directly with voters. Twitter, in particular, allows for direct connection because of its immediacy to the broad audience. As Dhawraj (2019:4) indicates: Twitter's relevance for the political world cannot be overstated as the micro-blogging site remains a "real time information network", a place where "important stuff breaks"; and an avenue where conversations between key role-players and decision makers are facilitated.

Social media appeals to the youth in particular and is a platform that can be used to encourage the youth to be involved in the voting process in South Africa. This is in line with the global increase in the use of social media through social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These platforms are easily accessible and connect everyone cheaply and easily. According to Jungherr (2016:358), "the internet has become an important infrastructure for political campaigns and digital tools have become pervasive campaigning devices". These devices have become easily accessible for daily usage and they are also easier to access, as the internet has become the new platform to share messages across. Given the need to draw young people back into the electoral process, it is important to assess whether political parties in South Africa are starting to embrace the opportunities afforded to them by the digital space.

The use of 'new media' in election campaigns has increased over the last few years particularly during voting periods. As Tracy (2019:2) indicates, the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and Youtube has emerged as an important electoral campaigning tool in South Africa. This is evident through the numerous political debates through the use of hashtags on Twitter during election periods. Clement (2019), for instance, noted that the digital population in South Africa as of January 2019, stood at 31.18 million. This demonstrates that many mobile users access the internet to use various social media platforms. The significant growth in internet



and social media usage was also noted by Duncan (2019:142) who claimed that 54% of the total population assess the internet and 38% of the total population are active on social media.

In South Africa, the mode of delivery during campaigns has primarily been through 'old fashioned' modes of engagement. However, communication should occur through a widely- accessible and credible range of media (Africa, 2008:25). This means that old and new modes of engagement should complement and supplement each other. Africa (2008) notes that significant proportions of the electorate still rely on traditional media. Additionally, traditional campaigning methods provide powerful imagery for the digital component of the campaign. "Social Media platforms have practically buried the physical and social gaps. They are also considered as a horizontal media of communication that provides the benefits of participatory democracy and development" (Meti, Khandoba and Guru: 2015:2). The social media platforms have now become part of the communication methods in the democratic society.

Traditionally, a key part of campaigning for political parties in South Africa is the manifesto launch which typically takes place at a rally held at strategically chosen venues. The level of turnout by supporters kitted out in party colours is seen as a show of strength. The manifesto launch is one of the key components of the campaign as this is where the party launches their campaign and gives an overview of where they will be campaigning throughout. It is often quite a show with live music, a festival atmosphere and a keynote address by the party leader. The launch can be an excellent opportunity for media coverage and provide the basis for engagement with potential voters via social media platforms. These traditional modes of communication can provide powerful images to be used on social media platforms. The use of interlinking the campaigning tools with the traditional and new established methods (i.e. social media) could be great assistance to participatory democracy. A far broader spectrum of the electorate can be reached in this way.

A study conducted by Dimitrova *et al* (2014:113) explains that newer digital media (i.e. blogs, online video sites such as YouTube and social networks like Facebook) provide opportunities for connecting politicians and voters. In that sense, social media platforms have to a large extent been an interface between citizens and candidates who wish to be elected to government. "The internet

is a very effective mode of communication amongst activists, linking them together, facilitating action and mobilizing them to one place in short notice” (Curran, 2013:14-15). This mode of mobilizing is essential for participatory democracy as it is simple and effective and brings people together. As Dimitrova et al (2014:110) also argues “some support the notion that the use of digital media leads to increased political activity among the public at large”. Therefore, the use of these digital platforms can have a positive impact on political participation, especially during times of elections. These media tools have the potential to reach out to all constituencies at all levels and keep the campaign spirit in a different aspect. If this type of communication tool played a key role in bringing people together, it can also mobilize citizens to go out in numbers to exercise their right to vote as done in the above-mentioned elections.

Reviewing the literature shows that New media (like Facebook and Twitter) provides alternative sources of political information and communication. It promotes the involvement of citizens from local to regional to transnational levels which has a positive impact on electoral participation which is one of the cornerstones of democracy. In essence, political communication is inextricably linked to the very idea of democracy and elections (Maier, Stromback and Kaid, 2011:4). Election campaigns have an information and education function; it empowers voters to make informed decisions for who they want to vote. Africa (2008:3) indicates that “effective campaign messages and carefully devised campaign themes are critically important to voters” because it provides them a broad range of political information. Furthermore, Meti, Khandoba and Guru (2015) indicate “social media has emerged as an essential tool of communication and has created new ways of political mobilizing and encouraging social media users in political activities ranging from joining their political groups by tweeting status updates”. This platform can assist in growing the party’s support base because they will engage social media users on a regular basis which can also evoke interest in the political party. Therefore, there is a need to further investigate the mediums and tools used for political communication in a democratic state such as South Africa. In particular, it is important to assess the extent to which political parties have embraced the use of these platforms.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The 2019 elections saw a total of 48 political parties registered to appear on the national ballot for the 2019 election, 19 more than had been the case in 2014 (Schultz-Herzenberg and Southall, 2019:5). Thus, the elections witnessed a significant broadening of political options. At the same time, mechanisms for political parties to communicate and engage with voters have also evolved. As in previous elections, the campaign period was a highly contested environment with deep-seated grievances over land redistribution, allegations of state corruption and anger about the state of the economy (Southall 2019). However, the question of the extent to which political parties provided relevant information to the electorate can be raised. Additionally, to what extent did political parties engage with voters through online and digital means? Did they revert to what they know best? If this is the case, an opportunity to fully engage with voters would have been lost.

Social media platforms are beginning to provide a digital space for political parties to interact, create and maintain relationships with the electorate, however studies of previous elections indicate that this was done in a very limited way. In the South African 2014 national and provincial elections, the use of new media was introduced but with little usage of it at the given time. As Duncan (2014) indicates “...before the elections, there were already signs that political parties had not internalized the interactive nature of social media and were using media like Facebook to broadcast party information rather than dialogue about it” (Duncan, 2014:149). Dhawraj (2019) conducted an extensive study on the use of Twitter focused on understanding how the ANC and DA used Twitter as “part of their electioneering arsenal in the 2016 municipal elections”. Dhawraj (2019: 4) found that in the 2016 local government both the ANC and DA used Twitter as a digital political communication platform to communicate their election campaigns with the DA notably leveraging the social networking site for intense ‘focused’ messaging of its negative campaign against the ANC while simultaneously promoting positive electoral messages around its own ‘core’ issues.

Given the widespread use of new media in South Africa and the need for voters to receive adequate information about political parties and political leaders, there is a need to continue investigating

the extent to which political actors in South Africa are utilizing the new tools available for political communication and whether it is assisting in the political process.

### **1.3 AIMS OF STUDY**

As indicated, communication through new (digital) media can be a critical way of engaging with voters. Indeed, the emergence of the internet and social media has brought about a new wave of communication in society. Research conducted around the usage of social media in previous elections primarily focused on how political parties applied media strategies effectively in their election campaigns (see Steenkamp and Hyde-Clark, 2014; Ayankoya, 2014; Malherbe, 2015). While these scholars have highlighted current trends of social media in elections, there exists a gap in their literature on the usage of online platforms as a campaign tool by political parties in the South African context.

Given this, the study aimed to conduct a deep analysis of the use of new media as a communication tool by South African political parties. More specifically the study aims to examine the ways in which the African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) used new media in the form of Twitter as a communication tool during the election campaign period of 2019. In this regard, the study examines how and what these political parties were communicating online in the run up to the 2019 election; whether they are communicating at all; and whether or not they have used Twitter well.

The rationale for choosing the ANC, DA and EFF is because they are the three largest political parties in the National Parliament and are active Twitter users. For example, they used Twitter in the previous local government elections of 2016 and have gained more followers as the years went by. These political parties joined Twitter between 2009 and 2013, respectively. Subsequently, the party leaders (of ANC, DA and EFF) also joined the Twitter platform to reach out, send out messages with the aim to engage with the public on a range of issues. Given the high volume of tweets produced and the limited scope of the study, I chose to focus on tweets generated in the two weeks running up of the election manifesto launch of each political party until the day of the

elections. The rationale for focusing on this time period is that it was anticipated that there would be an intensification of Twitter activity by these parties during this period of time.

## **1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

As earlier noted, the study tried to understand how Twitter was used by the ANC, DA and EFF during the 2019 election period as a communication tool in their campaigns. The following section outlines the research design and methodological approach adopted in the study. It provides a roadmap of how the study was conducted in terms of data collection techniques, sampling and analysis.

### **1.4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Durrheim (1999:32), a research design is a framework and plan that guides the research activity to ensure that conclusions are reached. The research design is there as a set of guidelines to the researcher to gain the type of study the researcher wants to obtain. This is developed to gain accurate and relevant answers to the research problem. Furthermore, it can be noted that “a research design is a plan used by researchers to obtain or select research participants and collect information from them” (Burger, 2005:11). In the social sciences, there are two fundamental types of research approaches. These are the quantitative research approach and the qualitative research approach. It should be noted that these two research approaches are remarkably different from each other as they utilise different research methods. Quantitative research according to Leedy (2001), is a research approach dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena and their relationships. It is used to answer questions on relationships within measurable variables with an intention to explain, predict and control events.

In this study I chose to draw on both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The primary data collection method of virtual ethnography falls into the qualitative approach while the Twitter survey falls into the quantitative approach. I also conducted a number of interviews so as to gain additional insights into my topic. According to Bosch (2017:62) virtual or online ethnography is a

common method used to study the internet broadly and more specifically to study online communities and Social Networking Services (SNSs). The online space is a different community and therefore the use of this type of method was effective for this study as one has to become part of this community and understand how the new media space is used. This type of method is commonly often combined with other qualitative methods such as interviews, questionnaires and offline observations so one can closely interlinked what is posted and why it is being posted. Therefore, adopting the triangulation method of having the virtual ethnography, interviews and survey questionnaires. This was important because the primary source of data of this study was the posts found on Twitter and was interlinked with that from the interviews and survey questionnaires conducted.

The research approach of virtual ethnography is an approach used for the online sphere. According to Bosch (2017:62) “virtual ethnography, also known as online, internet and digital ethnography, takes the element of traditional ethnography and applies them in a virtual setting on the internet”. This technique was the core element in this study as the study aimed to look at how the online space is used by political parties as an effective communication tool and it being part of the core principles of a democracy to have political communication. According to Hine (2000:10), “ethnography of the internet can look in detail at the ways in which the technology is experienced in use”. This approach was considered suitable because I had ready access to the data. As Fielding and Blank indicate (2016:411) “online ethnography is relatively cheap and often minimally disruptive to the lifestyle of the ethnographer compared to other ethnographic approaches”. This methodological technique is one that needs to be engaged with every day when collecting data, because the online world evolves on a daily post and is unlimited on a daily basis.

In this study, triangulation was therefore applied. Triangulation in research is the use of more than one approach to researching a question, with the objective to increase the confidence in the findings (Heale and Forbes, 2013). The combination of findings from two or more rigorous approaches provides a more comprehensive picture of the results than either approach could do alone. As indicated, in this study I relied on virtual ethnography, interviews and a survey of Twitter users to be able to understand and uncover the ways in which Twitter was used by these political parties.



#### **1.4.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Data collection is a process of gathering data to answer the research questions or address the research problem. There are various methods of gathering data in research. These can be grouped under two categories (Babbie 2010). Qualitative data collection methods include ethnography, observations and in-depth interviews which generate qualitative data while quantitative data collection methods, which includes surveys, generate quantitative data. To gather sufficient relevant data, I used both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The reason for collecting both data types was because I wanted to look at both the Twitter feeds and the response to the Twitter feeds.

The data collection process in virtual ethnography can be described as an immersion in the online environment. As the researcher I was constantly active on online platforms and Twitter to follow and understand what is being posted and why it is being posted. As Hine (2000:11) indicates “Ethnography is based upon analysis on the internet activity related to the case overtime and engagement with the producers of this activity in both newsgroups and websites”

The research central focus was on the online presence of the political parties being investigated; and these are the ANC, DA and EFF. Therefore, the study focused on their verified twitter accounts as this proved that it is an account of the political party. Furthermore, the study aimed to gather more information from various users of Twitter, whether they follow or do not follow the party and have access to their social media sites.

The research deals with the online platform, Twitter, which is the primary study site. Twitter is a social networking microblogging service which allows for the posting of small pieces of digital content- which could be text, pictures, links, short videos, or other media on the Internet (Educause 2009). It allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users’ tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. Tweets and replies to tweets can be sent by cell phone, desktop client or by posting at the Twitter.com website. The site allowed the researcher to follow and focus on the tweets from the political parties

being studied. To do this I followed the social media accounts of the parties and took note of the daily twitter activities occurring. The time period for collecting the data and monitoring the tweets of these political parties was two weeks prior to the election manifesto launch of each political party until the day of the elections.

All three chosen political parties have verified Twitter accounts which means all the tweets which were collected come directly from the parties. Tweets were generated every day by all three parties in the run up to their manifesto launches. Information on the launch and events taking place in the period before the manifesto were the key tweets that were collected to see how the party used twitter during this period. The ANC launched its 2019 election manifesto on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2019. The EFF launched its manifesto on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2019 and the DA launched its 2019 election manifesto on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2019. The tweets in this study were collected during the months of January and February 2019 until the election had occurred.

The Twitter platform allows for any member of the public to send out a message, but all messages are limited to 280 characters (letters or numbers), and anyone on Twitter can read any tweet that is posted. This means that with the right software in place the entire Twitter database can be harvested to provide a dataset that is readable and trustworthy. The profiles of each of the parties and candidates mentioned above were tracked for their manifesto launches period of two weeks after the election. It is also important to note that all of the tweets that were collected still have their original website links, so it is possible to go back to the original tweet to verify that the tweets used in this database are real and not altered.

The study also deals with the users of Twitter, with the aim of understanding the perspectives of the users. I therefore also conducted a survey on Twitter. This was to assess the use of Twitter for consuming political information. It was also aimed at finding out how the users were receiving the information that the political parties were putting out and whether they were engaging with these political parties.



According to De Vos (1998:191), a sample is “the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study”. Sampling is a process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the total population and the findings from the sample represent the rest of the group. The advantage of selecting a sample is that it is less costly and time saving than collecting information from a large group of respondents. The selected sample should therefore have similar characteristics to the population under study to allow generalizability of the results to represent the population.

Strictly speaking I did not draw a sample but rather sent out an appeal via Twitter. Given the fact that I am a student, my Twitter circle is predominantly students. When I initially posted the Twitter survey, those who responded were UWC students in my Twitter circle. I therefore followed up my Twitter survey with a survey of university students where I am registered.

While the survey results are not representative of Twitter users or students in South Africa, they do provide valuable insights. Students that are enrolled in this institution are not homogenous as they come from different provinces and ultimately different cultural backgrounds, and the institution admits international students, and also students of different races.

Following the survey, I tweeted and asked participants on Twitter if they are able to assist and be interviewed. The tweet received many interactions and people ready to be interviewed, but did not reach the amount of people that it was meant to reach. Targeted participants for this component of the study were Twitter users who are enrolled at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town. Convenience sampling was used to select the respondents for follow up interviews. The choice of convenience sampling was predicated on the lack of sampling frame, from which a random sample could be drawn. The researcher recruited Twitter users such as UWC students in their residences and computer labs. The clustering of students in these locations provided the opportunity for reaching a diverse group of students. Given the limited time frame for the study and the non-feasibility of randomly sampling, convenience sampling was the most appropriate sampling technique. The researcher approached students and explained the aim of the study to them, only participants who gave consent to participate in the study were recruited. Ultimately five (5) interviews were conducted, four (4) with regular Twitter users and one (1) with a key

informant; the Head of Communications at UWC. This was not included in the study because these interviews were used as a pilot for the study. The interviews were done to be able to understand which type of questions will be used to gain the relevant information for the study. Therefore, in the study these interviews are not included but rather noted to be done as a pilot to test the framework and how the information can be collected.

Each interview session took a minimum of forty-five minutes. Only one interview was an hour long. The participants were allowed to speak freely about the subject matters. Some participants allowed the researcher to tape-record the interview sessions, while others disagreed. For those that did not want to be tape-recorded, the researcher used notes to jot down their responses to the questions being asked. After each interview session, as the researcher I transcribed each response from the jotted materials and tape-recorded items.

### **1.4.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

For the qualitative data, I searched for key themes and presented the campaign messages conveyed by the political parties via their Twitter accounts. I presented the ways in which the ANC, DA and EFF used Twitter as a digital tool for campaigning in the 2019 elections, focusing on the run up to the manifesto launch of each party. I draw on the work of Foot and Schneider (2006) which distinguishes between the following four functions of web campaigning: informing voters, involving supporters, connecting online users with the political actors and lastly mobilizing citizens. However, I combine the involving and connecting aspect since they are conceptually close to each other. Also, within the scope of this study, I do not focus on the mobilizing aspect. The Twitter feeds and updates from the ANC, DA and EFF were examined to assess what the parties attempted in their campaigns. The updates from the data collected were analysed using theory to show how the tweets generated by the ANC, DA and EFF during the campaign period attempted to inform and connect/ involve the users on the platform.

For the Twitter survey Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. After data collection, the data had to be prepared for data entry. The coding of all the information on the questionnaire was done by assigning numbers to the answers indicated in all

questions of the questionnaire. After the responses to the questionnaire were coded, the data was captured into Microsoft Excel and thereafter imported to SPSS for analysis. Before the analysis of data started, the checking of the dataset for mistakes and errors was done to avoid the distortion of the results of statistical analysis. Errors were cross checked by the inspection of the frequencies for each of the variables. The corrections of errors in the data file were done by going back to the questionnaires and checking what value should have been entered. A thorough attempt was made to start the analysis process with a clean, error-free data set. Here I examine how the users on this platform made use of the updates from the political party. Again, I look at whether the parties involved, connected and mobilized users during the campaign period.

#### **1.4.4 LIMITATIONS**

In conducting a study on the use of Twitter there is so much more that could have been done. However, the given scope of the study and limited resources, it was necessary to focus on what was feasible. The limited timeframe is a limitation because it does not cover the full election period. The fact that the survey was conducted with 100 students from the University of the Western Cape is also a limitation since it is not possible to generalize to the broader population of Twitter users. Another limitation is that it was not possible to assess the extent of mobilization that occurred. To obtain an accurate picture of whether Twitter mobilized voters, a far more extensive and nuanced study would need to be conducted. Nevertheless, while limited in scope, the study provides useful insights into the way in which the chosen political parties used Twitter during the run up to their manifesto launches.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The central research question that was examined through this research was the following:

- How effectively have South African political parties (particularly the ANC, DA and EFF) used Twitter as a communication tool in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

Based on that analytical framework and the design of the study, the central research question can be broken into the following two sub- questions for the study:

- How effectively has each of these political parties used Twitter to inform citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?
- How effectively has each of these political parties used Twitter to involve and connect citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

### **1.5.1 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this study I was cautious and upheld ethical principles and standards. Researchers have an obligation to take ethical concerns into account when conducting any form of inquiry. Within any research project you need to take the ethical concerns into account. “Ethics refers to the system of moral principles by which individuals can judge their actions as right or wrong, good and bad” (Denscombe: 2012:59). Ethics is defined as the science of human behaviour and conduct with the intention of valuing and safeguarding human dignity, promoting justice, equality, truth and trust. According to Babbie *et al.* (2001), ethics is associated with morality. Essentially, professionalism is very important when conducting research. Every researcher, particularly, those in social sciences, has an obligation to maintain personal conduct and moral duty. Most importantly, the privacy and confidentiality of the participants should be of utmost concern and must be observed by researchers. The ethical considerations in this study are informed consent, confidentiality and no harm to participants.

Obtaining informed consent is one of the main ethical issues that the researcher took into consideration. Respondents were given a written consent letter of identity from the University of the Western Cape with the researcher’s contact details, should the respondents feel the need to speak to her of any issues which could arise during the data collection process. From the onset, the respondents were given a consent form they had to read and sign before filling out the questionnaire. The researcher obtained the respondents consent without forcing them but asking them to sign a consent form which clearly explained the purpose, procedures and their rights as

participants which include the right to withdraw at any given time and the right to access the findings of the study.

The moral duty of confidentiality means responsibility of the researcher to protect the entrusted information of the respondent. The identity of the respondents must not be revealed and sensitive information provided by them may not be disclosed, used or made accessible. Since the researcher used a survey and interviews as a data collection method, which required the researcher to replace the information provided by participants with codes, so the respondents information remained confidential.

Avoidance of harm to participants is vital and, in this study, the researcher ensured that there was no harm posed to the participants. One way that the researcher used to avoid harming participants was not forcing them to answer questions that they felt uncomfortable with answering. As it is stipulated in the written consent they could decide to quit from the study at any given time.

## **1.6 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

### **Chapter One: Introduction and Background**

This chapter constituted the introduction chapter which outlines the research problem, the research question, the research rationale and background of the study. The chapter outlines the importance of using new forms of campaigning through online platforms. The chapter also gave the aims of the study and what it wanted to achieve. Furthermore, giving an overview of the research design and methods used to collect data in this study.

### **Chapter Two: Literature and Analytical Framework**

This chapter discusses the relevant literature pertaining to the study, specifically democracy, political communication, elections, election campaigns and new media. It examined how previous authors studied similar cases to determine the best approach and methods needed for this study. This chapter has been divided into three sections. The first section examines the notion of

democracy, political communication and new media, whilst the second section highlights elections and campaigns and the way it has been conducted in many different contexts. The third section analyses new forms of campaigning giving the use of how social media has been on the rise and the relationship it has formed to bring people together. I draw on the work of Foot and Schneider (2006) which distinguishes between the following four functions of web campaigning: informing voters, involving supporters, connecting online users with the political actors and lastly mobilizing citizens.

### **Chapter Three: South African Context of Elections and Election Campaigns**

This chapter aims to set out the context of South Africa's elections. It looks at the South African political landscape and the setting of the national elections of 2019. The country was faced with many political issues and challenges prior to the elections. The chapter gives an overview of the situation before elections and the challenges that political parties were facing in the 2019 elections. It also gives an overview of the election campaigns of the ANC, DA and the EFF. This will be done by looking at how they campaigned in previous elections and how the party went about to gain support through campaigns.

### **Chapter Four: The 2019 Digital Campaigns of the ANC, DA and EFF.**

This chapter presents how the ANC, DA and EFF used Twitter as a digital tool for campaigning in the 2019 elections. The Twitter feeds and updates from the ANC, DA and EFF are illustrated in this chapter showing what the party has done. The updates from the data collected, guided by the theory in the study is shown in this chapter to give an understanding of how Twitter was used as a communication tool. The chapter will clearly show how the tweets generated by the ANC, DA and EFF during the campaign period attempted to inform, connect, involve and mobilize the users on the platform.

### **Chapter Five: How were the election campaigns received by the electorate**

This chapter will focus on how the Twitter feeds from the ANC, DA and EFF were received by users. This was done by conducting a Twitter survey. It examines how the constituency on this

platform made use of the updates from the political party. It also looks at whether the parties involved, connected and mobilized users during the campaign period.

### **Chapter Six: Conclusion: Has the use of New Media benefitted political parties**

This chapter concludes the study. It answers the question of whether the ANC, DA and EFF fully used Twitter to their advantage. It gives an overview of the use of social media and asks about the overall benefits for the political parties in the study and in the 2019 elections more generally.





## **2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The increase in the number of people who have access to the Internet and are active on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have had an impact on the way political parties engage with their electorate during campaign periods. In this context, this study sought to examine the ways in which the ANC, DA and the EFF used Twitter as a communication tool during the campaigning period in the 2019 elections. The purpose of this chapter is to firstly locate this study of the use of Twitter into the literature on how new media is being used in politics and more specifically elections. Secondly, it outlines the analytical framework used to gather and analyse the data collected in this study. The relevant literature focuses on democracy, elections, political communication, election campaigns and the use of new media in election campaigns. The chapter examines how previous authors studied similar cases to determine the best approach and methods needed for this study. This chapter has been divided into three sections. The first section examines the notion of democracy, political communication and new media, whilst the second section highlights elections and campaigns and the way it has been conducted in many different contexts. The third section analyses new forms of campaigning giving the use of how social media has been on the rise and the relationship it has formed to bring people together. Furthermore, I look at the use of new media as a political communication tool and how it has been used. I draw on the work of Foot and Schneider (2006) which distinguishes between the following four functions of web campaigning: informing voters, involving supporters, connecting online users with the political actors and lastly mobilizing citizens.

### **2.2 DEMOCRACY, POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND NEW MEDIA**

The starting point for this study is the notion of democracy and the importance of competitive elections. Numerous authors recognize the importance of elections in democratic systems. Regular, free and fair elections play an important role in building and consolidating democracy (Lilleker 2006). The minimal definition of democracy, as stated by Diamond and Morlino (2005)



indicates that a democracy should have at least universal adult suffrage, regular free, competitive and fair elections, and more than one political party. Diamond and Morlino (2005) add that freedom of organization and freedom of expression, alternative sources of information and institutions that will ensure that government policies are dependent on the votes and preferences of the electorate. New media platforms that are used as methods of engagements for campaigning can be seen as alternative sources in a democratic space. According to Diamond and Morlino (2005), civil as well political freedoms are important for political debate and electoral campaigning. There is a need for debate through these platforms during campaigns to allow freedom of expression and these alternate sources allow these debates as it is accessible. These are the most fundamental elements that define and strengthen a democracy.<sup>3</sup>

The literature also reveals that good quality election campaigns are important for a strong democracy. As Africa (2008:17) argues “if competitive elections are an essential component of democracy and such elections require good quality campaigns, then, by extension, good quality election campaigns are also critical to the quality of democracy”. Africa (2008:38) adds that to contribute to the quality of the democratic system campaign messages should be conveyed as widely as possible and through accessible and credible mechanisms”. Election campaigns are therefore important as it is the mechanism through which voters are informed about the options they have and to mobilize participation. Election campaigns are there to give the policies of the party, the manifestos and the future outlines of the specific political parties. According to Mancini and Swanson (1996), having election campaigns in a democratic state is a critical period because it informs voters on the various numbers of parties they can vote from.

During the campaign period, political parties attempt to convince voters to vote for them. As Schnur (1999:144) argues, “the success or failure of political parties and candidates depends on their ability to reach, engage and persuade voters”. They do this in various ways such as holding rallies and delivering speeches, conducting door-to-door campaigns and handing out pamphlets. This is part of the traditional methods of campaigning and having political communication.

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<sup>3</sup> It is recognized that there are other conceptions of democracy.

According to Africa (2019:372) “a good quality campaign is characterized by several dimensions including the calibre of the message content as well as the credibility and accessibility of the communication channels”. It is important for political parties to have access to a broad range of political information. With technology changing over a period of time, there are new methods that can be used during this period -this is campaigning through digital means via new media platforms.

The ways in which people access information and debate occurs have been evolving as technology advances. Brants and Voltmer (2011) discuss the shift in political communication in modern democracy through the mediums that is used to get the message across. The use of new communication methods which are technological offer the political candidates a better way to express themselves and participate in the public life and draw the voters closer to their specific political party. “Political communication elites have been quick to develop new strategies of communication in the maintaining or regaining their defining primary and dominance in the public arena” (Brants and Voltmer, 2011:3). Kaid (2004) agrees with the notion that new tools are being increasingly used for political communication as times are drastically changing. More than a decade ago, it was argued that “as a new channel of communication, the internet has brought widespread changes to almost every aspect of the political communication arena” (Kaid, 2004:20).

The new medium of the internet represents many opportunities for political communication and the future may offer exciting changes. The internet can reach out to many people at once and this will be received by young voters as they are the ones who are techno savvy and the internet is a daily use. McNair (2013:29) explores the concept of political communication in a matter of assessing its effect. Furthermore, it outlines the main approaches that are used to look at the effects of political communication mainly through media studies. “Effects of political communication can be examined at the micro-level of the individual consumer of the messages or at the macro-level when individual responses to political communication” (McNair, 2013:30). Therefore, communication is noted to be the messages sent out and their output and reach is important as the level of reach is where it will be examined to make meaning of the messages sent out.

McNair (2013:29) further states that political communication is what is known as “largely mediated communication transmitted through print and electronic media” this surely gives evidence of the notion of mass communication as a tool for political communication. “Political communication focuses on a threefold relationship between journalists, politics and the people and their interaction within the context of a democracy” (Savigny, 2017:20). This clearly shows the relationship that the media has with society when it comes to political communication especially in a democratic state, because without the media, political parties would not be able to communicate with voters.

In elections, mass communication is important to ensure that messages are heard by a broad audience. Traditionally, media such as newspapers, television and radio have been the primary mass communication tools. New media, such as the social media platforms that work with internet connectivity is another tool of mass communication used to communicate to people. Terms such as digital media, online media and new media are used interchangeably. The term new media is a more encompassing term and is preferred in this study. Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006:24) define new media “as those communication technologies typically involving computer capabilities that allow or facilitate among users or between users and information.” In this research the fitting definition for new media is Macnamara’s (2011) definition:

[New media] is used in changing ways along with other terms to denote emergent digital media and Internet media. It is a common term in current debate and refers to the range of one-to-one and one-to-many communication applications operating via the Internet including email, chat rooms, newsgroups, websites, blogs, wikis and social networking sites.

New Media has triggered changes in the campaign strategies of political parties, candidates, and political organisations. It has reshaped election coverage, and influenced voter engagements by having direct contact with the voters on these online spheres. These platforms facilitate interaction and collaboration with the electorate and production dissemination of party information and have become part of tools used during election campaigning.

As technology continues to advance and the number of social media platforms proliferates, the election media environment has become more diversified, specialized and fragmented. The diversity of content circulated by new media has created opportunities, such as the ability for more voices to be heard. Political party leaders can be in contact directly with many of the constituencies at one instant on one platform. It has also opened up wider avenues for instantaneous political discourse and debate. Social media can be used as an essential tool for communication by creating new ways of political mobilization and encouraging social media users to take part in political activities ranging from joining their political groups by updates through the medium. According to Owen (2017:2) “New Media have triggered changes in the campaign strategies of political parties, candidates and political organisations”. Campaigns are now likely to be conducted through online platforms and gain momentum through sharing of posts and updates through social media platforms. Therefore, the need is to understand how political parties use these platforms of tools of communication during their election campaign period.

### **2.3 DIFFERENT STUDIES ON THE USAGE OF ONLINE ELECTION CAMPAIGNING**

The literature shows that there has been a rise in the use of online platforms as campaign tools globally. A study conducted by Dimitrova *et al* (2014) looks at the effectiveness of the digital spaces in terms of participation and political knowledge. The study specifically focuses on how digital media affect a diverse group of people, especially during election campaigning. A question is asked around this issue: Can there be effectiveness when voters use these online platforms and does it enhance their participation levels and their knowledge on the various parties involved in the voting process? Indeed, the study demonstrated that to a large extent, the use of digital media platforms has increased participation levels of voters in terms of online political discussions.

In addition, another study was conducted by Graham, Jackson and Broersma (2016) who looked at how Twitter as a digital platform was used for campaigning purposes. They argued “Twitter has become one of the most important online spaces for political communication practice and research, four main features of tweets: their type, function, topic and whom politicians were interacting” (Graham *et al.*, 2016:776). New platforms have been created such as Twitter to keep political

conversations going, and this is mostly practiced during electioneering. The study primarily focussed on the British and Dutch general elections of 2010 and explored how candidates used the Twitter platform to interact with voters. It found that “candidates here tapped into the potential Twitter offers for creating a clear and more relationship with citizens, the use of Twitter was closely aligned to the communication strategies of the party” (Graham *et al.*, 2016: 778). They used this platform to form a relationship of engaging at this level and candidates available to engage with the users. The use of digital media with election campaigns is risky because it does not necessarily mean that the messages sent out is received as it ought to be.

Thus, Chadwick and Stromer-Galley (2016) look at the use of digital media and the role it plays in relation to party decline in support or party renewal. The study thus highlights that the use of online platforms can either ‘make or break’ the political party’s campaign strategy. In that way, the manner in which the platform is used is quite important because the campaign can either appeal or not appeal to them. As the scholars noted, “the use of digital media is of vital importance in this process, there is much at stake: voting persuading others to vote and arguably the most fundamental forms of political engagement” (Chadwick and Stromer-Galley, 2016:284).

Therefore, there is a need for the digital platforms to be optimally used as it will be of assistance in this electioneering process. This is where Foot and Schneider (2006) in “Web Campaigning” outline the functions of web campaigning. They distinguish between four functions of web campaigning, namely: informing voters, involving supporters, connecting online users with the political actors, and lastly mobilizing citizens.

All three studies are of great importance for this study because it looks at how they use this platform to gain effectiveness in the communication process.

#### **2.4 NEW FORMS OF CAMPAIGNING: THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

In some instances, new media explicitly seeks to directly engage the public in political activities, such as voting, contacting public officials, volunteering in their communities, and taking part in

protest movements. The rise of many protest movements gained momentum through the use of social media platforms.

Social media has come a long way in terms of playing a dynamic role in transforming people's way of life through how they communicate and interact online and even in real life (Spiro and Monray-Hernandez, 2016). It is not surprising that social media has affected the way people live and socialize. Nowadays, social media has become an important part of people's lives as they utilise these platforms for almost everything from attaining information, collaborating with other users and creating content, from shopping to electronic mails, education and business tools (Siddiqui and Singh 2016:71).

Social media can be broadly defined as the Internet platforms that enable the interactive web by engaging users to participate in, comment on and create content as a means of communicating with other users (Cohen, 2011). There has been consensus in the way in which social media is defined by scholars. Kaplan and Haelein (2010:60) define social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Web 2.0 refers to websites and web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, and user-centred design (Taylor 2010). Social media is generally used for facilitating communication between users and the content found on these platforms is user-generated. However, this definition will continue to evolve as social media continually changes to adapt to how the social world is structured, which in turn will have an impact on social media users' lives.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to mention a few, are methods of facilitating interpersonal connections across a distance while also connecting with the broader society. Gerbaudo (2012:13) points out how social media use must be understood as complementing existing forms of face-to-face gatherings rather than substituting them. However, social media can also be used to create new forms of proximity, more precisely; people can build relationships on these platforms that could ultimately lead up to face-to-face interaction. Social media plays a vital role in how people can obtain information, in terms of being able to come to a better, well thought out conclusion about their decisions (Gerbaudo 2012). Essentially, this



suggests that social media has become a key instrument in altering the way people form their different opinions on issues affecting them. Bentances, Solarczyk and Bellows (2012:9) state that social media usage continues to carve into peoples' culture and there is no indication of it slowing down. Evidently, social media will continue to impact the users' lives, whether it will be negatively or positively will be dependent on the way users utilize these platforms.

Previous research investigated social media, pointing to the importance of social networking sites as personal networks with individuals' identity formation and signalling, focusing on impression management, users' profile authenticity, and the negotiation of users' social relationships (Ritcher and Koch, 2008; Boyd and Ellison, 2007; Benson *et al*, 2010). Different disciplines understand social media and the use of these platforms in many different ways. For instance, O'Reilly and Milstein (2009) from a telecommunications perspective understand social media as professional and personal media for expressing the user's identity. This then point out that social media from the telecommunication perspective is perceived as a public area that is used for conveying self-identity through a personal and professional connection.

It is imperative to review what has been said on the evolution and the rise of social media, as it places it into context the concept of digital footprint. It is through one's activity on these social media networks or platforms where one creates an online presence and interaction, which can be described as a person's digital footprint (Hengstler, 2010). With the rise of social media use, the internet has changed into an interactive environment offering multiple opportunities for communication, knowledge-sharing and development as users have been empowered to create and share content (Rutten, Ros, Kuijpers and Kreijns, 2016). The number of users on social media continues to grow because the purpose of social media continues to evolve and users find different ways to utilize these platforms.

## **2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FOOT AND SCHNEIDER'S WEB CAMPAIGNING**

The following section will discuss the theoretical foundation of the study and how it guided the data collection and analysis process.

Foot and Schneider (2005) argue that the Internet, and in particular the Web, has emerged into the mainstream of American society, political candidates have increasingly sought to capitalize on the opportunities offered by this emerging medium to facilitate their campaigning efforts. This is relevant in the South African context as well. However, the question is the extent to which political leaders and political parties have sought to capitalize the opportunities presented by new media.

Foot and Schneider (2005) argue that “although electoral campaigns vary, all have an outward orientation, in that their success depends on informing, persuading, and involving others in the promotion of a candidate”. In “Web Campaigning” Foot and Schneider (2006) outline the functions of web campaigning by looking at what these online campaigns need to have to be noted to be effective. Their framework provides a very useful analytical lens for this study to examine the use of Twitter by the ANC, the DA and the EFF in the 2019 election. Foot and Schneider (2006) distinguish between four functions of web campaigning and these are; informing voters, involving supporters, connecting online users with the political actors and lastly mobilizing citizens.

The framework by Foot and Schneider (2006) is divided into the four pillars of: informing, involving, connecting and mobilizing. However, this study has rather grouped them, to be three and combine the ‘connecting and involving’ pillar to be analysed as one and the mobilizing pillar to be one noted to be a limitation in the study. In their framework, informing refers to the traditional role of providing information to the public. In this case one can look at how the political party uploads their policy positions, their manifestos and all the legal documents for voters to be able to have access to them. It is important that a campaign has accurate information about the party and their candidates.

The element of information demonstrates the need for having specific information when it comes to election campaigns. This is because if there is too much information, the voters might just get confused and there would be no clarity around the key campaign messages. In that sense, the primary aim of election campaigns is to provide policies, manifestos, and future ideas and solutions that speak to the needs of the electorate. The information function (i.e. informing) is very critical



in the campaign period because it informs the voters that assists them to make informed decisions when choosing the party, they want to vote for. In my study this aspect relates to the sub-question of how effectively the ANC, DA and EFF used Twitter to inform South African citizens during the 2019 election. I examine the Twitter accounts of the chosen parties to do so. Additionally, the Twitter survey provides insights on whether users became connected and involved with parties through the use of Twitter.

The function of ‘involving’ concerns establishing an interaction between the site creators and the site visitors, which may range from receiving messages of support, notices and many other forms. According to Foot and Schneider, involving as a campaign practice concerns the opportunity to establish interaction between users and campaign organizations. It encourages debates on current issues faced by voters and what the political parties aim to do to address the issues that they are faced with. It gives motivation to voters to exercise their democratic right to participate by having an interaction with the parties on the online sphere, by establishing a relationship with the users. The online platforms can also create conversations between the candidates and the voters, so look at things like hashtags that were used during the electioneering process. The important dates such as when the party is having meetings and rallies are the type of things that can be examined within this function. This is to show that the creation of an online structure serves as a bridge between the user of the site and a third actor either online or offline as in the case of social media platforms. This links to the question of how effectively the ANC, DA and EFF used Twitter during the election campaign to involve and connect South African citizens as described by Foot and Schneider. In this study I look at debates through Twitter hashtags, retweeting and responding to tweets as well as messages of support as part of connecting and involving. Additionally, the Twitter survey provides insights on whether users became connected and involved with parties through the use of Twitter.

Political parties need to use this period to address the issues that affect voters and show the policy’s they ought to come up with when they are voted into office. Political campaigns are used to engage with the constituency on a regular basis therefore the new incorporation of digital platforms. The digital platforms reach out directly to all internet and social media users and the party can send out messages at any given time which gives them the ultimate level of engagement during this period.

The final aspect outlined by Foot and Schneider is mobilizing. According to the authors some campaigns engage in the practice of mobilizing in which a user involves another actor in the goals and objectives of the campaign, mostly to recruit other citizens to support the campaign. Mobilizing refers to citizens showing support by taking some kind of political action such as wearing campaign stickers, shirts, attending rallies or persuading others.

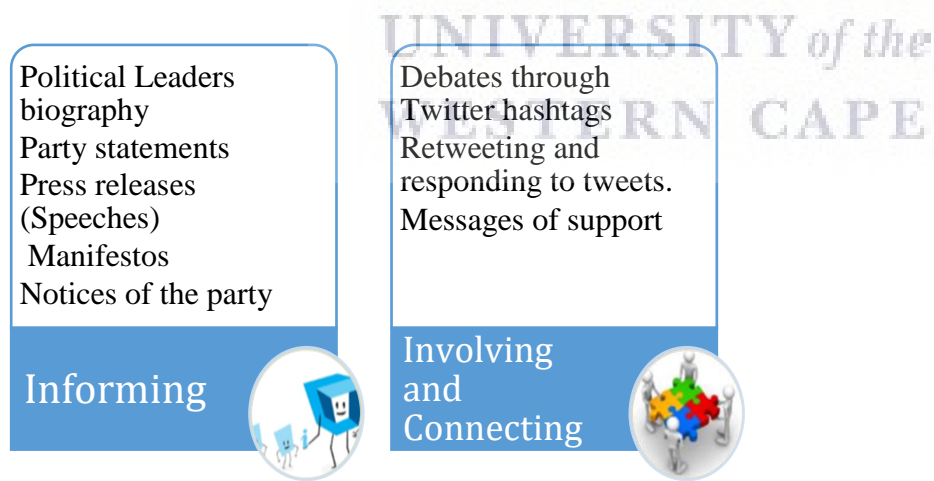
Campaigns are also key opportunities for voters to have “face to face” contact with the party leaders. This is the only time party leaders are in close contact with the voters as they use this opportunity to showcase their governance record of the past electoral period. A good campaign should be the end point of a productive inter-campaign period (Africa, 2008: 231). The end result is in the number of people that actually go to the polls and exercise their vote.

Therefore, this clearly highlights the importance of having effective election campaigns. It is meant to teach and educate citizens on who they want to vote into power, in any democratic state. If the political parties have brilliant election campaigns that are run throughout the period of voting, this might be of great assistance to the number of people voting for them. Therefore, there is a great need for election campaigns to be strategic and reach out to a number of people to be able to increase support when the voting process occurs.

This constitutes what political parties are meant to do during election campaigns to be effective - they must inform, engage and connect the constituency. There is a need to understand how a campaign needs to be conceptualized for it to work in favour of the political parties. These campaigns should appeal to the audience and eventually assist them to make adequate decisions when going to the polls. According to Stromer-Galley (2019), the expansion of new technologies has presented candidates with greater opportunities to micro target potential voters and a faster and more innovative way to respond to opponents. This inclusion of digital platforms assists in directly communicating with the political parties and the candidates. This shows the need to understand how the web campaigning aspect is incorporated and political parties make use of this ideal aspect.

The first aspect outlined by Foot and Schneider is the easiest for political parties to fulfil. There are many ways to inform people and it merely involves the provision of information and content. Involving and connecting people is a harder task because it requires engagement by the target audience. Thus, if a political party manages to involve and connect their potential voters via Twitter, they would have more successfully used it than a party that has only provided information to their potential voters. The most difficult aspect is to mobilize potential voters. This is also the ultimate objective of political parties because it could mean increased votes and therefore improved performance at the polls. Unfortunately, this is also the hardest aspect to measure. To obtain an accurate picture of whether Twitter mobilized voters, a far more extensive and nuanced study would need to be conducted.

The diagram below indicates how this theory will be used to be able to answer the research question by looking at the aspects of these online platforms. Firstly, the research will examine the extent to which the ANC, DA and EFF informed voters through the use of Twitter. To do this I used virtual ethnography as explained in chapter one. As a Twitter user I followed the ANC, DA and EFF to obtain information on the tweets of these political parties. I focused on the two weeks leading up the election manifesto launch of each political party up until the day of the election.



**TABLE 1-MODEL OF ASSESSING COMMUNICATION TOOL**

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In closing, it is clear that election campaigning needs to be part of a functioning democracy and that the rise of social media plays a central role in political communication as political parties' uses this platform on a regular basis. New media has now been closely interlinked with campaigns as noted above. The pillars outlined by Foot and Schneider provided an analytical basis and a theoretical framework for me to assess the Twitter campaigns of the ANC, DA and EFF. More specifically I will assess the extent to which they informed potential voters. Information that they could provide includes biographical information of political party leaders, party statements and press releases as well as manifesto-related content. I will also examine the ways in which they involved and connected their followers. In particular, I will do so by looking at the debates that occurred, retweets and messages of support.



### **3 CHAPTER 3: SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT OF ELECTIONS AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Election campaigns do not occur in a vacuum – they are shaped by the context in which they occur. Additionally, the Twitter campaign is part of the broader campaign. This chapter therefore aims to set out the context of South Africa’s elections. It looks at the South African political landscape and the setting of the national elections of 2019. The country was faced with many political issues and challenges prior to the elections. The chapter gives an overview of the situation before elections and the challenges that political parties were facing in the 2019 elections. It also gives an overview of the election campaigns of the ANC, DA and the EFF. This will be done by looking at how they campaigned in previous elections and how the party went about to gain support through campaigns. Each section will start by giving an overview of the previous election campaigns of the relevant political party. The chapter shows that all three parties had done a relatively good job of using traditional campaign techniques in previous elections. It also shows that they all faced serious challenges heading into the 2019 elections.

#### **3.2 OVERVIEW OF ELECTION RESULTS OF THE ANC, DA AND EFF, 1994-2019**

The ANC’s national vote share increased from 62.7% in 1994, to 66.4% in 1999 to 69.7% in 2004. In 2009, the ANC’s vote share at national level dropped to 65.9% and then dropped further to 62.2% in 2014 and finally to 57.5% in 2019. The DA started out as the DP receiving only 1.7% of the national vote in 1994. Thereafter the DA experienced a slow but steady growth. Its share of the vote increased from 9.6% in 1999 to 12.4% in 2004 to 16.7% in 2009 and 22.2% in 2014. This growth earned them the title of the “official opposition” in South Africa. However, in 2019 the DA’s support at national level dropped down slightly to 20.8% and at provincial level in the Western Cape, support declined from 59% to 55% (Chilenga-Butao 2019:214-215). The DA has had growth since and only declined in the 2019 elections. The EFF obtained 6.35% of the national vote in the 2014 elections and this increased to 10.8% in the 2019 elections.

**TABLE 2-NATIONAL RESULTS OF THE ANC, DA AND EFF, 1994-2019**

Party	Percentage of votes					
	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
African National Congress	62.7	66.4	69.7	65.9	62.2	57.5
Democratic Party/Democratic Alliance	1.7	9.6	12.4	16.7	22.2	20.8
Economic Freedom Fighters	--	--	--	--	6,35	10.80

Source: Schultz-Herzenberg, 2019.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.3 OVERVIEW OF THE CAMPAIGN HISTORY OF THE ANC, DA AND EFF**

#### **3.3.1 THE ANC’S CAMPAIGN HISTORY**

According to Africa (2019) the ANC’s campaign messaging has shown significant consistency since the 1994 elections. Africa argues that the ANC has over time woven its campaign messages into a simple, well blended and internally coherent theme but from 2009 its messaging started to ring hollow after the changes in the political context and the destructive path taken by the ANC in 2009.

The ANC has always relied on traditional campaign methods since the first democratic elections in 1994. According to Lodge (1994:35), “a considerable variety of flyers and leaflets intended for distributing during rallies and door to door supplemented the advertising” and “these were printed in English, Afrikaans and a range of African languages.” This mode of campaigning continued in 1999. Lodge (1999:71) indicated that motorcades equipped with loudhailers and leaflets would travel through the countryside in stately processions, their journeys culminating in Siyaanqoba (We will triumph) rallies. “The ANC campaign in 2004, organized fewer grandiose events, major rallies were confined to the launch and the closure of the campaign instead the ANC projected its messages through television” (Lodge, 2005:18). The 2009 election campaign for the ANC came

<sup>4</sup> National percentages cited in the balance of this article are also drawn from Schultz-Herzenberg, 2019.

at a point where the party had many divisions. They had to make sure they campaign and use different strategies to win the vote back, these divisions did not allow the decline in the support at the polls.

The 2009 campaign was destined to be a more difficult one for the ANC, despite its good showing in previous elections the movement could not ignore an underlying deterioration in the legitimacy of democratic institutions” (Butler, 2009:66). Therefore, their campaign methods had to be changed and have a more direct approach to gain the support back by speaking directly to the constituency. “The ANC’s methods were once again dominated by door- to- door canvassing by volunteers, conventional community hall meetings the kind the ANC used since 1994 helped to reach to every suburb and village in the country” (Butler, 2009:76). However, in the 2009 elections, the ANC used internet-based campaigning - the use of Twitter and Facebook was part of the strategy (Butler, 2009). In these elections the ANC started to experiment with web-based campaigning. In 2014 the ANC added the idea of television broadcasting into their campaign. As Butler (2019:68) notes, the ANC has been a formidable campaigner since 1994.

### **3.3.2 THE DA’S CAMPAIGN HISTORY**

Africa (2019) argues that the DA has generally had continuity in its messaging over time, particularly through its focus on the electoral dominance of the ANC. She adds, however, that at times, its messaging has suffered from a lack of internal consistency. The DA has always campaigned about making sure they hold the ruling party accountable, making the voters aware of wrongdoings in the ruling party during their campaigns. “In promoting its election campaign, the DA was able to present a comprehensive and coherent message which drew on its experience in oppositional politics, the DA stressed that its biggest successes had been in both opposition and government” (Jolobe, 2009:141).

The DA also successfully used traditional methods to campaign (including the use of billboards, pamphlets, posters and door to door campaigning). In 2004 we started to see an increase in the intensity of DA campaigning. According to Booyesen (2005:138) “The DA campaign crisscrossed



South Africa, moving from working-class coloured communities in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth and Cape Town's Mitchell's Plain, to Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Soweto in Gauteng.

The party also introduced television into their campaign by having adverts during peak broadcast hours. In the 2014 elections the party added a new strategy to the campaign to incorporate with the traditional method that they were using, “the DA’s launch of aggressive social media and television campaigns” (Jolobe, 2014:64). This aspect had worked in favour of the party as they used it to showcase their campaign around the country at a faster pace. They also used social media to break new stories and most importantly to engage with the voters directly. “The DA ran a successful 2014 election campaign, gaining over a million new votes and increasing its share of the vote in the national and provincial votes” (Jolobe, 2014:71).

### **3.3.3 THE EFF’S CAMPAIGN HISTORY**

The EFF has a much shorter campaign history. The EFF was formed in mid-2013 by the former leader of the ANC Youth League, Mr Julius Malema. The party first contested in the 2014 elections and aimed to target the youth vote. The EFF used traditional methods to campaign and gain followers. “The EFF members were keen to stress the effectiveness of door to door campaigning in addition to the major election rallies where its leader Mr Julius Malema had successfully attracted large numbers for the party’s election manifesto and the unveiling of premier candidates” (Robinson 2014:81). The EFF used local community hall meetings and gatherings as part of their campaign strategy.

### **3.4 THE CONTEXT OF THE 2019 ELECTION**

The ANC entered South Africa’s sixth democratic elections with many burdens lingering in the political party. The party had a vision of a “new dawn” under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa with the aim to bring unity and change within the party. The ANC was facing severe difficulties. In particular, the Zondo Commission which was set up to investigate State Capture negatively affected perceptions of the ANC (Gevisser, 2019).

In the run up to the elections, President Ramaphosa admitted that members of the ANC were responsible for and allowed state capture (ENCA 2019). As Schulz-Herzenberg (2019:170) indicates, public trust in the ANC, and in its ability to govern effectively, had plummeted. According to Schulz-Herzenberg (2019:182) the South African Citizens Survey (SACS) found that when Ramaphosa became president at the beginning of 2018, optimism about the future of the economy rose to 61%.

The DA also had its own internal battles before they went to the polls in 2019. As Africa (2019) indicates between 2014 and 2019 the DA struggled with major internal divisions and leadership issues which affected its credibility. The internal fighting brought about confusion and uncertainty for voters. In 2018, the party had court battles with Patricia De Lille, the former Mayor of the City of Cape Town. The fallout between the DA and De Lille led to her leaving the party and the formation of GOOD (Gerber, 2019).

Western Cape Premier Helen Zille was asked to vacate various decision-making structures of the party and was embroiled in controversy after she tweeted that ‘colonialism was terrible but its legacy is not only negative’ In a series of tweets, Zille said that people claimed that the legacy of colonialism was only negative, but insisted that there were positive effects as well. This link is a reference to the tweet: <https://twitter.com/DaliKhanyile/status/1070977164097609730>

The DA was also unable to maintain control in Nelson Mandela Bay with the ousting of former mayor Athol Trollip. Trollip’s ousting was filled with controversy and drama. “Trollip was removed through a motion of no confidence and his nemesis from the UDM former Deputy Mayor Mongameli Bobani was elected the Mayor” (Spies, 2018). Trollip took the Municipality to court which did not even succeed as he was still removed and not reinstated as the Mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay.

The resignation of Solly Msimanga as Tshwane Mayor as well as the resignation of the DA’s policy head, Gwen Ngwenya, with a leaked resignation letter that alleged the party did not take policy seriously, raised further concerns. Msimanga stepped down because he wanted to pursue a

higher position, he wanted to focus on the campaign of being a Premier in the Gauteng Province. “In his resignation letter, Msimanga explained that he was stepping down in order to pursue higher office” (Madia and Mitchely, 2019). Close to the time of Solly Msimanga’s resignation, Gwen Nqwenya also resigned using a letter.

On a governance level, the DA was severely criticized for its management of the drought in the Western Cape as fears and concerns about ‘day zero’ consumed citizens of the province through most of 2017. Gumede (2019) argues, black voters were repelled by perceptions that strong black leaders were marginalised and that the DA was not serious about the existential black issues of black economic empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was under spotlight for alleged corruption and underhand dealings. The issue of the VBS Mutual Bank saga, the Limpopo bank that was looted by politicians, government representatives and unscrupulous businessmen over the course of several years. “The Great Bank Heist”, which exposed all the sordid details of the dubious transaction at VBS, including the names of those involved. The VBS saga opened a corruptive can of worms that led to a major split in public opinion.

### **3.5 THE GROWTH OF ONLINE CAMPAIGNING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The elections held in South Africa in 2016 saw an increase in the use of new media. Nevill (2016) noted that social media conversations ahead of the 2016 local government elections in South Africa revealed a growth of nearly four-fold over discussions about the 2011 municipal polls. Nevill adds that “data extracted from the Salesforce Marketing Cloud Social Studio by online media agency, 25AM, shows that there were nearly 22 000 social conversations about the topic between 1 May and 29 July 2016” and that an “increased presence on social media by the leading political parties as well as institutions like the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) have helped to spark engagement about this election” Nevil (2016).

The tables below from Duncan (2019) give a clear indication of the growth of the parties' online presence on Twitter. They have consistently grown throughout the time they have started using Twitter and the following has increased. This clearly indicates that there is great potential in using this platform as a key communication tool during electioneering. The platform has become more relevant and known it has grown. Political parties have gained followers and momentum through this platform by being visible and using it on a regular basis. The table below gives an indication of the growth in the 2014 elections and the 2019 period and how political parties have gained a stronger use of the platform by having more followers and engagement.

**TABLE 3-TWITTER FOLLOWERS BY POLITICAL PARTY, 2014-2019**

Party	12 April 2014	2 May 2019	% growth in new followers since 2014
ANC	111,701	650,000	582
DA	72,495	551,000	760
EFF	40,668	740,000	1820

Source: Duncan (2019)

**TABLE 4-TWITTER FOLLOWERS BY POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS. 14 MAY 2019**

Party leader	Joined Twitter	Twitter followers
Cyril Ramaphosa	January 2015	531,000
Mmusi Maimane	September 2010	1,1200,000
Julius Malema	February 2010	2,4100,000

Source: Duncan (2019)

### **3.6 CONCERNS ABOUT YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE 2019 ELECTIONS**

As noted in chapter one, the lack of involvement of young voters was of particular concern in the South African 2019 national and provincial elections. In total 26.7 million people registered to

vote. However, while registration increased “over 9 million potential qualified voters most of them young people, remained unregistered” (Schultz-Herzenberg and Southall, 2019:7). As Schultz-Herzenberg (2019:60) noted, “younger voters generally turnout at lower rate primarily because the broader social costs of voting are highest for this population group, they only starting to establish social networks that mobilize them and their party identification is weaker”. Indeed, the 2019 election was fraught with uncertainty about whether voters would turn out to cast their ballot. It is in this context that campaigning through digital platforms has become more and more important.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

As in previous elections, the campaign period was a highly contested environment with deep-seated grievances over land redistribution, allegations of state corruption and anger about the state of the economy (Southall, 2019). Additionally, as noted above, the political parties included in this study faced many internal battles which added another layer of complexity to the 2019 elections. Voter apathy and disengagement among the youth was also a serious concern. The campaign period was in a highly contested environment, parties had to go out and use all available campaign methods.

There is a need to have platforms created for the youth to understand the importance of voting and being part of this democratic process as well as receive political information through the channels that they are accustomed to using. Social media appeals particularly to the youth, and is a platform that can be used to encourage the youth to be involved in the voting process in South Africa. This is in line with the global increase in the use of social media through social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These platforms are easily accessible and connect everyone cheaply and easily. The use of social media, particularly Twitter would therefore be extremely important for engaging with young voters in the electorate.

## **4 CHAPTER 4: THE 2019 DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE ANC, DA AND EFF**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Twitter plays a crucial role during electioneering - it is an online space that could reach out to millions of people at the same time. Volumes of tweets were generated during the 2019 South African election time. This chapter presents how the ANC, DA and EFF used Twitter as a digital tool for campaigning in the 2019 elections. In this chapter I aim to give an understanding of how Twitter was used as a communication tool. The Twitter feeds and updates from the ANC, DA and EFF are illustrated in this chapter showing what the party has done. The updates from the data collected, guided by Foot and Schneider's framework assesses how the political parties used the social media platform to inform, involve and connect with users during the 2019 election campaign. The chapter will clearly show how the tweets generated by the ANC, DA and EFF during the campaign period attempted to inform, connect and involve the users on the platform.

Thus, the chapter will discuss how the tweets and the Twitter strategy of the parties interlinks with the framework that was used in the study to do the data collection. I focus on outlining the key messages used by the ANC, the DA and the EFF as well as the key messages used in the campaign. These messages will be examined in terms of the framework provided by Foot and Schneider namely whether they informed, connected and involved voters. The review of the Twitter campaigns reveals that the three parties had coherent Twitter campaigns which worked hand-in-hand with the balance of their traditional campaigns. All three effectively used Twitter to inform their followers. The parties effectively shared information with their Twitter followers. Twitter has become an important information sharing tool to reach their various constituencies. The parties had their presence felt throughout the campaign period. However, the EFF was the most interactive of the three. The party responded to Twitter users and followed up on tweets.

## 4.2 AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC)

### 4.2.1 THE ANC'S 2019 TWITTER CAMPAIGN

The ANC made successful use of the Twitter platform during the 2019 campaign period. The party effectively shared information with their Twitter followers. Twitter has become an important information sharing tool for the ANC, especially to reach their various constituencies. Information was made available to Twitter users in different ways, using videos and images. The party made sure to inform and involve users on a regular basis. Political party information such as their manifesto, press releases, party statements and leader's biography were also shared on the platform to create a sense of political awareness.

As in previous elections the party's 2019 campaign relied heavily on door-to-door work, sectoral work, public meetings, one-on-one engagements. The party also embarked on a social media campaign. Indeed, the ANC made use of Twitter as an aspect of web campaigning and furthermore used it as a tool of political communication in the 2019 elections. The ANC made strong use of Twitter but primarily for the purpose of informing. Their Twitter campaign linked strongly with traditional methods that have always worked for the political party.

Based on a review of the ANC's Twitter campaign activity, it can be said that the party placed great emphasis on the 'inform' pillar in web campaigning. However, the 'involving' function of web-campaigning was not as strongly utilised. There was no clear interaction established with the party representatives on Twitter and the online users. It was noticed that the ANC had a one-way communication stream. The users interacted with the party official Twitter handle but with minimal responses or no responses at all.

The ANC has a verified Twitter account that joined Twitter in January 2009 and their handle on Twitter is @MYANC where you most likely find tweets from the party. The party gives a short bio of themselves for Twitter users to know who they are; "*Latest news and views from the ANC, South Africa's governing party and national liberation movement*". By the 22 October 2019 the party had 690.6K followers. This meant their account was well established and known to the voters at the time of the election campaign.



Given that Twitter has 240 characters, the party simplified the manifesto in those characters for the users to know what they want to obtain as a party, so when you further read the entire document you would understand the themes. Party policy documents were not found on Twitter but rather tweets of the stance on what the political party believes in and what they entail to do if they voted into government. Political parties made sure that they live tweet throughout the manifesto launch and have a live video on the Twitter page to have the information available for Twitter users. The party had press releases with various media houses and there were live videos posted on Twitter to make sure the Twitter users and the electorate can have access. The party statements, which are also found on the party websites, were put up and made available on Twitter, the party statement would be attached as an image with a link to the party website for further reading.

The image below shows the official ANC twitter page which was accessed on twitter directly.

IMAGE 1: ANC OFFICIAL TWITTER ACCOUNT



Source: <https://twitter.com/MYANC>

Below are images from the official Twitter account that was posted during the 2019 manifesto launch of the election campaign. These images are from the official Twitter account and clearly show the Tweets that went out during the period of campaigning. The Twitter feed was directly speaking to the Twitter followers on the platform whereby it is used to inform its supporters of its key messages and campaign information of the party.

**IMAGE 2: TWEETS ABOUT THE LAUNCH OF THE PARTY MANIFESTO**



Source: <https://twitter.com/MYANC/status/1083951322158776335>

This image above is a clear example of an “information” Tweet from the ANC Official Twitter account. It gives clear information on the manifesto launch and makes use of the image of the President and also tags his Twitter account as well. There was also a link which took the user to the manifesto launch. So, Twitter users that could not go to the launch physically were able to watch it virtually on the YouTube link provided.

**IMAGE 3: TWEET GIVING INFORMATION OF THE DP OF THE ANC**



Source: <https://twitter.com/MYANC/status/1083417461591105537>

This image above is a Tweet from the Official ANC account is also an informing tweet. This tweet gives indication where the Deputy President would be addressing a rally and launching the People’s Manifesto. The Tweet has given all the relevant information needed for this specific event of the launch by giving a required programme of where the Deputy President will be and what times would be at specific locations. The tweet also made sure that they tagged the Deputy President’s Twitter account so it will be visible to his followers on his Twitter feed.

**IMAGE 4: ANC SUPPORTERS AT THE MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: <https://twitter.com/MYANC/status/1083965508288942081>

**IMAGE 5: IMAGES FROM THE MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: <https://twitter.com/MYANC/status/1084025085218967552>

The images above show two Tweets from the Official ANC Twitter account. It is images of supporters of the party at the manifesto launch which was advertised in the first tweet mentioned. These show how the party reached out to their constituency and how they actually went out to support the party during the launch. It is clear as many people in the images are noted to be dressed in the party's regalia, singing and dancing at the official manifesto launch hosted by the ANC.

#### 4.2.2 THE ANC'S 2019 CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

The ANC 2019 election campaign was centred on 'restoring the movement' with the slogan #ThumaMina (Send Me). This was the key message throughout the campaign during the 2019 electioneering, the party wanted to provide an opportunity to restore the democratic institutions and to return the country to a path of transformation, growth and development. The tweets would have a poster attached as an image on twitter and the common hashtags that were noted frequently were: #People'sManifesto, #ThumaMina and #GrowSouthAfrica.

*Download the #VoteANC twibbon for your profile picture. The power is in your hands. #ThumaMina to #VoteANC on Wednesday 8th May 2019. Let us #GrowSouthAfrica together.*  
<https://twibbon.com/support/voteanc-thumamina>

The hashtags #ThumaMina and #GrowSouthAfrica were particularly prominent. These hashtags were used to highlight the record of the party and its achievements as well as to indicate proposed plans.

*We will continue investing to improve access to education so young people can find decent jobs in a knowledge-driven economy. So far, 1132 students have graduated from SA's 2 new universities in the Northern Cape & Mpumalanga. #GrowSouthAfrica. #VoteANC*

*The auto industry is one of our most important manufacturing sectors & key to creating jobs on a large scale. SA is the largest car manufacturer on the continent & government is committed to expanding this sector & increasing our export capacity. #GrowSouthAfrica #VoteANC*

*The number of black people with a job grew from 4.9m in 1994 to over 12m last year. Ensuring more South Africans, especially the youth, can find employment is our priority. #GrowSouthAfrica. #VoteANC*

*“The state of our economy is central to the life and wellbeing of our nation. To improve people's lives, we must have stronger and more inclusive growth,” Comrade President, Cyril Ramaphosa.*  
#GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina

*We are working with all social partners to create more decent jobs. The number of black people with a job grew from 4.9m in 1994 to over 12m last year. Ensuring more South Africans, especially the youth, can find employment is our priority as we* #GrowSouthAfrica. #VoteANC

*We will continue investing to improve access to education so young people can find decent jobs. So far, 1132 students have graduated from SA's 2 new universities in the Northern Cape & Mpumalanga.* #GrowSouthAfrica #VoteANC. #VoteANC. video:  
<https://twitter.com/i/status/1121715585992335360>

*On the creative industries, we will promote and support the diverse creative industries, from folk art, festivals, music, books, paintings, performing art to the film industry, broadcasting and video games.* #GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina

*On the ocean economy, we will promote investment in offshore oil and gas exploration and production as new growth areas.* #GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina

*We will work with the private sector and organised labour to drive the industrialisation of South Africa and Africa, to support locally produced goods and services and promote the Buy Local Campaign.*  
#GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina

*Our Industrial Strategy will accelerate industrialisation by supporting enterprises, including black industrialists, to save and create decent jobs in the core industries of manufacturing, agro-processing, mining and beneficiation, and tourism. ANC Manifesto* #GrowSouthAfrica

*Government interventions will be accompanied by the development of an appropriate macroeconomic framework to support the transformation of the economy to serve all people.*  
#GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina

*We must transform and diversify the financial sector, consolidate support for small businesses and cooperatives, as well as grow the township and village economy.* #GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina

*An ANC-led government is expanding the economy and creating jobs and opportunities for young people. Our Manifesto contains firm, realizable commitments, not empty promises.*  
#GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina

The African National Congress (ANC) had many tweets with regards to informing the users about what they were doing, the schedule of where each political party leader would be at a given time.



*“We call out the youth and communities at large to join us at Moses Mabhida stadium today for our 2019 election #PeoplesManifesto. Where a plan to a better life for all will be unveiled by President Cde @CyrilRamaphosa#GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina” (image attached)*

*As we continue to Grow South Africa Together. ANC Womens’ League Freedom Rally at Constitutional Hill, Gauteng. #GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina #VoteANC*

*#FBF ANC President Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa on the campaign trail in Durban. #ThumaMina #GrowSouthAfrica #VoteANC*

*#TBT ANC President Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa on the campaign trail in Cape Town and Stellenbosch. #ThumaMina #GrowSouthAfrica #VoteANC*

*Our land reform programme provides a sustainable but radical way to address the land question. We will use our land reform programme to build productive assets for our people. LISTEN: Comrade President, @CyrilRamaphosa speaks on land. #GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina. video: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1121363425014185984>*

The tweets below relate to ANC’s manifesto.

*The POWER is in your hands. We call out the youth to say #ThumaMina for a better South Africa for all. Be a part of the conversation online, follow our hashtag #PeoplesManifesto. Catch all the action and stream LIVE on our Youtube channel. #ANC107(image attached)*

*“Government will open up opportunities for young people to develop new software and applications, devices and equipment through specialised start-up support programmers. #ThumaMina #PeoplesManifesto” voteanc.org.za is now live, you can download the Manifesto pdf. #GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina #ANCManifesto*

*An economy for all. Download the full Manifesto on (link: <http://bit.ly/2CgTGNH>) bit.ly/2CgTGNH. #ThumaMina #GrowSouthAfrica #ANCManifesto*

*“Our education must prepare young people for a workplace that is being rapidly transformed by technological change. #ThumaMina #PeoplesManifesto”*

*ANC Manifesto: sustainable and radical land reform and a plan to broaden ownership of the economy. #GrowSouthAfrica #ThumaMina*

The party had a strategy of having a “FACT OF THE DAY” tweet based on what they had achieved in previous years.

*#FactoftheDay More than 50 million people from across the world have visited South Africa in the last 5 years, supporting 722,000 jobs in the hospitality and related-service sectors. #GrowSouthAfrica*

*#FactoftheDay In the last five years, government has built 447,000 new houses for South Africans across the country, providing more than 1.5 million people with a proper roof over their head. #GrowSouthAfrica. video: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1121318012357947392>*

They also maintained relying on historical figures linked to the cause; the likes of Oliver Reginald Tambo, Steve Tshwete and Bram Fischer. There were tweets that were quotes from these leaders so Twitter users would know what these figures have contributed towards the party in their time of leading.

*As we head to the polls, let us remember the words of Isithwalandwe Oliver Reginald Tambo on leadership when we vote for the ANC to lead and #GrowSouthAfrica. #RememberingTambo #VoteANC*

*"The distinctive feature of the revolutionary cadre is a high level of discipline, dedication, and courage in carrying out the tasks assigned by the movement. Such cadres are guided by our goal of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa" - Oliver Reginald Tambo*

*Today we celebrate the birthday of the late anti-apartheid activist, lawyer & freedom fighter Bram Fischer. We honour his memory by furthering the ideals he fought for. #RememberingBram #GrowSouthAfrica #VoteANC*

The party also made use of the strategy of having woman heroes of the ANC being noted in the hashtag #21Sheroes.

*Follow our 21 Sheroe Blog posts: <https://voteanc.org.za/blog/> #21Sheroes #VoteANC #ABetter life for all*

*As a young student activist & uMkhonto weSizwe operative, Coline Williams was prepared to risk her life in the anti-apartheid struggle. At just 22, she was killed by a defective limpet mine. This*



*#FreedomMonth, the courageous women of MK remind us that democracy requires us to be active citizens.*

*Phila Ndwandwe was a young mother & powerful uMkhonto weSizwe fighter at the height of apartheid. Captured by security police who wished to turn her into an informant, she would not be broken by beatings & brutality. She died so we could live in a free & democratic South Africa. This #FreedomMonth, we honour her sacrifice by exercising our hard-won political rights. #21Sheroes #VoteANC*

*Sophia Williams-de Bruyn was only 18 when she helped organise the historic 1956 march that united thousands of women in protest against unjust pass laws. #FreedomMonth is a time to pay tribute to this living sheroe & to remember that you too can continue the fight for a united, equal South Africa by voting ANC on May 8. #VoteANC #21Sheroes*

*A nurse, activist & fearless champion of democracy & human rights. Mama Albertina Sisulu was a courageous freedom fighter who ignited change through her bravery. She was a leader of the Federation of South African Women and United Democratic Front. This #FreedomMonth, they inspire us to use our votes to #GrowSouthAfrica. #VoteANC #21Sheroes*

*Helen Joseph could not stand by while black South Africans endured the brutality of apartheid. For her activism, she endured bannings, assassination attempts & police persecution. In a life dedicated to courageous struggle, the 1956 Women's March became a high point of her resistance. This #FreedomMonth, we honour her legacy by exercising the rights & freedoms she fought for. #VoteANC #21Sheroes*

The ANC had a countdown to election day.

*Today marks 17 Days to the Provincial and National General Elections. Visit the ANC pavilion at the Rand Easter Show at the Expo Center in Johannesburg, Gauteng. #ANCRandShow @GautengANC #VoteANC8May2019 #ANCSundays #ThumaMina*

*Growing our tourism sector will contribute to our economy & create jobs. The new e-visas system is being rolled out, starting in New Zealand, to make it easier for tourists to enter the country. <https://voteanc.org.za/manifesto> #GrowSouthAfrica #VoteANC. 16 days until we vote to grow our economy*

*Exports play an important role in the economy, driving growth & job creation. Over 250,000 jobs in SA are created as a result of exports of goods & services to other African countries. Increasing exports is our priority as we #GrowSouthAfrica. <https://voteanc.org.za/manifesto> #VoteANC. 15 days until we vote for more decent jobs*

*Today marks 14 days to the Provincial & National General Elections. 14 days to #GrowSouthAfrica and #VoteANC8May2019, don't miss out on an opportunity to grow the economy.*

*Today marks 13 days to the Provincial & National General Elections. #GrowSouthAfrica and #VoteANC8May2019*

*Today marks 12 days to the Provincial & National General Elections. #GrowSouthAfrica and #VoteANC8May2019*

#### **4.2.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE ANC'S USE OF TWITTER IN THE 2019 ELECTIONS: INFORMING, INVOLVING, CONNECTING?**

The ANC had key campaign Twitter hashtags which they used throughout the campaign, as shown above. The party maintained these hashtags and used them as part of the key messages for the campaign. This made it easier in terms of searching for the party on Twitter - users could just search for their hashtags and they would be able to access the tweets about the party.

The ANC effectively provided information on Twitter by making sure there were posters to show what will be done during this period. The political leaders of the party were active and were deployed in specific areas to campaign. These events were well documented on their official twitter page and pictures of where and what they were doing was provided extensively. The images provided as posters were to indicate where the campaigns will take place, giving vital information such as: Date, Time, Venue, and Political Leader speaking to the people during the campaign. The manifesto was provided as a link on the twitter feeds, the user would click on the link and it would direct you to the party's manifesto document.

The "FACT OF THE DAY" strategy provided a good starting point for their campaign. These tweets included information on the party's achievements, key historical figures and providing information on woman heroes. The ANC received comments and retweets on the updates they posted, which gives a clear indication that they had reached out to many users. This is noted through the activity on twitter as a frequent Twitter user I maintained checking the ANC official page frequently during the time of the data collection period and the election campaign period. The party received support through the tweets as many followers would comment and engage with

the tweet but there was no response from the political party Twitter handle. While it was beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the Twitter feeds of individual leaders, it must be noted that political leaders did in fact engage with voters. For example, on the 15th of April 2019, Cyril Ramaphosa had a live Twitter interaction with potential voters via a live chat. He engaged with Twitter users about the state of the country. The invitation tweet was retweeted 762 times (CyrilRamaphosa2019; Twitter Q&A with President Cyril Ramaphosa under the hashtag #HolaMatemela 2019) (Shange 2019).

Therefore, it can be argued that the party did not fully establish a relationship with their Twitter users - it posted only with no response to any of the users' comments. The relationship that was maintained was between the users themselves and not the political party. This can be seen as a wasted opportunity.

### **4.3 DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (DA)**

#### **4.3.1 THE DA'S 2019 TWITTER CAMPAIGN**

The DA made successful use of the Twitter platform during the 2019 campaign period. As in previous elections, the party's 2019 campaign covered a range of campaign techniques. The party also embarked on a social media campaign including the use of Twitter. Their Twitter campaign linked strongly with their traditional methods of campaigning. The party made use of Twitter on a daily basis to let users know about events that were planned and what the party planned to achieve.

The party made sure there is enough campaign information for the online users to engage with. All party related information was directly linked to their twitter handle. It was observed that the DA used Twitter to reach out to their followers by sharing all campaign related information on a regular basis. For example, the DA posted tweets on every single event to keep their followers well-informed about the day to day activities of the party. The party shared live videos of their manifesto launch and images of their campaign trail in the various constituencies. This was a good

communication strategy used by the party to ensure that Twitter users could engage with them in public. The DA also made sure that information was made available to Twitter users in different ways and formats. They used videos and images to provide information on their manifesto and policy positions. Press releases, party statements and leader's biography were also shared on the platform to create a sense of political awareness. As such the DA made sure to utilise Twitter's interactivity.

The numbers of followers increased on a daily basis. However, information was primarily provided through retweeting, not the party directly tweeting. The party launched their manifesto in various stadiums throughout the country. The DA launched its 2019 election manifesto on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2019 and the tweets in the study were collected during this period. The tweets were collected during the month of January and February 2019 until the manifesto launch which was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2019.

Based on a review of the DA's Twitter campaign activity, it can be said that the DA utilised the 'inform' function very effectively. The party mostly made use of the information function by making means to be online and presenting themselves at all times. However, it did not fully incorporate the "involving" function of web campaigning. It was observed that the DA did not 'connect' with the users by responding and having conversations through the platform with the users.

The graphic below illustrates the official DA Twitter account which is a verified account. Content found on the handle is therefore from the party. The @Our\_DA is the official twitter handle and the party had a following of 565.2K at the date of the tweet. There was a biography introducing the page itself and the description on the DA twitter handle was "Working together to bring CHANGE that builds #OneSAforAll. Let us live and strive for freedom in South Africa, our Land".

IMAGE 6: DA OFFICIAL TWITTER ACCOUNT



Source: [https://twitter.com/Our\\_DA](https://twitter.com/Our_DA)

Below are images from the 2019 election manifesto launch. These images below are tweets from the DA Official account. The first image is an infographic image of the leaders in the political party. This image is an informing tweet because it gives the followers the pictures and names of who are the leaders in the party. The tweet also gave information of what each leader does in the party and collectively the team that will lead the election campaign of the DA.

IMAGE 7: IMAGE INTRODUCING DA ELECTION TEAM



Source: [https://twitter.com/Our\\_DA/status/1043465729553690627](https://twitter.com/Our_DA/status/1043465729553690627)

The image below also provides information on the DA’s manifesto launch. There is a strong focus on highlighting the fact that Mmusi Maimane is the leader of the party. It also shows the venue of the party manifesto launch. The tweet pronounces that “At long last the day has finally arrived”. This tweet is an informing tweet because it gives information on the launch of the party manifesto. There was also a visible link to join the launch virtually for those who could not be at the venue physically. The hashtag is #DAManifesto. The fact that Twitter users could watch the launch live meant that it went beyond being a static image.

**IMAGE 8: LIVE TWEET FROM THE MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: [https://twitter.com/Our\\_DA/status/1099169013853290496](https://twitter.com/Our_DA/status/1099169013853290496)

The two images below are also tweets about the manifesto launch. Again, this is noted as an information tweet. There is a tweet with a video link whereby one of the leaders in the province where the launch is taking place is speaking. Gauteng Premier candidate, Solly Msinmanga, spoke about the DA’s agenda to transform Gauteng and deal with corruption. This video is directly from the day of the launch. An innovative feature was that twitter followers were given a chance to be part of the launch by being able to share videos of the day during the launch.

The second tweet is an image of the people at the launch. It gives a clear indication that people did actually attend the launch and they received the information of the specific event. In the tweets users could watch the DA leader’s speeches and get a sense of the day and its excitement.



**IMAGE 9: LIVE VIDEO AT THE MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: [https://twitter.com/Our\\_DA/status/1099260335817719808](https://twitter.com/Our_DA/status/1099260335817719808)

**IMAGE 10: LIVE VIDEO OF DA LEADER AT MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: [https://twitter.com/Our\\_DA/status/1099293874164559873](https://twitter.com/Our_DA/status/1099293874164559873)

Another strategy of the DA was to have strong links between the DA handle and the handle of DA leaders. For example, the image below is a tweet from the DA's official twitter account and it is a video of the DA's Chief Whip speaking to the twitter followers and the people online. It is a video



that is a summary of the day's events of the launch and letting the followers know what had occurred and what the party will be doing throughout the electioneering period.

**IMAGE 11: VIDEO OF DA CHIEF WHIP**



Source: [https://twitter.com/Our\\_DA/status/1099176891922157570](https://twitter.com/Our_DA/status/1099176891922157570)

#### **4.3.2 THE DA'S 2019 CAMPAIGN MESSAGES**

The DA had a range of messages in the 2019 election campaign. The party was guided by the slogan "One South Africa for All". This slogan was used as a recurring hashtag during the campaign to reach out to Twitter users. Key hashtags were #StandUpForChange #OneSAforAll, #Change, #AjobinEveryHome, #OneSAforAll. The manifesto was entitled. 'The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All' (Democratic Alliance, 2019).

The DA emphasized that it had a vision to take the country forward and a plan to implement that vision.

*The DA is the only one party with a vision to take SA forward, as well as a plan to make this vision a reality. There is one party with a track record in govt that can back up its promises. When you vote DA, you vote for unity - do the right thing on the 08 May. #OneSAforAll*

*This is the real South Africa. On the 8th of May 2019, we have a choice. Either we stay on this path, or we make a change for the better. Only you can #BringChange! video: [https://youtu.be/p725-eAf\\_5E](https://youtu.be/p725-eAf_5E). #Bring Change*

General tweets providing information on voting and the voting process was also provided.

*You can vote anywhere in your province, and if you have moved outside your registered province you can still vote, but only on the national ballot.*

*For more information, please visit <https://check.da.org.za/>*

*#VoteDA for Change that builds #OneSAforAll*

Tweets also focused on unity and racial unity with the claim that the DA was at the centre of unifying South Africans.

*The DA is a home for all those who want to see a better tomorrow, where blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians are united in working together to build a better South Africa.*

*"The DA stands at the centre of a new political realignment, as people converge around our values and our mission to build a united country that is shared by all" - DA Leader Mmusi Maimane*

*South Africa is a beautiful country, with beautiful people, and diverse cultures. We are a unique country with unique challenges, but our struggles are not insurmountable. Let's work together today to build a better tomorrow. #MondayMotivation #OneSAforAll #unity #diversity #southafrica*

They also had tweets on their achievements in the Western Cape, the one province successfully led by the DA. The DA continued its message from previous elections that the Western Cape is the best-run province in the country.

*The Western Cape is the best-run province in South Africa. More than half of all new jobs created in South Africa in the last financial year were created in the Western Cape. With 12 days to go before elections, it's time to vote for a party that knows how to grow the economy, attract investment and create jobs. #VoteDA on 08 May. #OneSAforAll #elections2019 #Change*

Many messages on their Twitter feed focused on ANC and EFF urging voters to vote for the DA to stop them from coming into power. They portrayed other parties negatively in their tweets.

*Under the ANC & EFF policy of expropriation of land without compensation, the government will own all the land & SAns will be tenants of the state. The DA believes that all SAns have the right to own their land and homes. This is what is called empowerment. video: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1121356988871532544>*

*"Our best bet at unseating the corrupt ANC government that has plunged us into this crisis through 25 years of looting and broken promises, is by uniting around a shared vision of what we want for our country." - @MmusiMaimane #OneSAforAll*

The DA had an election count down showing the days left until voting day. The party added relevant information in their countdown tweets. See examples below:

*"With 87 days to election day, we are united, focused and equipped to deliver our strongest campaign in history (image with details) Federal Council unanimously adopted that the party's manifesto to be launched on 23 Feb @Rand Stadium in Joburg"*

*14 days to go! 🗳️ On 08 May, South Africans have a chance to end 25 years of empty promises and bring change that stops corruption and puts a Job in Every Home. Together, we can build a South Africa that we can all be proud of! #OneSAforAll #Change #AjobinEveryHome #Elections*

*Are you ready to vote for change on 08 May? We have just 13 days to go before we cast our vote. This election is our opportunity to reject corruption and empty promises and vote for a party with a track record of good governance! #VoteDA #Change #OneSAforAll #election2019*

*We are drawing closer to crunch time, with just 20 days to go before election day! We are ready to bring change that will build #OneSAforAll. South Africa, are you ready to vote for change? #Change #SouthAfrica #Elections*

*With 12 days to go before elections, it's time to vote for a party that knows how to grow the economy, attract investment and create jobs. #VoteDA on 08 May. #OneSAforAll #elections2019 #Change"*

### **4.3.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE DAS USE OF TWITTER IN THE 2019 ELECTIONS: INFORMING, INVOLVING, CONNECTING?**

The party made extensive use of Twitter as a campaigning tool during the elections. The DA had hashtags they used throughout the campaign. The party had tweets with images attached showing where the party leaders were campaigning and tweets about the manifesto launch. They had tweets about their manifesto and where to find it on their website. The DA made use of video to a great extent. They had many retweets through the Twitter feeds during campaigning. The party's official Twitter handle mostly retweeted tweets from the party leaders. As previously indicated, there was a strong link between the accounts of the DA leaders and the official DA account. Although the tweets would not directly be from the party, they would still appear on their timeline because the official party handle had retweeted these tweets. What was most tweeted were videos by the party campaigning. The party did make use of the live option on Twitter to keep users informed if they are not able to be part of the manifesto launch. In addition to links to video clips of speeches and other activities, their adverts were put as links on the tweets for the users to click on the link and watch the advert on YouTube.

It can be seen that the DA made strong use of Twitter but primarily for the purpose of informing. The DA party managed to make use of Twitter with regards to informing the users and telling them what they were going to do and indicating their vision as well highlighting their track record in the Western Cape.

During the time period of the research the party had limited interaction with users on Twitter. The DA did not respond to tweets. There were no two-way conversations between the party and voters or rather making the candidate of the party available to answer questions posed by the Twitter users. Thus, as in the case of the ANC, it can be argued that the DA did not fully establish a relationship with their Twitter users - it posted only with no response to any of the users' comments. So, while Twitter was extensively as a communication tool during the campaign, it was not used optimally to connect and engage with potential voters.

## **4.4 THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

### **4.4.1 THE EFF'S 2019 TWITTER CAMPAIGN**

The EFF made successful use of the Twitter platform during the 2019 campaign period and had the greatest breadth of popular participation in the study. Like the ANC and DA, and as in previous elections, the party's 2019 campaign covered a range of campaign techniques. This included a strong focus on social media including the use of Twitter. Their Twitter campaign also linked strongly with their traditional methods of campaigning. Like the ANC and DA, the party made use of Twitter on a daily basis to let users know about events that were planned and what the party planned to achieve. There were live videos, posters, their manifesto launch updates and all the necessary information about where the party will be campaigning. Political party information such as their manifesto, press releases and party statements were also shared on the platform to create a sense of political awareness. The party successfully informed the users about the party's positions and activities throughout the period of campaigning.

The EFF had a strong focus on sharing their policy positions via Twitter. Unlike the ANC and DA, there was interaction established with the party representatives on Twitter and the online users. The users interacted with the party official Twitter handle was very active in tweeting all the necessary information. The EFF's leaders were quite interactive on Twitter by making sure they tweet about the party and its campaign on a regular. The leaders would retweet and make sure they tweet the same tweets that were found on the EFF Official Account. As such the EFF utilised Twitter's interactivity more than the ANC and DA. Below are examples of how the leaders of the party had tweets that were directly speaking to the manifesto launch which were tweets that interlinked with what one found on the EFF Official account.

IMAGE 12: TWEET FROM JULIUS MALEMA'S ACCOUNT



Source: [https://twitter.com/Julius\\_S\\_Malema/status/1092061999914196993](https://twitter.com/Julius_S_Malema/status/1092061999914196993)

IMAGE 13: TWEET FROM MBUYISELI'S TWITTER ACCOUNT



Source: <https://twitter.com/MbuyiseniNdlozi/status/1090508943170985985>



**IMAGE 14: TWEET FROM ADV. DALI MPOFU'S ACCOUNT**



Source: [https://twitter.com/AdvDali\\_Mpofu/status/1091768023101382657](https://twitter.com/AdvDali_Mpofu/status/1091768023101382657)

Based on a review of the EFF's Twitter campaign activity, it can be said that the party placed great emphasis on the 'inform' pillar in web campaigning and also attempted to go beyond merely providing information. The party used the 'involving' function of web-campaigning by connecting with the Twitter users online.

The EFF had extensive growth on twitter since it joined twitter in November 2012. The party managed to gain more followers on Twitter although they joined it later than the other parties. The party launched its manifesto on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February. Tweets from this official page were collected in the weeks leading up to the launch. It has a verified account - @EFFSouthAfrica is the official handle of the political party. The EFF had a strong presence on twitter throughout the 2019 campaign. Tweets were generated on a daily basis to give information on affairs and events happening in the EFF. Their campaign was centred on the theme "our land, our jobs now". This was the key message used throughout the 2019 campaign. The EFF had a major following with one of their campaign slogans; 'EFF Red Friday' where they took their campaign to all spheres of society. This included churches, toll gates, the Rand Show and door-to-door campaigns. For example, the Red Friday campaign supporters would post images of them in the party regalia showing their support and therefore increased activity and interaction on the party feeds.



The official account of the EFF is noted in the image below and it shows the information of the party based on the twitter official page. The bio on the profile of the account gives a clear indication of what the party is and what they stand for: *“The official platform for Economic Freedom Fighters to champion radical economic policies in South Africa. It's for Fearless Fighters. SA Government in Waiting!.* The party had 808.8 thousand followers at the date that the tweet below was extracted for the research.

IMAGE 15:OFFICIAL EFF TWITTER ACCOUNT



Source: <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica>

The EFF had live videos and made sure the users knew what the party and its leaders were doing. The party provided information about events the party would have, whether Television interviews, radio or interaction in various communities. The use of images and posters to give an indication of events that will occur and the manifesto was made simpler by putting up the key information from the manifesto on Twitter with the use of the 280 characters that Twitter allows. They had live tweets throughout the manifesto launch, if you cannot watch it live you actually know what was happening based on the tweets sent out. The party had press releases with various media houses and there were live videos posted on twitter to make sure the twitter users were able to have access. The party shared their press release statements on Twitter with a direct link for users to access to on their official party website. They also made sure they tweet their stance as a party on what they believe in and their policy documents they wanted to implement.

Below are images of the campaign by the EFF on Twitter during their manifesto launch in 2019. The image below is a tweet giving information on the EFF's manifesto launch and how one can watch it on virtual platforms. It gives the party's official links of their social media platforms and how one can join virtually to be part of the launch if one cannot go to the specific venue of the launch.

**IMAGE 16: INFORMATION ON WHERE TO WATCH THE LIVE MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica/status/1091650853835075584>

The tweet below is an image of the party's album that was launched during the campaign. It gives the names of the music album and the songs that are on the album that was launched on the social media platforms of the party.

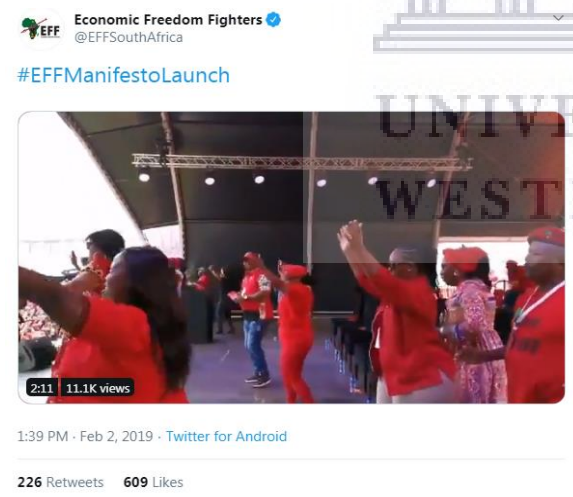
IMAGE 17: TWEET ABOUT THE LAUNCH OF THE EFF JAZZ ALBUM AT MANIFESTO LAUNCH



Source: <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica/status/1091642062880030720>

The image below is a tweet from the official EFF's Twitter account displaying images from the official launch of the party's manifesto. The first tweet is a video that was added on twitter during the manifesto launch of the party leaders on stage.

IMAGE 18: LIVE VIDEO FROM THE MANIFESTO LAUNCH



Source: <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica/status/1091653146026229760>

The tweets below show images of the political party leaders in their regalia at the stadium where the manifesto was launched. Image 19 below focuses on the elderly indicating that making an

elderly person happy is the noblest act a young person can ever do” noting that “the elderly have come to bless the EFF manifesto launch”.

**IMAGE 19: IMAGE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica/status/1091738209359409152>

**IMAGE 20: IMAGE OF THE EFF LEADERS AT THE MANIFESTO LAUNCH**



Source: <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica/status/1091618723797061633>

The image above is of the EFF leader, Julius Malema, posing along with Floyd Shivambu and Advocate Dali Mpofu.

#### 4.4.2 THE EFFS 2019 CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

The campaign of the EFF was centred on the slogan “our land, our jobs now” this was the key message used throughout the 2019 campaign. The #OurLand AndJobsNow was therefore a key hashtag used throughout the campaign period on Twitter since it was a central component of the manifesto. This slogan was used as a recurring hashtag, although they had other hashtags such as; #ChooseEFFPlanOfAction and #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow.

*We are a generation we have been waiting for. #EEFManifestoLaunch #OurLandAndJobsNow (image attached)*

Other hashtags that were generated during the campaign were: #EFFRedFriday, #EFFThrowbackThursday, #EFFWomanCrushWednesday and #EFFManCrushMonday. Each hashtag had its own unique meaning, where the party gained followers as supporters followed this trend throughout the campaign.

Some of the hashtags provided information about campaign activities as well as television and radio interviews conducted with party leaders.

*[Don't Miss It]: The Commander In Chief @Julius\_S\_Malema will be in conversation with Redi Tlhabi on Unfiltered tonight. Watch it on SABC 404 and SABC 3at 20h30(image attached)*

*[DON'T MISS IT]: Deputy President @FloydShivambu will be in conversation with John Perlman on Kaya fm this evening at 18h00 #EFFManifesto (image attached)*

*[LISTEN NOW]: SG @GardeeGodrich will be on @SAfmRadio at 07h10 in conversation with Stephen Grootes discussing the #EFFManifesto. Tune in via 104 - 107 MHz or stream via <http://bit.ly/1AADscZ>*

*We have effectively entered the final phase of our election campaign, the Tshela Thupa Phase. This phase is based on intensification of Door-to-Door in order to speak directly to voters. Nothing will stop us. Ska ba hemisa Fighters. Victory is certain! #EFFisCommitted. #VoteEFF. Tshela Thupa*

EFF Tweets also focused on Julius Malema as the leader of the organisation.

*When they see the Son of the Soil, CIC Julius Malema our people and grandmother's always shed tears. Tears of joy that our ancestors have heard the cry of our people and sent the one that will restore the dignity of Black people #CICinKZN #VoteEFF*

*People's reaction when they see their incoming President, CIC Julius Malema #CICinKZN. #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

*"Being a President is falling inlove with your people and people falling in love back with you." Woza May 8 so we can have our President #CICinKZN. #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

The EFF also used Twitter to highlight messages around patriarchy, gender inequality and gender-based violence.

*The EFF recognizes that while patriarchy and sexism are pervasive in our society, it is children, black women and gender and sexual minorities who suffer the most from gender-based violence. Join the March at 10 am from Marry Fitzgerald Square to the Constitutional Hill #VoteEFF*

*The EFF recognizes that while patriarchy and sexism are pervasive in our society, it is black women who suffer the most from gender based violence. We have a clear commitment and plan on Gender. #EFFonGender #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

*EFF Women marched because women have suffered most from the neo-liberal reality of the past 20 years. The vicious circle of triple oppression, based on race, class and gender, has not been broken for black women. #EFFWomenCrushWednesday Vote EFF*

*In May, we must vote for the EFF government which will immediately require sponsors of sporting codes to split the money equally between female and male teams, particularly Banyana Banyana. #ChooseEFF. #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

*The EFF government will strive to realise women's liberation through a variety of interventions, starting with prioritising women when it comes to the benefits of economic emancipation. #ChooseEFF #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

Other hashtags were used to indicate the party's policy positions. Examples are provided below:

*The EFF government will work towards building a strong relationship with Lesotho and will ensure that the resources that South Africa receives from Lesotho, particularly water, benefit the people of Lesotho. #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow #ChooseEFF*



*The EFF government will introduce a special inspectorate in the Department of Labour to monitor, report on and enforce gender parity and equality in the workplace. #ChooseEFF #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

*The EFF will pass a law that will make all Public Representatives and Servants to forfeit their pension funds and savings if they are found guilty of corruption. #ChooseEFF#VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

*The EFF Government will track all ex-mineworkers or their close family members and ensure that each and every one of them gain access to their pension funds. #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow #ChooseEFF*

*The EFF government will remove apartheid statues and take them to a dedicated apartheid museum as a reminder to future generations under the theme: 'NEVER AGAIN'. #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow #ChooseEFF*

*The EFF Government will launch a #TeachersMatter campaign, from 2020, to look at both the professional and personal needs of teachers. This includes emotional wellness, financial and debt management. #ChooseEFF #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

*The EFF Government will discontinue ownership of land by a few, and ensure that all South African land is owned by all South African people through the principle of progressive state custodianship of land. #VoteEFF for #OurLandAndJobsNow*

*When we take over government in May, the EFF Government will build storm water drains in every street in South Africa by 2022. #VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow*

While the tweets above zoned in on a particular aspect of their policy positions, some of the tweets provided an overview of their stances on various issues. Two examples of this are provided below:

*A vote for the EFF is a vote for:*

- 1. Abolishment of foreign land ownership*
- 2. Increase of police visibility*
- 3. Appointment of qualified people into government and state institutions*
- 4. All clinics to be opened 24 hours*
- 5. Scrap of all preferential tariff deals*



*#VoteEFF*

*A vote for the EFF is a vote for:*

- 1. #OurLandAndJobsNow*
- 2. Crime free society*
- 3. Gender parity and Equality in the workplace*
- 4. Harsher minimum sentences for "corrective" rape*
- 5. Public health care system that ensures easy access to gender affirming treatment. #VoteEFF*

To raise the campaign momentum, the EFF created hashtags for different days such *#EFFManCrushMonday*, *#EFFThrowBackThursday* and *#EFFRedFriday*.

Below is an example of *#EFFManCrushMonday*:

*Our #EFFManCrushMonday is Landa Mabenge. "Mr Mabenge is an author of a brutally honest memoir "Becoming Him". Where he lays bare his tortured world, growing up trapped in the wrong body, while unflinchingly tracing his transition from Female to Male" On the 30th March we occupied Philippi Stadium to reclaim what is ours. Come May, EFF is going to govern in the Western Cape. Habashweeee*

Throwback Thursday focused on the history of the EFF.

*WE ARE THE FUTURE! NO ONE CAN STOP US! We said it then, we are saying it now.  
#VoteEFF #OurLandAndJobsNow #EFFThrowBackThursday*

*It's #EFFThrowbackThursday. Let's go down the memory lane and tell the history of our beloved organization. That 1st press conference at Constitutional Hill in 2013. That 1st community meeting we held in Sebokeng Zone 13. What's your memorable moment about our movement?*

A key component of the campaign was the 'EFF Red Friday' where they took their campaign to churches, toll gates, the Rand Show and door-to-door campaigns. Red Friday EFF campaign supporters would post images of themselves in the party regalia showing their support. The *#EFFRedFriday* hashtag would link back to the issue of land and jobs.

*#EFFRedFriday*

*Let's paint South Africa RED Fighters*

*We want #OurLandandJobsNow*

*#Vote EFF*

*Remember tomorrow it's #EFFRedFriday #VoteEFF*

*On May 8, let's #VoteEFF, a party that will not let you down but ensure that those deployed to government deliver Vote for #OurLandAndJobsNow #VoteEFF*

*14 days to go to elections Vote EFF*

#### **4.4.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFS USE OF TWITTER IN THE 2019 ELECTIONS: INFORMING, INVOLVING, CONNECTING?**

The party made extensive use of Twitter as a campaigning tool during the elections. The EFF had hashtags they used throughout the campaign. The party used Twitter as a communication tool and campaign strategy to send out their messages on a daily basis as they would tweet on a daily basis to keep their followers informed on the party and their stance. The Twitter following of the party grew and they documented their everyday activities through the use of tweets and hashtags on this platform. The party had tweets with images attached showing where the party leaders were campaigning and tweets about the manifesto launch. They had tweets about their policy positions. The EFF made use of video to a great extent. They had many retweets through the Twitter feeds during campaigning.

There was also a strong link between the accounts of the EFF leaders and the official EFF account. The party made use of links to video clips of speeches and other activities. It can be seen that the EFF made strong use of Twitter throughout their campaign. The party effectively used twitter to inform and connect the electorate. The interaction on the party's timeline shows how they had a major response on the Twitter platform. Compared to the ANC and DA where there was limited interaction with Twitter users, the EFF also had a clear connection with users. The leaders of the EFF and the official party handle would respond and interact with the Twitter users establishing a relationship on the platform. The leadership of the EFF made sure they endorse the tweets of the party by retweeting it and reaching out to too many users. The EFF was responsive as they would

reply to certain comments on their official party twitter account or there would be responses directly from Julius Malema.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the chapter was to assess whether and how the three respective parties used Twitter as a communication tool to inform, involve and connect users during the 2019 campaign period. The chapter has therefore presented the use of Twitter by the ANC, DA and EFF in the run up to the voting day. A particular focus was given to the tweets from their official accounts. The chapter closely looked at the key messages presented through the use of Twitter.

Furthermore, the chapter looked at the extent to which the parties informed users as well as involving and connecting Twitter users. The parties mostly made use of the information function by making means to be online and presenting themselves to voters at all times. All three parties made extensive use of hashtags to convey information about their campaign activities, build momentum around their manifesto launches and explain their policy positions. They also built on the other components of their campaigns. They linked up with Facebook and provided links to videos or used the live function.

The parties all used the platform as a communication tool to reach out to as many Twitter users as possible. However, they did not fully incorporate the “involving” function of web campaigning. The parties did manage to ‘mobilise’ more followers during the campaign period since there was an increase in their following on twitter. Unfortunately, as previously indicated, studying the mobilisation function became a limitation in the study, because the data collected in this study cannot be used to accurately assess whether the users that follow the party get mobilized and actually involved in the party events.

The next chapter will focus on the reception of the Twitter feeds examined in this chapter. The Twitter survey that was conducted in this study seeks to understand how the Tweets by the ANC, DA and EFF were received by Twitter users.

## **5 CHAPTER 5: HOW THE CAMPAIGNS WERE RECEIVED**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, I presented how the ANC, DA and EFF used Twitter for their digital campaigns in preparation for the 2019 general elections. The chapter looked at how these parties used Twitter to provide key campaign messages and engage with the electorate. As such, parties such as the ANC, DA and EFF used Twitter as an important informing tool with the idea to connect with potential supporters. The campaign is meant to reach out to the twitter users and therefore there is a need to see how the campaign messages were received by users on this platform. The purpose of this chapter is to understand how the Twitter feeds from the ANC, DA and EFF, presented in Chapter four, were received by Twitter users that were part of the survey conducted. The Twitter survey that was conducted in this study seeks to understand how the Tweets by the ANC, DA and EFF were received by Twitter users. The close-ended data revealed that political parties do have a Twitter audience and that this audience wants to engage with political parties, particularly political leaders. The open-ended data revealed that respondents found the tweets to be informative but felt that much could be done to improve the quality of the tweets through, for example focusing on substantive issues rather than pointing out the flaws of competing parties. This means that the content posted by parties should be carefully considered. This chapter demonstrates that Twitter remains a communication tool that can be more fully utilized in upcoming elections.

### **5.2 METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of the survey was to assess the use of Twitter for consuming political information. The survey also aimed to get an understanding of the Twitter strategies of the ANC, DA and EFF from the perspectives of the users. It was also aimed at finding out how the users were receiving the information that the political parties were putting out and whether they were engaging with these political parties.

As previously indicated, to obtain respondents I sent out an appeal via Twitter. Given the fact that I am a student, my Twitter circle is predominantly students. When I initially posted the Twitter survey, those who responded were UWC students in my Twitter circle. I therefore followed up my Twitter survey with a survey of university students where I am registered. While the survey results are not representative of Twitter users or students in South Africa, they do provide valuable insights. Students that are enrolled in this institution are not homogenous as they come from different provinces and ultimately different cultural backgrounds, and the institution admits international students, and also students of different races.

Following the survey, I tweeted and asked participants on Twitter if they were able to assist and be interviewed. The tweet received many interactions and people ready to be interviewed, but many of them were not available thereafter. Targeted participants for this component of the study were Twitter users who are enrolled at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town. In the end the survey had 100 respondents. The questionnaire is provided in appendix 3.

### **5.3 EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS USED TWITTER FOR POLITICAL INFORMATION**

The Twitter survey that was conducted gave an indication on how the users engaged with the platform and whether they make use of it on a regular basis. The data collected also provided information on how this platform is used to get political information during the electioneering period.

Taken together, a majority of the respondents (55%) were active on Twitter. One fifth of the respondents (20%) said that they were very active and just over a third (35%) said that they were somewhat active. The survey reveals that a substantial proportion (45%) of the respondents was not really active on Twitter.

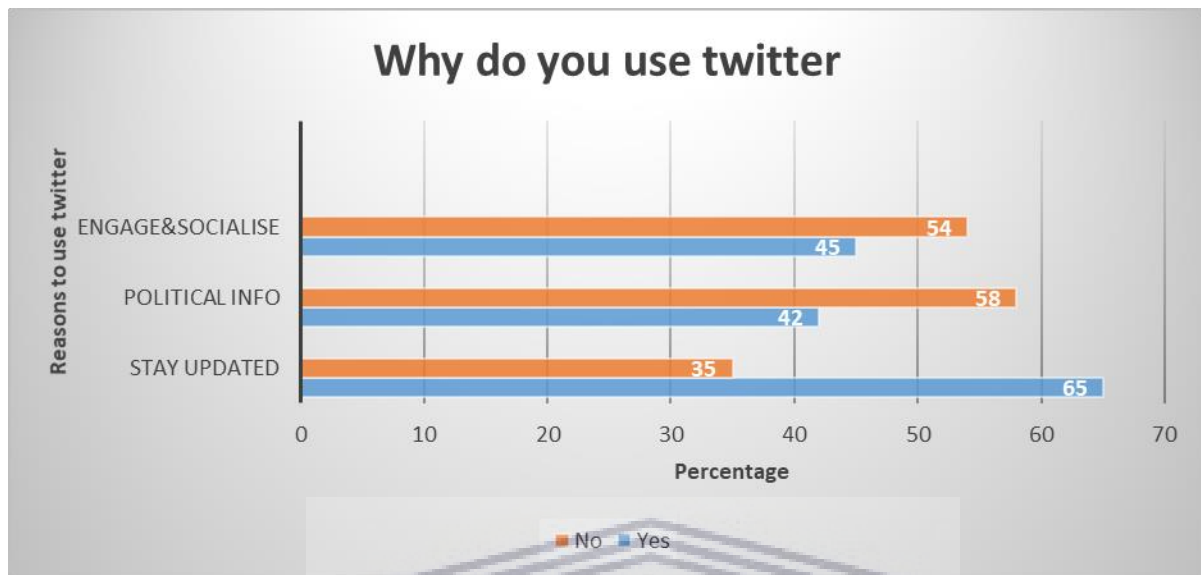
**TABLE 5- ACTIVE TWITTER USERS**

Are you an active Twitter user?	
Very active	20%
Somewhat active	35%
Not really active	45%
Total	100%

Respondents were asked “what do you generally use Twitter for?” and were allowed to give more than one answer. The findings presented in graph 1 below shows that the respondents note the importance of Twitter as an important tool to receive political information, stay informed about what is trending as well as use it to engage and socialize. The analysis shows that a majority of the respondents (65%) affirmed that they use Twitter to stay updated on what is trending. This would include current affairs. The platform thus plays an important role in keeping the users informed on newsworthy information. Over half of the respondents (58%) indicated that Twitter provided them with political information. This demonstrates that political parties do have a Twitter audience which means that the content posted by parties should be carefully considered. Another 54% of respondents indicated that they use Twitter to engage and socialize.



**GRAPH 1: THE USE OF TWITTER BY PARTICIPANTS**



Question: What do you generally use twitter for?

Given the fact that higher proportions of the sample use Twitter for obtaining political information and to stay up to date with what is trending, this could potentially also be seen as part of the aspects of campaigning. Engaging among people (students) that are politically interested would clearly interlink with ‘involving’ and ‘connecting’. The users of this platform would engage and debate through the use of hashtags which Twitter users take as topics of discussion. Political parties also engage through these hashtags that the followers make use of. However, it would be for political parties to make use of the platform for engagement. Otherwise, the users might only engage with each other and have minimal engagement directly with the political parties.

Respondents were also asked whether using Twitter helps in informing them about political parties and mobilise them to be actively involved in politics. A majority of respondents (58%) said that Twitter helps in informing them about political parties and exactly half (50%) said that it helps in mobilising them to be actively involved in politics.

Respondents were also asked about what they perceive as the advantages of using social media. In the table below (Table 6) the majority of the respondents (71%) reported that they use social media for sharing information and political content. This gives an indication on how this platform, in



particular for the given sample tested, could further engage with the political content posted by the respective parties. Almost half of the respondents (47%) felt that an advantage of using social media is to obtain campaign information. More than a third (37%) noted that they primarily use the platform to keep in touch with party leaders. This means that they are particularly interested in the party leaders' views on certain topics.

**TABLE 6-THE PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

What would you say are the most important advantage(s) of using social media?	Yes (%)	No (%)
Sharing information/ political content	71%	29%
Keeping in touch with political party leaders	37%	63%
Learning technology becomes easier	35%	65%
Campaign information	47%	53%

Respondents were asked a series of agree/disagree questions regarding Twitter and political parties. Notably 66% of the sample indicated that they use Twitter to engage with political parties and their debates. Under half said that they consider the information on Twitter valid and trustworthy (44%), that they were satisfied with how political parties are portrayed online (40%) and that the tweets by political parties improve their perceptions of the party (44%). Again, this demonstrates an eagerness to engage through Twitter.

**TABLE 7 -PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTY TWITTER ENGAGEMENT**

	Strongly agree/agree	Strongly disagree/disagree	Don't know
I consider the information on Twitter valid and trustworthy	44%	35%	21%
I am satisfied with how political parties are portrayed online	40%	33%	17%
The tweets by these political parties improve my perceptions of the party	44%	45%	11%
I use Twitter to engage with the political parties and their debates	23%	66%	11%
I consider twitter as a medium that is for political parties to engage with voters	60%	29%	11%

A majority of the respondents (64%) followed political parties. This shows a relatively high engagement with political content. This is fortunate in the context of this study because it means that they are suitable respondents to give insights on the use of Twitter by the ANC, DA and EFF.

**TABLE 8- EXTENT TO WHICH POLITICAL PARTIES ARE FOLLOWED ON TWITTER**

Do you follow any political parties?	
Yes	64%
No	35%
Not answered	1%
Total	100%

In the survey 46% said that they follow the ANC, 37% said that they follow the EFF and 35% said that they follow the DA. In reality the EFF had the largest Twitter following of these three parties. Nevertheless, these respondents provide useful insights about how the campaigns were received because they are Twitter users that were following political parties.

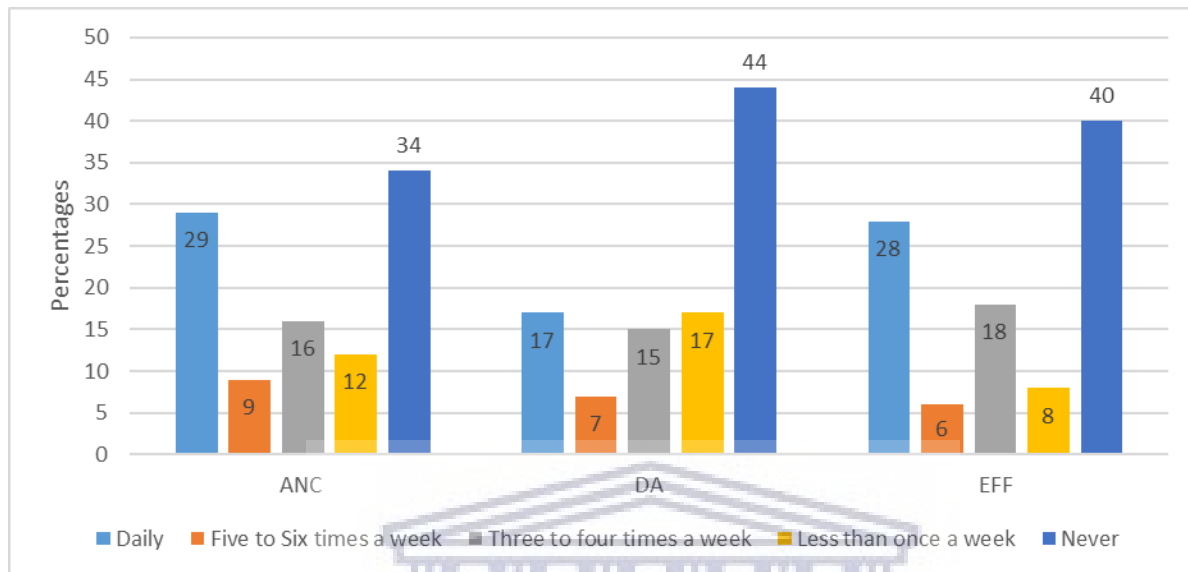
**TABLE 9- PARTIES FOLLOW**

If yes, which parties?	
Follow ANC	46%
Follow DA	35%
Follow EFF	37%

In graph 2 below there is a breakdown on how often respondents received Twitter updates from the three political parties on the party policies and political content during the election campaigning period. Substantial proportions of the respondents chose the option to not see any content from the political parties about their policies and any other political content on their tweets - ANC (34%), DA (44%) and EFF (40%).

About a third of respondents (29%) said that they note daily updates from the ANC, 28% for the EFF and the DA at 17%. These respondents can therefore be seen as extremely actively on Twitter. When combining those that said they received updates daily, five to six times per week and three to four times a week, majorities of respondents were actively receiving updates from the ANC at 54% and the EFF at 52%. However, about a third of the respondents (34%) received updates from the DA daily, five to six times per week or three to four times a week.

## GRAPH 2: FREQUENCY OF TWITTER FEEDS ON POLICIES AND POLITICAL CONTENT



Question: How often do you see twitter updates from the following political parties about their policies or political content? Daily, Five to six times a week, Three to four times a week, Less than once per week, Never

### 5.4 HOW THE CAMPAIGNS WERE RECEIVED BY RESPONDENTS

The aim of the survey was also to understand what the respondents thought of the content posted on Twitter by the ANC, DA and EFF during the campaign period. To obtain this information three open-ended questions were posed. These were:

- In your opinion, how informative were the twitter updates from the ANC/ EFF/DA? (Please elaborate)
- What is your personal opinion about the quality of the content of the tweets from the ANC/DA/EFF? Is there a need to improve and how? (Please elaborate)
- How effective was the use of twitter by the ANC/DA/EFF during the pre-election period? (Please elaborate)

### 5.4.1 HOW INFORMATIVE WERE THE TWITTER UPDATES?

In response to the question in your opinion, how informative were the twitter updates from the ANC/ EFF/DA? (Please elaborate)” most respondents gave general answers rather than focusing on a particular political party. The responses can be categorised into three broad groups. The categories are: those that indicate that they do not follow political parties, those that felt that the Twitter updates were not very informative and those that felt that it was informative. The majority of respondents felt that the tweets were informative. However, a substantial proportion felt that the tweets were not informative.

The table below note that the majority of respondents found that Twitter was informative and kept them up-to-date about the campaigns. One of the respondents noted that “They are informative because I keep up with that the EFF does and what it says through their leaders. It also informs me on the stance that they take.” The EFF is the only party that mainly stands out in the responses as being informative. The table above is the responses from the respondents and majority in the survey noted the parties being investigated were informative. One of the respondents noted that; “very informative looking specifically at the EFF keeps me up to date with things going on.” Another respondent states that; “twitter updates from the ANC and EFF were very informative, everything trends we got to see how political leaders engage with people where they were a glimpse of what they would do when in power.” These respondents mention the political parties that they felt were informative on twitter during this period. “They are informative because I keep up with that the EFF does and what it says through their leaders. It also informs me on the stance that they take”. The EFF is the party that is mentioned quite often in the responses of in the survey, giving the notion of visibility they were quite informative during this period.

**TABLE 10- TWEETS WERE INFORMATIVE**

<p><b>Informative</b></p> <p>EFF posts are informative</p>
--

Because I only follow the DA, their updates are informative especially highlighting what they doing as well as the blames of the ANC

Due to following key political figures, I was always aware of political parties, main countries with a key emphasis on Western Cape

Easy way to be in touch with new developments and discuss with others

EFF and DA were very much informative via twitter.

For me the twitter updates from the EFF and the ANC were very informative as I have learned their contents and mandates on their updates on twitter. I also read the EFF manifesto on twitter

Gave me information about the aims and objectives of the party

Generally, twitter is the platform that is best for direct interaction following political parties means you get updates directly from the party. Which informs me of the political activities

I am from the states so I do not follow South African politics but twitter is informative with parties from the USA

I saw their campaigns and everywhere that they went, visiting different people in the different areas of the country. They were informative in showing their campaigning for the people

In my opinion they helped me to be aware of the EFF and its engagement

In my opinion try help me learn about the issues in South Africa and understanding what is going on keep people aware of issues

It was very informative to display their campaign and political things

It was very straight forward, the twitter updates would state what the political parties does, what they stand for and what they will do at the moment

More on how they state they will improve the country and better themselves than other political parties

Quite informative, everything about political activity is shared on twitter

Quite informative, it gives out the basic information and its straight to the point

Social media information is very informative as it gives regular updates on the party and what they are currently up too. It also includes past and present information about the party and the electorate was very honest on these platforms

The twitter updates emphasise how each political party works in the provinces. It was in fact very informative because us as citizens have the power to interact with the various political.

The twitter updates from the parties only portray themselves in positive views only, never admitting their mistakes however they were informative to the extent of informing citizens about their prospectus and the positive change they've brought to the country

The twitter updates in relation to many political parties are either over-informative on the individuals lives or under-informative on the changes that will take place for the country

The twitter updates of the political parties are based on the campaign information and the things that are planning to implement rather than that they are busy criticising each other

They are informative because I keep up with that the EFF does and what it says through their leaders. It also informs me on the stance that they take.

They are not informative but they rather help with campaigning because of the rate in which they trend

They are very informative because political leader will talk about something than if don't know you will go search up on it in order to know it

They gave their promises that they are going to keep stating what they going to if they win, they gave all info needed

They give details about political events and post about their movement regularly so you are always informed about new information regarding the political party

They are more informative in the sense that they were able to mobilise people and encourage them to vote.

They were clear and attractive to their audience

They were generally very informative but at times just gave the list/summary of the important points because I think that is how most millennials consume information

They were informative on twitter platform I am able to engage with political parties have more information on their wishes for the country

They were informative telling us where and what the party is doing and also showing the users where they campaign

They were just giving information about what they have achieved on, nothing more

They were quite informative but the twitter updates were very delayed.

They were quite informative because they get to see how the political parties relay information and how they interact with citizens and other political leaders



Through twitter I am able to see the party's manifesto and their recent accomplishments, in detail. It also gives me a sense of how active they are in the community and the amount of followers

Timely updates of ideology of parties and new campaigns

To have knowledge about particular political parties more especially the content come from political party leaders not just social media pages

Twitter updates from the ANC and EFF were very informative, everything trends we got to see how political leaders engage with people where they were a glimpse of what they would do when in power

Twitter updates were informative towards ANC because it shows that what is ANC planning to when they are elected by the South African citizens and the implementations that are being done by the ANC

Very informative

Very informative

Very informative because they keep us updated with the individual events these political parties part takes in

Very informative looking specifically at the EFF keeps me up to date with things going on

Very informative on what they plan doing for their votes after people have voted for example the misfortune that happened in KZN they are doing their best in reaching a better state

Very informative, ANC always updates where they are and what they are doing. EFF is always trending with any given topic.

Very informative, telling us everything about the party

Very informative, they help keep abreast of where the parties are campaigning, the issues they are raising as well as their positions regarding specific issues

Very. They inform on nearest party location, when campaigning

The table below shows the responses of those respondents that felt that the Twitter updates were not informative. The ANC was mentioned by one respondent and the DA by another two respondents. One of the respondents felt that the DA is very negative on Twitter. One respondent indicated that ANC leader, Fikele Mbalula, acts like a celebrity. Another said that it's more of a popularity contest". There was also a sentiment that parties focus on what other political parties

are doing wrong. One respondent likened the parties to being like “a little child” and attacking each other. Another respondent noted that these parties can make better means of informing them and giving the necessary information and not being limited.

**TABLE 10- TWEETS NOT INFORMATIVE**

<b>Not Informative</b>
All parties- not as informative as what it could be, they should make their various policies more foreground on twitter
ANC posts were not that informative because Mbalula is acting as a celebrity, average they could do a better job in tweeting
In my opinion they were not informative in any way
DA is not informative
DA is very negative on twitter
ANC needs to do more on giving out information via twitter
Not effective
Not entirely informative because there were parts of information missing
Not generally informative, more like a popularity contest
Not informative enough, didn't expand on their respective manifestos enough
Not informative- no posts appeared in my news feeds
Not much informative they just share videos and pictures of them campaigning nothing interesting
Not really informative because political parties mainly focus on what other political parties doing wrong instead of what they are going to do improve economic growth and maintaining the economy
Not really informative, most of the social media platforms
Not really informative, twitter feed that I see does not really provide much information. I would see one or two posts about political parties
Not really relevant

Not that informative, the tweets I came across were just slander  
Not that much just short and intended to lure your mind  
Not very informative as it was political banner  
Not very informative in most cases they just state the obvious jobs, corruption  
Not very informative, they just post updates about where they were campaigning and all  
Nothing new, these parties are nothing but lip services to the people. They refuse to engage in questions that seek accountability from the party or individuals that have been implicated in corruption.  
It was not informative at all  
They were not informative because I hardly get any updates  
They were not very informative but tend to be like a little child and attacking each other  
It depends on the content in the updates but hardly ever informative  
They are rarely informative other than squabbles between them. I believe the platform can be used to critically engage public participation and opinion rather than to serve political party interests.

The table below shows the responses of those that say they do not follow political parties on Twitter. This gave a clear indication in the study that there are users on Twitter that do not show any interest in following the ANC, DA or EFF and they chose the option on the survey that they do not follow the parties investigated in the study.

**TABLE 11- DO NOT FOLLOW PARTIES ON TWITTER**

<b><u>Don't Follow</u></b>
Don't follow
Don't know
I do not follow any of the above political parties so I wouldn't know
I do not have twitter however the updates, I view through other social media outlets are generally important as a political update that reaches a social platform must be of great importance
I do not know as I do not follow any of the three political parties
I do see any twitter feeds
I don't see political updates on twitter
I don't use twitter, but what I see on the news, it works because citizens have been complaining and commenting
I have none since I do not have twitter
No opinion because I have no interest
Not
Not active on twitter at all
Not applicable
No comment
Not interested

#### **5.4.2 QUALITY OF THE TWITTER UPDATES**

The respondents were also asked a question of the quality of the tweets. There was a strong sense that the quality of the content should be improved. The table below provides responses that note the sentiment that there is a great need for the quality of the tweets to be improved. One respondent

noted: “to improve they need to engage on content provides accountability and full transparency” the respondent suggests there the tweets need more engagement. Another response gives a suggestion on what the parties can do on this platform and notes that; “I think they should use the platform to educate rather than to promote themselves.” However, the majority of the responses just note that the quality is not up to standard and there is a great need for it to improve. They also note how the political parties mainly, DA and EFF rather speaks of the EFF instead of promoting their own party on the platform. Therefore, the parties would do well to understand what the users actually want to see on the platform. This would enable parties to make use of it more effectively.

**TABLE 12- NEED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE CONTENT**

<b>Improve the quality</b>
I think they should use the platform to educate rather than to promote themselves
Improve because some might get offended or some tweets to aggressive
It reached out the masses, it needs to improve in making their manifestos/plans more relevant rather than bashing other parties (the DA particular)
It sometimes feels like spam and I would like to suggest they have better quality control
There is a definite need for improvement, definitely to filter what is being said and to have some form of responsibility and formality that needs to be taken to consideration
There is definitely space for improvement on the quality of content on both DA and EFF. There content is based more on how the ANC is corrupt and were they are lacking instead it should inform the electorate about what they can do
There is much improvement needed
They could improve and do better
They could improve the content of their tweets i.e. how they relay their tweets, but it could take away the authenticity of their intent
Yes, the political parties must tweet the transformation updates that have been applied and work rather than tweeting plans which will be implemented in future which are not directed to the needs of the people
Yes, there is a need to change
Yes, there is, there should be more interaction and more informative updates provided

Yes, that platform can be used to access those that use twitter often to inform them about the political parties

Yes, there is a need to improve there could be less joking around and more serious things could be updated

Yes, they need to improve by actually interacting with the people of SA in issues that affect them because there are many problems people are faced with that are overlooked.

Yes, they should be able to show us results of their service delivery at least weekly which they do not do.

The content is very boring not well looked at on content of the ANC, there is a need to improve DA very negative about other parties, they need to improve

The EFF and ANC seem to be more about promises and not enough information on what they will do they need to improve

The DA is more of anti-ANC not much on solutions they need to improve

The quality can improve and be more elaborate.

The quality is average more information can be added

They must improve because mostly the content comes from their individual accounts meaning it will be their personal opinion which will influence the audience

They need to address permanent issues and how they will fix them

They need to use the platform effectively, share party content more often

There should be an improvement because the information can be affected by emotional drive instead of being professional. This influences people to think the wrong thing sometimes

They should improve

Tweets can improve by members of the parties not only listing their positives but also accepting their downfalls and how they plan to improve on that.

The content is not that accurate

Yes, there is a need to improve in the sense that they can censor things that are being uploaded.

Bad quality, yes one needs to improve to become successful

To improve they need to engage on content the provides accountability and full transparency

Its informal there is nothing positive about change of the lives of South Africans

Not good enough

Not good at all

Not good enough, too much fear from the DA ANC focuses too much on what they did in liberating the country  
Not good quality

The table below provides the responses of respondents that felt that there was no need to improve the content. As can be seen from the responses, they were quite happy with the content being provided. They note that the content is political and no need to improve, the one respondent noted that; “good quality across all three parties.” They see no need to improve and rather keep the tweets as they have been during this period, the one respondent noted the EFF specifically and said; “the EFF has the most active leaders on twitter, for me they are always on point discussing the social issues which is what the people want to see. There is no need for them to improve the quality its good and they engage.” They also mention that it’s informative and helps, noting no need for the quality to improve.

**TABLE 13- NO NEED TO IMPROVE THE CONTENT**

**No need to improve**

ANC content is fine even the political leaders are hilarious so it makes you want to keep up with what is happening and they do remind us of events

The news from the DA is of good quality making use of written and video platforms. I don’t see any problem with the quality of their news feeds

DA election campaign on social media sites are the best due to them spending more on campaign than the ANC and EFF

EFF content is available for people to read

EFF content is available for people to see so I wouldn’t suggest anything because there is no competition

EFF is more often on twitter this makes it more accessible than others

EFF is ok

EFF have great content on twitter



The EFF has the most active leaders on twitter, for me they are always on point discussing the social issues which is what the people want to see. There is no need for them to improve the quality its good and they engage.

Good quality across all three parties

Content is political no need to improve

I sometimes find twitter can be a lot easy and descriptive and tend to engage

I think it is quick and reliable because if you are trying to find something out about the political party, you can use social media and you will usually find out what you were searching for

It is not about the quality but about marketing

It was good no need to improve anything

Its great it shows that they have people who know a lot about social media and campaigning

It was good but they need to remember to keep things short and simple

No need for improvements

No need to change

No need to change anything

No need to improve

No there is no need to improve everything is fine

They satisfactory

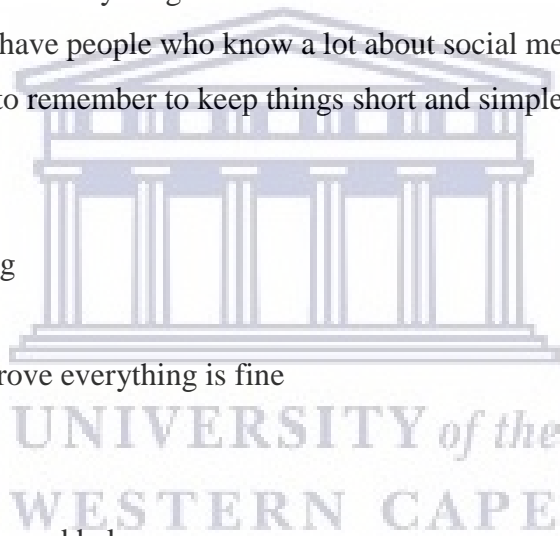
They good

They were very informative and helps

Twitter is twitter so I don't think one can improve anything

They gave all information that the public needs to know

The content is very informative.



The table below notes how the quality of the tweets were good but there could have been improvements that could have been made. The twitter respondents noted that the political parties give information, but it is not as sufficient according to them. The respondents want the parties to have more information on specific things such as their policy documents, debates and more

information on the political party. There is information and the quality is good but there could have been a lot of improvement that the parties should note.

**TABLE 14- QUALITY IS GOOD BUT OTHER IMPROVEMNETS CAN BE MADE**

<p><b>Quality is good but other improvements can be made</b></p> <p>Nothing but would like more policy- based tweets which may formulate debate</p> <p>People could only show the positive as they upload their own information but it keeps the public informed</p> <p>Political parties need to further improve their tactics since they are using millennials tools. They need to give a lot of information in a short concise format that is straight forward</p> <p>The content is something that needs to be re-evaluated because of the fact that many times political parties speak about things that concern various citizens, but not everyone can contribute because they are not on twitter.</p> <p>The quality of the content is fine, should try more social media platforms</p> <p>The quality of the content of the tweets from ANC are good but they should improve.</p> <p>The tweets were of good quality however there is room of improvement in all the parties' tweets.</p>
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The table below provides the responses of respondents that stated they had no interest or were not familiar with the content. This gives an idea of respondents who did not note any content from the political parties investigated in the study. They are not familiar with any content on Twitter that is based on ant of the political party being investigated in this study. Some respondents note they do not know because they do not have any interest in this content of political parties, or they do not even see any content from the political party.

**TABLE 15- DONT KNOW THE CONTENT**

<p><b>Don't Know</b></p> <p>Don't know</p> <p>I am not familiar with any content from either of the political parties</p> <p>I cannot give any insight because I have not received any information</p> <p>I did not see any posts</p> <p>I do not know</p> <p>I don't know</p> <p>I don't know I don't check that much</p> <p>Not interested</p> <p>Not need because I'm not interested</p> <p>Need to check it out</p> <p>No comment</p> <p>No specific opinion</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
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The table below is an indication of responses that noted that the tweets were based on mudslinging and immaturity. The quality of the content was based on what the other party was doing rather than promoting their policies. Respondents noted that they were constantly fighting and complaining about each other rather than showing their progress and using the tool for political communication during this electioneering period.

**TABLE 16- MUDSLINGING IN THE TWEETS**

<p><b>Mudslinging</b></p> <p>It was a huge joke, majority posts are to bad mouth other political parties</p> <p>Content wise they are childish in a sense that they are constantly fighting like two-year olds who do not know how to use this tool smart and to their advantage.</p> <p>Each party need to sell off itself without trying to drag the name of the other it seems petty</p> <p>Much of the political feed online is mudslinging from one party to another as entertaining as it maybe it does not provide a canvas for progress</p>
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Personal opinion about the quality of the content of the tweets considering political party is that I mostly see political parties complaining about the next  
Yes, it should be, talk more on their ideas than attack each other  
The quality is somehow immature at often times. There is a greater need for improvement which in return will change how the parties are perceived by the public  
The quality is average needs more decent information on party policies and their manifesto

### **Unrealistic Promises**

Some of the 'promises' made by the parties are unrealistic. They also tend to point out the flaws of other parties instead of implementing their own and improving their own

The issue of unrealistic promises closely interlinks with the view that tweets are about mudslinging. The perception was that the tweets would be promises but would not become a reality.

### **5.4.3 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF TWITTER**

The table below shows how the respondents noted the political parties were effective on twitter. They used the platform to give information on the political party and what they were doing during the time. The response noted that the political parties being investigated give information on their stance as a party and giving information on their campaigns. The information provided by the parties was informative and assisted in the decision making when voting furthermore evoked conversations and discussion among the youth. The majority of the respondents noted the effectiveness and say the parties used it correctly and gave more ideas on what more they can use this platform to be more effective. One respondent noted that twitter was effective because political leaders used social media to communicate and campaign targeting the youth who ate always online on Twitter. Twitter also assisted parties in gaining more followers as the platform became more popular during this time. One respondent noted that “it was highly effective as they gained more followers leading to more supporters.”

**TABLE 17- THOSE THAT REGARDED THE TWEETS EFFECTIVE**

**Those that regarded it effective**

Twitter was more effective because political leaders used social media to communicate and campaign and by that they targeting the youth which is always online on twitter

EFF was very effective as it brought all the information to twitter

Effective because they want to get votes

Effective in where they are and their stance

Effective, it made me realise who I don't want to vote for more than who I do want to vote for

For the EFF it was very effective as it brought forth job opportunities in a sense or a manner of marketing

Given the following on twitter as well as the optics the use of twitter looks effective. I think it's more for the EFF because they gained more followers

It is effective as it changes many perspectives of the nation about the lives of our politicians

It is effective because I see everything clearly

It was effective because more people went out to vote

It was effective because political parties kept informing users about their potential objectives and the influence to vote for them

It was effective because they showed places that they improved, only because they need.

It was effective, it shows us videos and pictures

It was highly effective as they gained more followers leading to more supporters

It was not that effective

It was really effective because we knew the percentages

It was used as good platform to sell their party and this to engage with ordinary citizens

It was very effective as it informed people about the various campaigns that was taking place mainly rallies, in addition they took an extra mile by calling and smsing the electorate

It wasn't much effective because these parties are campaigning the something and it's a repetition of empty promises

Very effective

Very effective

Very effective because I was aware

Very effective because it is a crucial election year

Very effective by the way they told us to go vote

Very effective especially from the DA, they are extremely busy on Facebook campaigning for their party and pointing and the ANC faults

very effective in making us aware

Very effective it gave me the urge to go vote

Very effective it was constant reminder of where to place your loyalties

Very effectively used as a platform to engage

Very effective, especially with the youth

very effective, more people were informed and persuaded

Very effective, they were on the ball telling us about their party

Very much effective as the date for elections get closer the more effective the parties make use of twitter

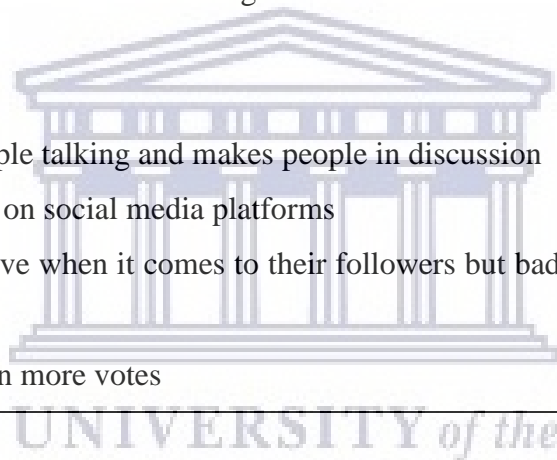
Very useful updates

Very, it keeps talking people talking and makes people in discussion

All parties are very active on social media platforms

In some cases, it is effective when it comes to their followers but bad for those who were not really buying their ideas

They all stepped up to gain more votes



The tables below note how a few of the respondents did not see the tweets of the political parties as being effective. They did not see the tweets as informative or did not even see any tweets on their feeds, the other respondents were not interested in this or did not bother to follow the political parties. However, this was just a small number of respondents who noted this and don't see the need for the parties to use this platform.

**TABLE 18- THOSE THAT DID NOT REGARD IT AS EFFECTIVE**

**Those that did not regard it as effective**

I would say that it was very effective because social media has taken over the way news is transferred and circulated. Newspapers, print media is slowly phasing out.

I wouldn't say it was effective, because it didn't motivate me to vote

Not effective

Not effective as I did not see any posts

Not that effective because each the different parties were just debating instead of advertising themselves

Not very as I am yet to see pre-election promotion on my twitter feed

Not very effective

Relatively effective

Satisfactory effective

They are not effective

The table below shows responses of respondents did not know if there was any form of effectiveness in the tweets of the political parties being investigated in the study. These respondents did not have any interest to note if they were effective or not, these can be noted in the sense that they did not notice or would rather not apply to them.

**TABLE 19- THOSE THAT WERE NOT COMMITED OR DID NOT KNOW**

**Those that were non-committed or did not know**

ANC-not that much, DA-always on the go, DA- not really

Don't know

I did not follow the pre-election period

I do not notice

I don't know

I have been inactive

I have no idea

No comment

Non

Not applicable

Not interested

Not relevant

Unfortunately, I had not witnessed much of the various parties twitter feed



## 5.5 HOW THE ANC, DA AND EFF TWITTER CAMPAIGNS WERE RECEIVED

As the data shows, respondents had mixed views on the ANC's Twitter campaign. One respondent stated that the use of Twitter gave the electorate an idea of what the ANC will do if voted into government. *Respondent 77 noted, "Twitter updates were informative towards the ANC because it shows what the ANC is planning to do when they are elected by the South African citizens and the implementations that are being done by the ANC."* Another respondent shared the same sentiment that the platform was used to the full advantage of the ANC as a communication (information) tool during the election campaign period. *Respondent 72 said "the ANC is using Twitter in their advantage because they are writing what they will implement and post videos of what they plan on doing."*

In contrast, another participant had a different view on what the ANC is doing on Twitter and how effective the party's digital campaign was on this platform. *Respondent 40 said: "ANC posts were not that informative because Mbalula is acting as a celebrity, EFF posts are informative"*. Although the use of Twitter increases the amount of interaction between the party and voters, it could also portray a 'positive' or 'negative' image of the ANC depending on how the messages are received.

Similarly, there were mixed views on the DA's Twitter campaign. Some respondents felt that it was very informative and of a good quality. However, several respondents commented on the focus on negative campaigning and how the party expended a lot of energy pointing out the flaws of the ANC and EFF.

One of the respondents noted the effectiveness of platform sending out key messages about the DA. *Respondent 67 noted: "Very effective especially from the DA, they are extremely busy on Twitter campaigning for their party and painting the ANC faults"*. This response illustrates how the DA used the platform as a key communication tool as a means of reaching out to the electorate. This view was also shared by another respondent who noted that the DA made sure that sufficient

information about the party is shared as much as possible. There were also other ‘positive’ views regarding the DA’s online presence, especially relating to the key messages that were posted. Respondent 67 said: *“I follow the DA and their updates are informative, especially highlighting what they are doing and what they blame the ANC for doing.”* The respondent added that *“the news from the DA is of good quality making use of written and video platforms. I don’t see any problem with the quality of their news feeds”*. Based on the responses, the Twitter platform had been useful for the DA to inform the users about their campaign and what they aim to do if elected into power.

Others commented on the need for improvement by the DA. Respondent 49 noted: *“It reached out to the masses, however it needs to improve in making their manifestos/plans more relevant rather than bashing other parties”*. This view was shared by another respondent who said the following: *“There is definitely space for improvement on the quality of the content on both the DA and the EFF. Their content is based more on how the ANC is corrupt and where they are lacking instead it should inform the electorate about what they want to do”* (Respondent 51). The respondents feel that although sufficient information was shared, the party needs to improve the content that was posted on Twitter during the campaigning period.

Based on the responses from the Twitter users in the survey, it would appear that the EFF fared better in executing their campaign. The EFF received several positive comments from the respondents. Respondents noted that they could see the frequent activity by the party on Twitter. A respondent in the study noted that *“The EFF is campaigning a lot on Twitter, the party leaders are very active and have a large number of followers which gives the party advantage to campaign on the platform”* (Respondent 32). Another respondent said: *“The EFF is very effective as it brought all the information to twitter, I found their manifesto as a link on twitter”* (Respondent 66). Twitter users in the survey saw the campaigns by the EFF on twitter to be effective. It is further noted that the information shared by the EFF left a positive party image with the respondents. One respondent clearly gave a viewpoint on this, *“Respondent 92 said; “the content was very informative looking specifically at the EFF it keeps me up to date with the things happening in the party”*. Another respondent alludes to the sufficient content made available by the EFF on Twitter which gives a clear outlook of the information provided by the party on twitter.

*“Respondent 59; “The EFF content is available for people to see so I wouldn’t suggest anything because there is no competition.*

Furthermore, another respondent pointed to the EFF interacting with users on the platform, making the content available and making sure to have a connection with the users during this period. *“Respondent 32 said; “The EFF has the most active leaders on Twitter. For me, they are always on point discussing the social issues which is what the people want to see.”* This viewpoint was shared by *Respondent 94 who mentioned: “The EFF is more often on Twitter this makes it more accessible than the other parties.”*

There was a visible connection by the party and the Twitter users as they always tend to debate on issues and expect responses from the users and respond to users’ comments on the platform. The EFF has effectively involved and connected the users as they were the party with the most active mentions through hashtags throughout the period of campaigning. Therefore, it can be noted that they have successfully used Twitter as a communication tool in the period of campaigning because they have effectively informed, involved and connected the users. The function of mobilising is one that became a limitation in the study because one cannot directly note if the tweets on the platform mobilized users.

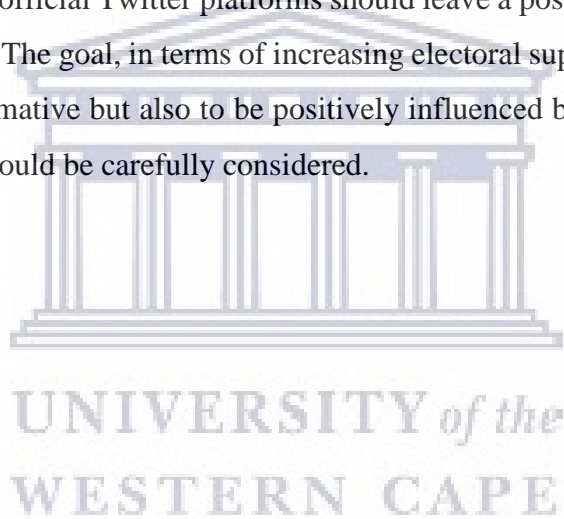
## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The chapter demonstrated how Twitter can play a crucial role in the electioneering process. Respondents observed that information was always available, there were images, videos and posters giving all the relevant information regarding the 2019 campaign. In addition, the parties made use of the live option on Twitter to directly involve users when they had an event so they could follow the activities. This is an informing tool in web campaigning as the users were part of events and would know what is occurring.

Users of Twitter in the survey wanted to engage with political parties, particularly political leaders. Respondents found the tweets to be informative but felt that much could be done to improve the quality of the tweets through, for example focusing on substantive issues rather than pointing out

the flaws of competing parties. While many respondents had positive perceptions about the how the Twitter platform was used and engaged by the ANC, DA and EFF, many respondents critiqued their use of Twitter. They indicated that the parties were at times childish and that they should add more policy content.

Overall, the data demonstrated that Twitter could be used to the advantage of the political parties because the majority of respondents would use the platform to share party information. This in turn could potentially create political awareness among their followers. Political parties can utilise this social media platform to connect them to as many users in the hope to attract more followers and supporters. Parties can capitalize on the use of Twitter, however they would need to think carefully about their content because it could portray the party either in a positive or negative way. The content posted on their official Twitter platforms should leave a positive image with the voter rather than a negative view. The goal, in terms of increasing electoral support, is not only for users to consume and share informative but also to be positively influenced by it. This means that the content posted by parties should be carefully considered.



## 6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will conclude and answer the central research question of whether the ANC, DA and EFF effectively used Twitter as part of their campaign tools in the 2019 elections. As a Twitter user I followed the ANC, DA and EFF to obtain information on the tweets of these political parties. I focused on the two weeks leading up the election manifesto launch of each political party up until the day of the election. In addition to this I conducted a survey of Twitter users to get an understanding of the Twitter strategies of the ANC, DA and EFF from the perspectives of the users and to find whether they were engaging with these political parties.

The strong growth in the number of people who have access to the Internet and are active on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook have had an impact on the way political parties engage with their electorate during campaign periods. A substantial benefit of the platform is that it provides political parties with a mechanism to go beyond providing information to voters. Twitter enables a two-way conversation between political parties or political leaders and the broader public. In this context, this study sought to examine the ways in which the ANC, DA and the EFF used Twitter as a communication tool during the campaigning period in the 2019 elections. The main objective of this research project aimed at answering an overarching question: *How effectively have South African political parties (particularly the ANC, DA and EFF) used 'New Media' as a communication tool in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?* Based on that analytical framework and the design of the study, the central research question was into two sub- questions. These were:

- How effectively has each of these political parties used Twitter to inform citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?
- How effectively has each of these political parties used Twitter to involve and connect citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

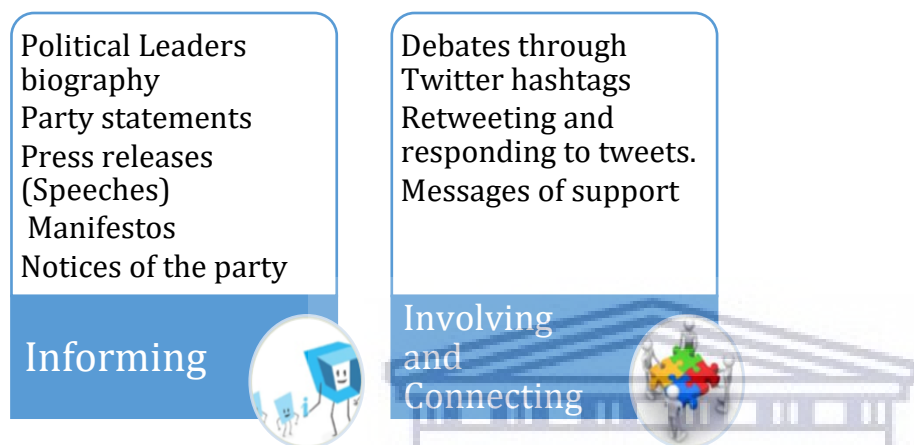
Ultimately, the importance of the study relates back to democracy and that a quality democracy requires political communication to occur especially during campaigns. The literature revealed that good quality election campaigns are important for a strong democracy. As Africa (2008: 17) argues “if competitive elections are an essential component of democracy and such elections require good quality campaigns, then, by extension, good quality election campaigns are also critical to the quality of democracy”. Africa (2008: 38) adds that to contribute to the quality of the democratic system campaign messages should be conveyed as widely as possible and through accessible and credible mechanisms”. According to Owen (2017:2) “New Media have triggered changes in the campaign strategies of political parties, candidates and political organisations”. Campaigns are now likely to be done through online platforms and gain momentum through sharing of posts and updates through social media platforms.

Therefore, there is a need to understand how political parties use these tools of communication during campaign periods. This in turn raises the larger questions of whether the use of Twitter by these political parties are enhancing election campaigns and thereby strengthening the quality of democracy in South Africa.

## **6.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In the research I used the framework by Foot and Schneider which is divided into the four pillars of: informing, involving, connecting and mobilizing. This constitutes what political parties are meant to do during election campaigns to be effective - they must inform, engage and connect the constituency as well as mobilizing them. However, this study has rather grouped them, to be three and combine the ‘connecting and involving’ pillar to be analysed as one. The mobilizing pillar has been noted to be a limitation in the study since it was not possible to assess this aspect with the methods and data collected.

The diagram below shows how the theory guided the collected and analysis of the data.



### **Model of Assessing Communication Tool (Online Platforms/New Media)**

In Foot and Schneider's framework, informing refers to the traditional role of providing information to the public. In this case one can look at how the political party uploads their policy positions, their manifestos and all the legal documents for voters to be able to have access to them. It is important that a campaign has accurate information about the party and their candidates. The information function (i.e. informing) is critical in the campaign period because it informs the voters which assists them in choosing which party they want to vote for. The first aspect outlined by Foot and Schneider is the easiest for political parties to fulfil. There are many ways to inform people and it merely involves the provision of information and content.

The function of 'involving' concerns establishing an interaction between the site creators and the site visitors, which may range from receiving messages of support, notices and many other forms. According to Foot and Schneider, involving as a campaign practice concerns the opportunity to establish interaction between users and campaign organizations. It encourages debates on current issues faced by voters and what the political parties aim to do to address the issues that they are



faced with. It gives motivation to voters to exercise their democratic right to participate by interacting with the parties on the online sphere, by establishing a relationship with the users. The online platforms can also create conversations between the candidates and the voters, so look at things like hashtags that were used during the electioneering process. Involving and connecting people is a harder task because it requires engagement of the target audience. Thus, if a political party manages to involve and connect their potential voters via Twitter, they would have more successfully used it than a party that has only provided information to their potential voters.

The final aspect outlined by Foot and Schneider is mobilizing. According to the authors some campaigns engage in the practice of mobilizing in which a user involves another actor in the goals and objectives of the campaign, mostly to recruit other citizens to support the campaign. Mobilizing refers to citizens showing support by taking some kind of political action such as wearing campaign stickers, shirts, attending rallies or persuading others. The most difficult aspect is to mobilize potential voters. This is also the ultimate objective of political parties because it could mean increased votes and therefore improved performance at the polls. Unfortunately, this is also the hardest aspect to measure. To obtain an accurate picture of whether Twitter mobilized voters, a far more extensive and nuanced study would need to be conducted.

### **6.3 THE CONTEXT OF THE 2019 ELECTION**

The context of the 2019 elections was a highly contested environment with deep-seated grievances over land redistribution, allegations of state corruption and anger about the state of the economy (Southall, 2019). Additionally, the political parties included in this study faced many internal battles. The ANC entered South Africa's sixth democratic elections with many burdens lingering in the political party. The ANC was facing severe difficulties. In particular, the Zondo Commission which was set up to investigate State Capture negatively affected perceptions of the ANC (Gevisser, 2019). As Schulz-Herzenberg (2019:170) indicates, public trust in the ANC, and in its ability to govern effectively, had plummeted. The DA also had its own internal battles before they went to the polls in 2019. As Africa (2019) indicates between 2014 and 2019 the DA struggled with major internal divisions and leadership issues which affected its credibility. The internal fighting brought about confusion and uncertainty for voters. In 2018, the party had court battles

with Patricia De Lille, the former Mayor of the City of Cape Town. The fallout between the DA and De Lille led to her leaving the party and the formation of GOOD (Gerber, 2019). The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was under spotlight for alleged corruption and underhand dealings. The issue of the VBS Mutual Bank saga, the Limpopo bank that was looted by politicians, government representatives and unscrupulous businessmen over the course of several years. “The Great Bank Heist”, which exposed all the sordid details of the dubious transaction at VBS, including the names of those involved (Keytle, 2019).

Thus, the country and contesting political parties were faced with many political issues and challenges prior to the elections. All political parties had a massive amount of work to do convince voters to support them. The use of Twitter as a communication tool was one of a range of tools that could be used to provide voters with campaign communication as well as engage with them. Political parties could benefit directly from the growing use of the technology.

#### **6.4 AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

The ANC received its lowest result at national level since 1994. Given the political landscape and the serious challenges that the party faced going into the elections, the result is not entirely unexpected. According to Butler (2019:81) “the results came in very much in line with expectations in the national vote where the ANC achieved 58% on a low turnout”. Butler (2019:81) adds that ANC proved that a party can campaign against itself and win”. Africa (2019) concurs with Butler. She argues that the 2019 election saw a substantial change in the overall campaign theme of the ANC - rather than emphasizing twenty-five years of democracy, the party campaigned under the promise of a ‘New Dawn’ under Cyril Ramaphosa. Africa argues that while the focus on a new dawn was a difficult and perhaps risky message to deliver, it spoke to the reality that the ANC and the country were facing.

What then of the ANC’s 2019 campaign and in particular the use of Twitter in that campaign? How effectively did the ANC use twitter to inform citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

The ANC made successful use of the Twitter platform during the 2019 campaign period. The party effectively shared information with their Twitter followers. Twitter has become an important information sharing tool for the ANC, especially to reach their various constituencies. Information was made available to Twitter users in different ways including videos and images. The party made sure to inform and involve users on a regular basis. Political party information such as their manifesto, press releases, party statements and leader's biography were also shared on the platform to create a sense of political awareness.

The ANC effectively used Twitter in the 2019 election campaign period as a tool to provide information to users. The party was active on Twitter throughout the run up to the elections. It had posts on twitter on a daily basis. They successfully informed their constituency (that are users of Twitter) about all aspects of their campaign. The ANC had key campaign Twitter hashtags which they used throughout the campaign. The party maintained these hashtags and used them as part of the key messages for the campaign. This made it easier in terms of searching for the party on Twitter - users could just search for their hashtags and they would be able to access the tweets about the party.

Tweets of the party's policy stances were provided. The party had press releases with various media houses and there were live videos posted on Twitter to make sure the Twitter users and the electorate can have access. The party statements, which are also found on the party websites, were put up and made available on Twitter, the party statement would be attached as an image with a link to the party website for further reading.

The ANC also effectively provided information on Twitter using posters. The political leaders of the party were active and were deployed in specific areas to campaign. The images provided as posters were to indicate where the campaigns will take place, giving vital information such as: Date, Time, Venue, and Political Leader speaking to the people during the campaign. The manifesto was provided as a link on the twitter feeds, the user would click on the link and it would direct you to the party's manifesto document. They ANC had live tweets throughout the manifesto

launch and have a live video on the Twitter page to have the information available for Twitter users. Their events were well documented on their official twitter page with pictures of where campaigning was happening and what they were doing. The “FACT OF THE DAY” tweets included information on the party’s achievements, key historical figures and providing information on woman heroes. The ANC’s Twitter campaign was also boosted by influencers and celebrities with people such as fashion designer David Tlale and Media Personality Penny Lebyane using the hashtags and retweeting.

Beyond providing information to users, how effectively did the ANC use Twitter to involve and connect citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

To an extent the ANC managed to involve and connect with users. The ANC managed to gain followers since their content was trending through hashtags and retweets. The ANC received comments and retweets on the updates they posted, which gives a clear indication that they had reached out too many users. This was noted through the activity on twitter. As a frequent Twitter user, I checked the ANC official page frequently during the time of the data collection period and the election campaign period. The party received support through the tweets as many followers would comment and engage with the tweets. The invitation tweet of President Ramaphosa was retweeted 762 times (CyrilRamaphosa2019; Twitter Q&A with President Cyril Ramaphosa under the hashtag #HolaMatemela 2019) (Shange, 2019). In this way there was connection formed with the party and the constituency on the twitter platform.

However, while there were comments from users, there was no response from the political party Twitter handle to those comments. There was no clear interaction established with the party representatives on Twitter and the online users. The connection and involvement were therefore between the users with each other and not between the party and the users. This means that the ANC had a one-way stream of communication during a period meant for engagement and interaction. The users interacted with the party official Twitter handle but with minimal responses or no responses at all. This overlooks a fundamental part of web campaigning because the party gets the opportunity to speak directly to the users and understand what they want from the party

through the conversations and debates formed on Twitter through the use of hashtags. Although political leaders of the ANC did in fact engage with voters, this lack of response by the party to users was a big void and a lost opportunity.

Based on a review of the ANC's Twitter campaign activity, it can be said that the party placed great emphasis on the 'inform' pillar in web campaigning. The ANC made strong use of Twitter but primarily for the purpose of informing. Their Twitter campaign linked strongly with traditional methods that have always worked for the political party. This provided a good starting point for their campaign; however, the party did not fully establish a relationship with their Twitter users since it only posted with no response to any of the users' comments. The relationship that was maintained was between the users themselves and not the political party. The connecting function of web-campaigning was not as strongly utilized. This might have been a strategic choice of the ANC given the context of the elections and the challenging internal dynamics that the party faced.

## **6.5 THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE**

In 2019 the DA's support at national level dropped down slightly to 20.8% and at provincial level in the Western Cape, support declined from 59% to 55%. Again, given the serious challenges that the party faced going into the elections, the result is not entirely unexpected. As Africa (2019) indicates between 2014 and 2019 the DA struggled with major internal divisions and leadership issues which affected its credibility. The court battles with Patricia De Lille, the former DA Mayor of the City of Cape Town and the issues around former Western Cape Premier Helen Zille where she asked to vacate various decision-making structures of the party are only two examples of these leadership challenges. The campaign messages were also regarded as problematic. Jolobe (2019:95) argues that the DA had a weak campaign in the 2019 elections. According to Jolobe (2019:95) the campaign made bold unrealistic claims about a provincial police and rail service and was characterised by message incoherence on key issues such as land reform, black economic empowerment and affirmative action. Additionally, the party received negative backlash from society because it campaigned in the name of tragedy and loss of the people who died in Marikana and the Life Esidimeni tragedy by erecting a billboard with all their names as a campaign strategy. In Gauteng, the DA launched the 'The ANC Is Killing SA' campaign. The DA erected a billboard

with the slogan “ANC is killing us” and listed the names of the victims of the Marikana massacre, the Life Esidimeni tragedy, and school children who died in pit latrines. This billboard came with a lot of backlash when it was erected by the party because the names written on the billboard were victims of tragic circumstances. As Africa (2019) argues the extent of negative campaigning was counterproductive. Families of the Life Esidimeni victims said the decision to create the #TheANCIsKillingSA billboard had opened old wounds (Khumalo, 2019).

Despite these observations the DA has always run a strong campaign which resulted in the growth earned them the title of the “official opposition” in South Africa. What then of the DA’s 2019 campaign and in particular the use of Twitter in that campaign? How effectively did the DA use Twitter to inform citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

The DA effectively used Twitter as a communication platform for informing users during the 2019 elections. The party made extensive use of Twitter as a campaigning tool during the run up to the elections. The DA was extremely active on the platform and made use of the party leaders Twitter handles to inform their constituency on a regular basis. As in previous elections, the party’s 2019 campaign covered a range of campaign techniques including the use of Twitter. Their Twitter campaign linked strongly with their traditional methods of campaigning. The party made use of Twitter on a daily basis to let users know about events that were planned and what the party planned to achieve.

All party-related information was directly linked to their twitter handle. The party’s official Twitter handle mostly retweeted tweets from the party leaders. As previously indicated, there was a strong link between the accounts of the DA leaders and the official DA account. Information was primarily provided through retweeting, not the party directly tweeting. Although the tweets would not directly be from the party, they would still appear on their timeline because the official party handle had retweeted these tweets.

The DA posted tweets on every single event to keep their followers well-informed about the day-to-day activities of the party. The DA also made sure that information was made available to



Twitter users in different ways and formats. A substantial number of tweets related to the launch of their manifesto. They had tweets about their manifesto and where to find it on their website. The DA made use of video with Twitter to a great extent. The party shared live videos of their manifesto launch. They also used videos and images to provide information on their manifesto and policy positions. What was most tweeted were videos by the party campaigning and images of their campaign trail in the various constituencies. The party did make use of the live option on Twitter to keep users informed if they are not able to be part of the manifesto launch. In addition to links to video clips of speeches and other activities, their adverts were put as links on the tweets for the users to click on the link and watch the advert on YouTube. Press releases, party statements and leader's biography were also shared on the platform to create a sense of political awareness. The DA had hashtags they used throughout the campaign. The party had tweets with images attached showing where the party leaders were campaigning.

Beyond providing information to users, how effectively did the DA use Twitter to involve and connect citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

To an extent the DA managed to involve and connect with users. The party made sure there is enough campaign information for the online users to engage with. The DA managed to gain followers since their content was trending through hashtags and retweets. The numbers of followers increased on a daily basis. They had many retweets through the Twitter feeds during campaigning. Users commented and tweeted about the DA in their favour and agreeing with what the party stands for. As such the DA utilised Twitter's interactivity.

During the time period of the research the party had limited interaction with users on Twitter. The DA did not respond to tweets. There were no two-way conversations between the party and voters or rather making the candidate of the party available to answer questions posed by the Twitter users. Thus, as in the case of the ANC, it can be argued that the DA did not fully establish a relationship with their Twitter users - it posted only with no response to any of the users' comments. So, while Twitter was extensively as a communication tool to convey information during the campaign, it was not used optimally to connect and engage with potential voters.



The DA made successful use of the Twitter platform during the 2019 campaign period. Their Twitter campaign linked strongly with traditional methods that have always worked for the political party.

Based on a review of the DA's Twitter campaign activity, it can be said that the DA made strong use of Twitter and utilised the 'inform' function very effectively. The party had a continuous online presence. The DA informed users about campaign activities telling them what they were going to do and where. They also indicated their vision as well highlighting their track record in the Western Cape. This provided a good starting point for their campaign; However, their use of Twitter did not fully incorporate the "involving" function of web campaigning. It was observed that the DA did not 'connect' with the users by responding and having conversations through the platform with the users. A more connected online campaign on Twitter could have benefited the party much more in 2019. The DA could have had more engagement with the party leaders on the platform. As in the case of the ANC, this might have been a strategic choice given the challenging internal dynamics that the party faced and the controversy around the former Western Cape premier's engagements on Twitter.

## **6.6 THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

The EFF has grown since their establishment prior to the 2014 elections. According to Roberts, (2019:108) "the EFF was the party that grew the most relative to the 2014 electoral results, the party's national support increased by 4.4% and 706.665 votes to give a total of 1.9 million votes and 10.8% of all valid votes, which stands in stark contrast to the patterns observed for the ANC and DA". Thus, despite the challenges that the party faced going into the elections, the party gained votes unlike the ANC and the DA.

How effectively did the EFF use Twitter to inform citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

The party made extensive and strong use of Twitter as a campaigning tool during the run up to the elections. The EFF had extensive growth on twitter since it joined twitter in November 2012. The party managed to gain more followers on Twitter although they joined it later than the other parties. The EFF had a strong presence on twitter throughout the 2019 campaign.

The EFF made successful use of the Twitter platform during the 2019 campaign period and had the greatest breadth of popular participation in the study. Like the ANC and DA, and as in previous elections, the party's 2019 campaign covered a range of campaign techniques. This included a strong focus on social media including the use of Twitter. Their Twitter campaign also linked strongly with their traditional methods of campaigning. There was also a strong link between the accounts of the EFF leaders and the official EFF account.

Like the ANC and DA, the party made use of Twitter on a daily basis to let users know about events that were planned. Tweets were also generated on a daily basis to give information on affairs and events happening in the EFF. The party had tweets with images attached. There were live videos, posters, their manifesto launch updates and all the necessary information about where the party would be campaigning. The party made use of links to video clips of speeches and other activities.

The party also made use of Twitter to let users know about what the party planned to achieve. Their campaign was centred on the theme "our land, our jobs now". This was the key message used throughout the 2019 campaign. The EFF had a major following with one of their campaign slogans; 'EFF Red Friday' where they took their campaign to all spheres of society. This included churches, toll gates, the Rand Show and door-to-door campaigns. Political party information such as their manifesto, press releases and party statements were also shared on the platform to create a sense of political awareness. The party successfully informed the users about the party's positions and activities throughout the period of campaigning. The EFF had a strong focus on sharing their policy positions via Twitter.

How effectively did the EFF use Twitter to involve and connect citizens in the run up to the 2019 national and provincial government elections?

The EFF had hashtags they used throughout the campaign. The Twitter following of the party grew and they documented their everyday activities through the use of tweets and hashtags on this platform. They had many retweets through the Twitter feeds during campaigning. For example, the Red Friday campaign supporters would post images of them in the party regalia showing their support and therefore increased activity and interaction on the party feeds.

Unlike the ANC and DA, there was interaction established with the party representatives on Twitter and the online users. The users interacted with the party official Twitter handle and the EFF leaders were active by tweeting the same tweets as the official account. As such the EFF utilised Twitter's interactivity more than the ANC and DA. The party used twitter to inform and connect the electorate. The interaction on the party's timeline shows how they had a major response on the Twitter platform. Compared to the ANC and DA where there was limited interaction with Twitter users, the EFF also had a clear connection with users. The leaders of the EFF and the official party handle would respond and interact with the Twitter users establishing a relationship on the platform. The leadership of the EFF made sure they endorse the tweets of the party by retweeting it and reaching out to too many users. The EFF was responsive as they would reply to certain comments on their official party twitter account or there would be responses directly from Julius Malema.

Based on a review of the EFFs Twitter campaign activity, it can be said that the party placed great emphasis on the 'inform' pillar in web campaigning and also attempted to go beyond merely providing information. The party used the 'involving' function of web-campaigning by connecting with the Twitter users online.

## 6.7 THE SURVEY OF TWITTER USERS

The Twitter survey that was conducted in this study sought to understand how the Tweets by the ANC, DA and EFF were received by Twitter users. A majority of the respondents (55%) are active on Twitter. A majority of the respondents (65%) also affirmed that they use Twitter to stay updated on what is trending. This would include current affairs. Over half of the respondents (58%) indicated that Twitter provided them with political information. Almost half of the respondents (47%) felt that an advantage of using social media is to obtain campaign information. More than a third (37%) noted that they primarily use the platform to keep in touch with party leaders. This means that they are particularly interested in the party leaders' views on certain topics. Respondents were asked a series of agree/disagree questions.

Respondents were also asked whether using Twitter helps in informing them about political parties and mobilise them to be actively involved in politics. A majority of respondents (58%) said that Twitter helps in informing them about political parties and exactly half (50%) said that it helps in mobilising them to be actively involved in politics. Respondents were also asked about what they perceive as the advantages of using social media. The majority of the respondents (71%) reported that they use social media for sharing information and political content. A majority of the respondents (64%) also followed political parties. This shows a relatively high engagement with political content. This was fortunate in the context of this study because it meant that they were suitable respondents to give insights on the use of Twitter by the ANC, DA and EFF. In the survey 46% said that they follow the ANC, 37% said that they follow the EFF and 35% said that they follow the DA. In reality the EFF had the largest Twitter following of these three parties. Nevertheless, these respondents provide useful insights about how the campaigns were received because they are Twitter users that were following political parties. Substantial proportions of the respondents chose the option to not see any content from the political parties about their policies and any other political content on their tweets; ANC (34%), DA (44%) and EFF (40%). About a third of respondents (29%) said that they note daily updates from the ANC, 28% for the EFF and the DA at 17%. These respondents can therefore be seen as extremely active on Twitter. When combining those that said they received updates daily, five to six times per week and three to four times a week, majorities of respondents were actively receiving updates from the ANC at 54% and

the EFF at 52%. However, about a third of the respondents (34%) received updates from the DA daily, five to six times per week or three to four times a week.

Notably 66% of the sample indicated that they use Twitter to engage with political parties and their debates. Under half said that they consider the information on Twitter valid and trustworthy (44%), that they were satisfied with how political parties are portrayed online (40%) and that the tweets by political parties improve their perceptions of the party (44%). Overall, the data demonstrated that Twitter could be used to the advantage of the political parties.

The results point to the fact that the content posted by parties should be carefully considered. Given the fact that high proportions of the sample use Twitter for obtaining political information and to stay up to date with what is trending, this could potentially also be seen as part of the aspects of campaigning. Engaging among people (students) that are politically interested would clearly interlink with 'involving' and 'connecting'. The users of this platform would engage and debate through the use of hashtags which Twitter users take as topics of discussion. Political parties also engage through these hashtags that the followers make use of. However, it would be for political parties to make use of the platform for engagement. Otherwise the users might only engage with each other and have minimal engagement directly with the political parties.

The majority of respondents found that Twitter was informative and kept them up-to-date about the campaigns. The respondents feel that although sufficient information was shared, the party needs to improve the content that was posted on Twitter during the campaigning period. While many respondents had positive perceptions about the how the Twitter platform was used and engaged by the ANC, DA and EFF, many respondents critiqued their use of Twitter. They indicated that the parties were at times childish and that they should add more policy content. Respondents observed that information was always available - there were images, videos and posters giving all the relevant information regarding the 2019 campaign.

Respondents had mixed views on the Twitter campaign of the ANC and the DA. While both parties received many positive comments, the ANC was negatively mentioned by one respondent and the

DA by another two respondents. Several respondents commented on the focus on negative campaigning and how the party expended a lot of energy pointing out the flaws of the ANC and EFF.

Based on the responses from the Twitter users in the survey, it would appear that the EFF fared better in executing their campaign. The EFF received several positive comments from the respondents. They highlighted that there was a visible connection by the party and the Twitter users as they always tended to debate on issues and have a two-way engagement.

The survey results demonstrated an eagerness to engage through Twitter. The platform thus plays an important role in keeping the users informed on newsworthy information pertaining to political events and the election campaign. This gives an indication on how this platform could further engage with the political content posted by the respective parties.

## **6.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

The review of the Twitter campaigns reveals that the three parties had coherent Twitter campaigns which worked hand-in-hand with the balance of their traditional campaigns. All three effectively used Twitter to inform their followers. The parties all used the platform as a communication tool to reach out to as many Twitter users as possible. The parties effectively shared information with their Twitter followers. Twitter has become an important information sharing tool to reach their various constituencies. The parties had their presence felt throughout the campaign period. However, the EFF was the most interactive of the three. The party responded to Twitter users and followed up on tweets.

All three parties made extensive use of hashtags to convey information about their campaign activities, build momentum around their manifesto launches and explain their policy positions. The parties did manage to ‘mobilise’ more followers during the campaign period since there was an increase in their following on twitter. They also built on the other components of their campaigns. They linked up with Facebook and provided links to videos or used the live function.

However, they did not fully incorporate the “involving” function of web campaigning. The parties mostly made use of the information function by having a constant online presence. The ANC and the DA used the platform in a vacuum as they did not have any connection established with the constituencies on Twitter. The EFF was the only party who made the effort to use it to their great extent as they made sure they do not leave the constituencies hanging but rather respond and reply to any of the comments posted.

While this study did not delve into other campaign techniques, the use of twitter must be seen within the context of the rest of the campaign. For example, the DA ran an aggressive SMS campaign which may have turned voters off from the campaign messages. It would be important for future research to look at the various platforms in relation to the more traditional modes of campaigning as well as how this was received by voters. The ANC and the DA have yet to fully harness the power of Twitter for campaign purposes.

It can be reasonably assumed that voters want more than a static “provision of information” approach. The platform of Twitter provides responsive engagement and interaction on a scale which was not previously possible. Yet, this innovative platform was still primarily used for the purpose of providing information. The ANC and the DA the might have done this as strategic choice given the challenging internal dynamics that they both faced going into the elections. While it might have been the “safer” option since they both faced considerable backlash from voters on a number of issues, a willingness to do the difficult work of engaging with voters on critical issues might well have served them better.

## **6.9 CONCLUSION**

The use of social media for communication is now embedded in all aspects of society. The study reveals that parties primarily used Twitter to inform voters in the 2019 election campaign. Yet Twitter remains a communication tool that can be more fully utilized in upcoming elections. As previously indicated a quality democracy requires political communication to occur especially during campaigns. Unfortunately, the study revealed that the two main political parties have yet to fully harness the power of Twitter. As Foot Schneider (2006) outline, it can be used in a far more



dynamic way to also involve, connect and mobilize. Parties can still capitalize more fully on the use of Twitter. To do this they need to think carefully about their content that they upload because, beyond increased engagement, badly-chosen content can be counter-productive. Given the worrying statistics declining voter participation among young voters, it is incumbent on political parties to fully embrace and use social media platforms to engage more thoroughly with voters.



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## 8 APPENDICES



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#### 8.1 APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET

**Political Studies Department  
Economics and Management Science, University of the Western Cape**

##### Participation in a Research Study

Research title: Assessing the use of ‘New Media’ as a communication tool by the ANC, DA and EFF in the run up to South Africa’s 2019 Provincial and National Elections.

##### Dear Participant

The research is undertaken as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master’s Degree in the Political Studies Department at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa. The researcher intends to use this material for academic purposes only. The study is being carried out by the student Simone Matika under the supervision of Prof Cherrel Africa.

Before you decide whether or not to partake, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear if you would like more information. Please take your time to decide whether or not to wish to take part in this research.

##### Purpose of the study

The main objective of the study is to conduct a deep analysis of the use of these new communication tools by political parties in South Africa. In particular, this study will focus on the African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). This study aims to look at the pre-election year (2017, 2018 and 2019) and how political parties and their leaders use social media (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) as a political communication tool during this period.

##### Description of the study

The main methodological technique that will be adopted is virtual ethnography, this is some sort of emersion in the online environment. This technique is the core element in this study as the study aims look at how the online space is used by political parties and leaders as an effective tool and it being part of the core principles of a democracy to have political communication. The qualitative methods that will be adopted are in-depth interviews with key stakeholders which are

representatives from the respective political parties that will be investigated which are; African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom (EFF). Focus groups and interviews will be conducted and will consist of different groups of people to be able to gain diverse answers for the study.

### **Confidentiality**

Due to the way the research is structured respondents will not be identified unless permission is given. You will not be personally identified and your identity will be kept confidential. Complete confidentiality is guaranteed should the respondent state so in the informed consent form. The researcher will ensure that the results of the study will be reported without referring to you directly unless you explicitly prefer to be referred to directly and you can formally consent to that for any or all parts of the interview. All records of the interview will be stored away in safe keeping until research has been completed, thereafter, it will be destroyed.

### **Voluntary participation and withdrawal**

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary that means you are free to decline participation. It is up to you decide whether or not to take part. Refusal to take part will involve no penalty or loss of services to which are otherwise entitled; and also, it will not impact negatively on your position in your organisation or leadership. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign the consent form). If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time- and without giving a reason. You may also choose to answer particular questions that are asked in the study if there is anything that you would prefer not to discuss, please feel free to say so.

### **Benefits and Cost**

The purpose of this study is to produce new knowledge; in this regard, your participation is highly appreciated as a contribution. There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interview, which will be approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will be conducted in a neutral or place convenient for you, to ensure no costs will be incurred. There is no risk attached to the study as it's just a few minutes of your time to give input on the required topic of various political parties and their communication methods.

### **Informed Consent**

Your signed consent to participant in this research study is required before I proceed to interview you. I have included the consent form with this sheet that you will be able to review the consent form and then decide whether you would like to participate in the study or not.

### **For more information:**

Contact student researcher: Simone Matika

Email: [simonematika@live.com](mailto:simonematika@live.com) or [3227037@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3227037@myuwc.ac.za)

Alternatively, and in case of complaint, please contact the supervisor:

Supervisor: Prof Cherrel Africa

Email: [cjafrica@uwc.ac.za](mailto:cjafrica@uwc.ac.za)

Telephone: 0219592180



# University of the Western Cape Department of Political Studies

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## 8.2 APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM

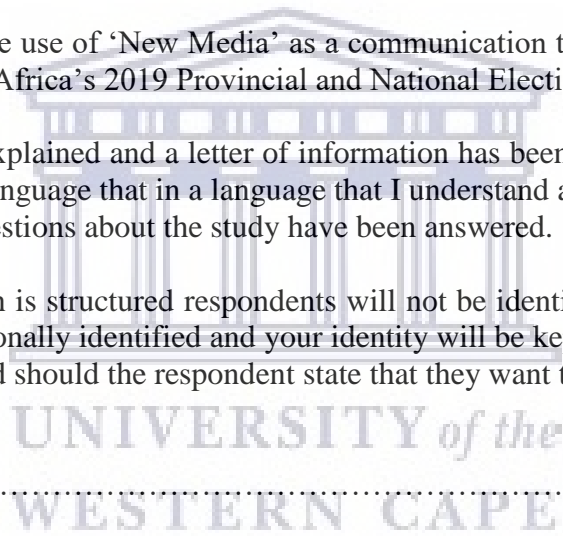
**Political Studies Department  
Economics and Management Science, University of the Western Cape**

### Participation in a Research Study

Research title: Assessing the use of ‘New Media’ as a communication tool by the ANC, DA and EFF in the run up to South Africa’s 2019 Provincial and National Elections.

This study has been fully explained and a letter of information has been provided. The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered.

Due to the way the research is structured respondents will not be identified unless permission is given. You will not be personally identified and your identity will be kept confidential. Complete confidentiality is guaranteed should the respondent state that they want to remain anonymous.



Participant’s name.....

Participant’s signature.....

I understand that my identity will not be disclosed if I wish and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

Would like to remain anonymous? Yes/No (circle your response)

Student researcher: Ms Simone Matika  
Email: [simonematika@live.com](mailto:simonematika@live.com) or [3227037@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3227037@myuwc.ac.za)

For any queries, please contact the supervisor:  
Supervisor: Prof Cherrel Africa  
Email: [cjafrica@uwc.ac.za](mailto:cjafrica@uwc.ac.za)  
Telephone: +27219592180



**8.3 APPENDIX 3: SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

**Participation in a Research Study**

**Research title: Assessing the use of ‘New Media’ as a communication tool by the ANC, DA and EFF in the run up to South Africa’s 2019 Provincial and National Elections.**

**Are you an active twitter user? (Please tick ✓):**

Very active	Somewhat active	Not really active at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**1. Do you follow any political parties?**

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2. If yes, which parties?**

	Yes	No
ANC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**3. What do you generally use twitter for?**

	Yes	No
To Stay updated on what is trending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage and socialise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. How often do you see twitter updates from the following political parties about their policies or political content?**

	ANC	DA	EFF
Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Five to six times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Three to four times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Less than once per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Do you think using twitter helps you in the following:**



	Yes	No	Don't know
Informing you about political parties			
Mobilise to be actively involved in politics			
Other (please specify):			

**6. What would you say are the most important advantage(s) of using social media?**

Sharing information/political party content	
Keeping in touch with political party leaders	
Learning technology becomes easier	
Campaign information	
Other (Please specify)	

**7. In your opinion, how informative were the twitter updates from the ANC/ EFF/DA? (Please elaborate)**

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**8. What is your personal opinion about the quality of the content of the tweets from the ANC/DA/EFF? Is there a need to improve and how? (Please elaborate)**

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**9. How effective was the use of twitter by the ANC/DA/EFF during the pre-election period?**

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**10. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements below:**

Statements:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

a) I consider the information on twitter valid and trustworthy					
b) I am satisfied with how political parties are portrayed online					
c) Does the tweets by these political parties improve my perceptions of the party					
d) Do I use twitter to engage with the political parties and their debates					
e) I consider twitter as a medium that is for political parties to engage with voters					



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