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# POST TRUTH 1

Venue: Eden Grove Seminar Room 1

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## POST-TRUTH: AN OUTCOME OF RELATIVISM, EMOTIVISM AND 'BULLSHIT'

Dr Marc Caldwell

University of Fort Hare

The term “post-truth” (last year’s ‘word of the year’) has entered our vocabulary as if the dishonesty, deception, and plains symptoms of emotivism in public discourse that have become a hallmark of corporate and political appeals (as reported in news media) are either something new, or have reached levels that make them a pathological condition of the public sphere. While utterances surrounding American president Donald Trump and South African President Jacob Zuma, for instance, are typically presented in the news as either untrue or as strategic ploys serving their political ambitions, there remains a curious sense that their audacity is either beyond any effective reproach, or that we have indeed entered a new era. It would be an era of humbug, balderdash, claptrap, hokum, drivel and any number of terms that describe the more innocuous-sounding ‘post-truth’. The difference, however, is that ‘post-truth’ indicates a condition where truth has little if any bearing on what may or may not be said ‘to be true’; and that publics and the news media have become impotent to speak truth to power.

A question sometimes asked is, “How did we get to this point?” Some commentators point to current conditions of news media and particularly the Internet as responsible for this condition. On the Internet, for instance, “everything is true”. Bloggers, the Twitterati, and peddlers of ‘fake news’ trade alongside professional journalists. Others consider the likelihood that *facts* – that term (along with *truth*) that we have become accustomed to putting in scare quotes – have become a discredited currency; that ‘non-facts’ or ‘alternative facts’ do actually count in public discourse, even if their use does not seem quite right.

Many of these views have warrant. However, blaming the messenger (journalism) and communication technology for the prevalence of post-truth phenomena is to seek an easy scapegoat for an otherwise more complex condition that fudges the difference between truth and lies. Practices of post-truth occupy the formerly demarcated space between these terms. Philosopher Harry Frankfurt refers to this space as the territory of ‘bullshit’ – one bit of truth combined with another bit of a lie. So long as it is plausible, and strikes a popular nerve, it becomes valuable current by which a dishonest or corrupt politician can ply through (and even manipulate) public discourse to serve his own ends. This, in Frankfurt’s brief diagnosis on the phenomenon, does not make the offender a liar, but does make him a far greater danger to public life. “The bullshitter,” he writes, “does not reject the authority of the truth, as the liar does, and oppose himself to it. He pays no attention to it at all. By virtue of this, bullshit is a greater enemy of truth than lies are” (1998: 132).

Beyond the outrage and dismay that political uses of ‘bullshit’ causes, a study of Frankfurt’s work (in this and other essays) provides us with a deeper understanding of the underlying public culture that gives post-truth its actual traction in public discourse. Other thinkers, such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor, arrive at a similar diagnosis. MacIntyre finds the seed in the malaise in emotivism. Taylor has long challenged the relativistic conception of truth that pervades social imaginaries of late modernity.

In short, these and other thinkers help us understand “how we got to this point”. Relativism (Taylor) and emotivism (MacIntyre) have helped make ‘bullshit’ (Frankfurt) our common sense. The paper applies views from these thinkers to the field of media ethics.

## DOWN THE FAKE NEWS RABBIT HOLE: A TYPOLOGY FOR FAKE NEWS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Ms Vanessa Clark

University of Cape Town

*A lie can run round the world before the truth has got its boots on.*

**Terry Pratchett, *The Truth***

Fake news as a phenomenon truly entered the mainstream in 2016: internationally during the US elections, and in South Africa around the local government elections. But is fake news an entirely new beast? Or simply the digital world’s version of propaganda, parody, satire, gossip and tabloid journalism? Undoubtedly the internet and specifically social media has given, and continues to give, this new entity wings. But is it really new?

An attempt to create a typology for fake news in South Africa, with the aim of supporting the efforts to curtail fake news and its dissemination, resulted in some unexpected nuances and complications.

These nuances highlight the limitations of the traditional anti-fake news tools; foreground the possible role fake news plays for its audience, and by extension, cast a spotlight on the challenges and complicity of the traditional media; plus consider the role technology has to play in differentiating today's "fake news" from iterations that have gone before.

Initial findings from a content analysis of some of the most widely read fake news sites in South Africa show there are two sides to fake news: its intent, and its reception. News might be fake in the way it is written or created, with a range of intentions from deliberate deception to earning ad revenue. But fake news is also deliberately received, from outright lies to information that is very difficult, or impossible to verify.

Readers appear to be captivated by fake news, and the emotions it provokes. Like the grand narratives of old, and more recently favourite urban legends, the same fake news stories stay in circulation, jumping from country to country with crude, minimal editing. What differs today is that readers have the unprecedented ability to share and by implication, endorse, the "news" that resonates. "We are all publishers" is what we are constantly being told, thanks to Facebook, Twitter and the like creating an effective and accessible mix of publishing capabilities and the networked effect.

It would be easy to dismiss readers as stupid for reading and sharing fake news, and to launch media literacy campaigns as a silver bullet cure. But this overlooks the possibility that the content creates meaning for the receiver that is not being met by traditional media in South Africa. This section of the analysis draws on Wasserman's interrogation of the role tabloids play in post-apartheid South Africa.

This view is bolstered by early findings that show an uncomfortable level of overlap between fake news sites and traditional news sites. Fake news sites also tell the truth. And traditional news sites also lie. And fact checkers sometimes make slip ups. This makes it challenging to create and rely on a checklist style "this is how you recognise fake news" remedy.

While the analysis is still in its initial phases, one inevitably approaches the uneasy conclusion that in part, one of the causes of the rise of fake news are the lacks in the traditional media, whether through poor reporting; underfunded, under-staffed and under-trained newsrooms; or publishers' obsession with clicks, shares and likes over sound journalism.

New media are being adopted, and concurrently new conventions of journalism set. This study hopes to contribute to this discussion by working towards a better understanding of fake news, the roles it plays, and the lacks it spotlights. Unfortunately it is unlikely that there are easy answers, but better understanding points to future areas of focus.

## **DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF TRUTH? SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE RISE OF ALTERNATIVE FACTS IN ONLINE POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

**Dr Samuel Kamau**

Aga Khan University

The advent of the internet and social media was supposed to herald a new era of democratic engagement and entrenchment of a democratic participatory culture because their ability to circumvent traditional gatekeeping barriers in the circulation of political information, unrestricted access to information and their ability to facilitate vibrant political discourse, the cornerstone of democracy.

Initially, there were high expectations that social media would re-invigorate democracy, but now, discourse has shifted from whether social media facilitates democracy, to whether social media is actually a threat to democracy.

While social media has given citizens enormous power to seek, receive and spread information and influence, it is also an effective purveyor of fake news, propaganda and disinformation and helps entrench polarized politics when users with extreme views and biases find affirmation in the social media echo chamber.

The surge of 'alternative facts', misinformation and conspiracy theories has both diluted and substituted the kind of dialogue originally hoped for and dampened the expectations on the internet's democratizing effect.

Social media platforms are now associated with the death of informed public discourse, total alienation and disinterest in objective truth, and online political discourses have morphed into self-indulgent irrationalism and obfuscation.

The unprecedented, yet hardly surprising rise of Donald Trump, propelled by a wave of populist anger, resurgent nationalism and a deep-rooted hostility towards immigrants, not only demonstrated the power of fake news, but also ushered us into an era of post truth politics, characterized by a popular mistrust of mainstream media and other credible information sources.

People now interpret news and events through the lenses of their own experience and beliefs. They are willing to ignore common sense, established science and any evidence that contradicts their beliefs however irrational.

The de-legitimization of mainstream media has left the people susceptible to fake news, where facts are debatable and can be 'altered' to suit one's beliefs.

This paper raises and addresses several important questions. One, was the much touted democratizing power of the internet and social media overstated, thereby placing too heavy a burden of expectation on the internet? Is the current post-truth era a temporary epoch in history or is it reflective of a deeper political shift that has found an outlet through social media? Finally, are digital spaces still viable platforms for informed political discourse?

## THE PERCEPTION OF THE CITY BRAND ON MEGA-EVENTS IN THE WAKE OF EPIDEMICS

**Dr Abyshey Nhedzi**

University of Johannesburg

Mega-events have become an important part of tourist destination branding. Considering that cities can be perceived as brands, events' organizers and city marketers strive to establish and strengthen them. In their efforts they use various branding techniques, including the hosting of mega-events. Attention to sports mega-events for the hosting cities continues to grow as a useful tool in place branding and marketing efforts. Historically a core audience for city branding has been and remains tourists. The conditions are in terms of popularity of the cities to the global population. Sports mega-events are undoubtedly part of a tourism product portfolio to maximize revenue, international trade and boost destination's brand image. Inevitably, sports and tourism are becoming interwoven as they satisfy both socio-economic and political agendas of both developed and developing nations. More intangible benefits including attracting of potential tourists and investors are perceived to outweigh the costs for the host cities in monetary and other demands. However, unlike previous research efforts, sports mega-events have not been empirically examined based on the context faced recently – the epidemic outbreaks. The increasing popularity of mega-events in the midst of pandemic outbreaks should be a subject of focus in the twenty-first century city branding as it is an alarming global challenge affecting the success of organizing entity and the leverage of host destination.

This research presents an analysis of the perceptions of the city brand - Rio de Janeiro - during the phase of preparing for global sports events, such as the 2016 Olympic Games amid an outbreak of the Zika epidemic. The article is about research that measures city brand perceptions of Rio as a host city of a sports mega-event. It addresses the gap in knowledge of the host city brand image among external stakeholders.

Using a quantitative and convenient and snowball sampling approach, a survey was conducted with 'potential sports tourists', rather than tourists who had already decided to visit a particular destination. Potential sports tourists were defined with the intention to focus on the views and concerns of potential fans or tourists living or work in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality located in the Gauteng province, South Africa. A survey questionnaire was administered on voluntary basis to 450 respondents.

Data captured records on Microsoft Excel was analysed using SPSS. The SPSS facilitates data summaries using descriptive statistics, tables, bar charts and graphic presentations.

The main findings of this study show that respondents had positive expectations of the city (Rio) prior to the hosting of a sports mega-event. By investigating the external stakeholders from an emerging nation, the study has broadened the context of city brand perceptions of a sports mega-event. Application of the method to Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), data revealed what the authors believe to be previously untested and unexpected patterns. For example, if a brand's reputation is affected by negative or unforeseen circumstances such as epidemics, tourists are likely to have negative associations with regards to the city brand (e.g., Africa CDC, 2016; Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010; Dvorak & Steiner, 2015). Tourists may avoid the affected destinations when they perceive that such destinations as unsafe or unattractive (Solberg & Preuss, 2007) as a result of negative perception awareness. Most of the previous studies either focus on residents' perceptions of the impact of hosting a mega-event (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011), or visiting tourists who are already in destinations (Smith, 2006; 2014; Knott, 2015). Few studies focus on international observers (Bodet & Lacassagne, 2012; Fullerton & Holtzhausen, 2012).

## MASS MEDIA AND THE PROPAGATION OF FEARS: A CASE STUDY OF VANGUARD'S COVERAGE OF THE 2014 EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK IN NIGERIA

**Mr Olutobi Akingbade**

Rhodes University

This paper, drawing on the mass media's communicative power and role in organising and determining the flow of ideas and news, brings to the fore the need for a more conscious and careful approach in the mass media's coverage of epidemics if the excessive fears and panic that accompanies most outbreak of viral and infectious diseases must be reduced. This is hinged against the backdrop of existing literature that asserts that the mass media has severally been linked to the generation and propagation of

fears during different episodes of social unrest, and on the gruesome nature of deaths caused by outbreaks of infectious diseases such as Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) (Nicholas & O'Malley, 2013; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2011). The EVD outbreak in Nigeria was first recorded in Lagos state (a state with air, land and sea ports of entry and a population of over 21 million) and is the first recorded EVD outbreak through air travel. This led to high restrictions in flights as fears escalated in many countries as a result of the viral disease outbreak (Fasina, et al., 2014).

Using *Vanguard*, a print medium organisation in Nigeria as case study, this paper presents an analysis and discussion of *Vanguard's* coverage of the 2014 EVD outbreak in Nigeria. The news stories and editorials between the months of July and October 2014 are presented as the timeframe, being the time from the start of the outbreak until the time World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the country free of EVD. As theoretical framework, this paper, embedded within the qualitative medium of enquiry, draws on the normative theories of the media as posited by Christians et al., (2009) and the agenda-setting function of the media as originally coined by McCombs & Shaw (1972). These theoretical postulations are drawn on to highlight the unique platform and power the mass media holds in creating awareness, steering attention to issues, persuading, shaping beliefs, actions and reactions of the consumers of disseminated messages and information.

## **CONCEPT PAPER: USE OF MEDIA FOR HEALTH COMMUNICATION AND TASK SHIFTING TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF AMR IN A RURAL HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING PROJECT**

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The rapid emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a major threat to public health worldwide, causing approximately 700 000 deaths annually, and predicted to cause up to 10 million deaths annually by 2050. Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are most vulnerable to AMR, which adversely affects health and development in these countries with under-resourced and over-utilised public sector healthcare facilities. Additionally, AMR increases the out-of-pocket expenses to procure more expensive second-line antibiotics, further affecting health and development issues. None of the 26 World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centres on antimicrobial resistance and usage, or infection prevention are in Africa. This further increases the negative impact on sustainability and socio-economic development of African LMICs in particular, but also of the world as a whole due to the rapid emergence and spread of AMR. Worldwide, there is a shortage of well-trained health workers, and the negative impact is high in LMICs, which is exacerbated further in remote and rural areas. South Africa is a low-middle income country, and approximately 83% of its population relies on public sector healthcare facilities. With a shortage of medically trained healthcare professionals, the quadruple burden of disease, and a 0.2% growth rate, a treatment-based approach alone is insufficient and ineffective.

This concept paper explores the options of synergistic combinations of media and health communication by auxiliary health workers, such as the community health workers, as a way of task shifting to address the challenges posed by AMR in the context of shortage of more specialised healthcare professionals, as well as the poor health outcomes. As a form of strengthening health systems, collaborative participation of auxiliary health workers with researchers (youth) and academicians from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) provides a community engaged way of influencing communities to make health-related choices. To compensate for the absence of sufficient healthcare professionals in LMICs and the resultant compromise of patient adherence counselling for rational use of antibiotics, mass media, such as television and radio, could be employed as effective ways to widen audience reach, persuade the target population to adopt better health-related behaviours as well as to inform them about important health information. The media for health promotion can increase the spreading and potentiating the impact of health and safety information, in turn increasing the impact to the audience networks and facilitating the information by sharing across the community. This will expand the reach out to include broader and more diverse audiences. Media can also improve the interactive communication, connection and public engagement, which may allow people to make safer and healthier decisions when it comes to health.

Community-based participatory research approaches and empowering health communication programmes can assist in strengthening Primary Health Care (PHC) and rural healthcare systems. Given the ongoing interests and momentum around AMR at the WHO agencies and member states, this project is expected to provide valuable lessons about strengths and weaknesses of anti-AMR efforts at rural, grassroots levels. Additionally, the project can be an important learning lesson in youth empowerment in addressing major health justice topics like AMR.

## **“SERVICE DELIVERY” PROTESTS: MEDIA FRAMES, SINGLE STORIES, PROTESTER NARRATIVES**

**Miss Linah Nkuna**

University of Johannesburg & UNISA

South Africa has been described by some as the “Protest capital of the world”. For anyone who watches the news or reads a newspaper in South Africa, even only on occasion, there is no doubt that so called “service delivery” protests have escalated in frequency, violence and severity over the past decade. At least, according to media coverage. Thousands of people from different provinces, different communities, different backgrounds with different living conditions and needs are represented more or less under the same media frame of “service delivery” protest.

This paper examines the representation of protests in selected media texts from 3 South African news media outlets namely, SABC, News24 and eNCA in order to question what appears to be a pervasive single story conveyed by the term “service delivery” protest. The study argues that there is a “single story” in how these so called “service delivery” protests are covered, one that is centered around violence, demands for services and poverty which suppresses many other stories from the protestors. The study further compares the media texts to all the protestor narratives that were collected through interviews. The notion of a ‘single story’ by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) is used as the conceptual framework to make sense of the media framing of protests in South Africa, in combination with media framing and narrative theory. Framing theory argues that people’s perceptions may be framed and influenced by the nature of stories represented in the media and helps to show how media has the power to eliminate voices or weaken arguments through framing. This study argues that this “single story” of protests has limited a many sided story to a one-sided phenomenon.

## **SELF AS PERFORMANCE: A METHODOLOGY FOR QUANTIFYING AND INTERPRETING A ‘VIRAL’ SOCIAL MEDIA ‘SCENE’.**

**Mr Alex Gwaze**

University of Cape Town

Internet access, specifically access to social networking sites and social media applications, has redefined not only how people communicate with each other but also a) what kind of information is admissible in the ‘conversation,’ and b) where that ‘conversation’ is ‘heard.’ Social media platforms in the form of audio-visual sharing applications, business networks, blogs, chatrooms, text-based apps, forums, gaming sites and social networks, have provided a large amount of data on ‘how’ people are using the internet to interact, express, publish and share their individual ideas, opinions and ‘social lives’ to a global audience. However, expansive as the data is on social media activity, the ‘motivation’ of the user oftentimes remains difficult to examine. By building upon established methods for interpreting audiovisual content, specifically Giannetti’s (2014) ‘Fifteen Elements’ of mise-en-scène analysis, Nichols (2005) ‘Six modes of Documentary Practice’ and Murch’s (2005) ‘Rule of Six,’ this study proposes an alternative methodology for quantifying and interpreting user generated audio-visual social media content, and stresses the possibility of analysing an individual post as a standalone source for data collection, to conduct social media research. This paper argues that a ‘viral’ social media post is a densely compact ‘scene’ that reveals a significant amount of information about the user and the context of the event – that is the individual’s agency and the immediate community’s cultural framework. It identifies (6) characteristics of a singular post - i) audience engagement, (ii) the context, (iii) framing, (iv) narrative structure, (v) individual agency and (vi) agenda – as key attributes that can be measured and understood. The paper concludes that all social media ‘scenes’ are inherently performative and reflexive because they [re] present recognisable evidence of an individual’s ‘social role,’ which is externally validated by the ‘public.’ The virility of the individual’s performance of this ‘social role’ is incidental and mutually linked to the aspirational goals of the user, which are consequently affirmed by their ‘immediate community’ and confirmed by the ‘extended audience.’ Therefore any and all social media posts are an opportune vehicle for self-expression and significant individual social agency in the global community.

## **MORDOR AND ME: STORY-ING AFRIKAANERDOM IN VIDEO GAMES**

Mr Tristan Jacobs

AFDA

In the digital landscape of modern society circa 2017, people are spending vast amounts of time committed to virtual environments and in many of these cases playing games. Storytelling as a human trait has shifted since the onset of the internet to include far more avenues for expression, representation and constructions of truth. By unpacking the 'ludic' in this discourse and converging it with the idea of survivability (as an African premise), my research aims to explore play and fantasy as mechanisms for representation in the Afrikaans concept of *oorlewe*. The latter was inspired by a talk at SACOMM 2016, and the former draws mostly on the insights of Jane McGonigal and Alison Gazzard; but also measures the influence of Tolkien and other fantasy world-builders as observers of radical change.

This paper considers Applied Ludology and Performance Studies as comparative tools for dissecting the video game *Middle-Earth: Shadow of Mordor* as case-study. Within fields of communication that question reality as well as power, Monolith's action adventure title bleeds the fictional world of Mordor somewhat into the player's own world by virtue of their iconic nemesis system. This component of the game processes data from the player's friends, in their separate game world, and uses their successes or failures in real-time to influence the player's unique story. This is but one example of how the game crafts truth to/ for the individual. One might argue that this ability to grip the imagination, to disrupt and blend realities is the power of video games. And this research considers what the future of communication and storytelling might be when games continue their delivery of open-worlds into our real one.

## **"ACCIDENTAL LOVE": THE ROLE OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE AND MASCULINITY WITHIN SCREEN NARRATIVES IN CONTEMPORARY AFRIKAANS ROMANTIC COMEDIES**

Dr Anna-Marie Jansen van Vuuren

University of Johannesburg

Whilst many of the South African films that were made in first 20 years after Apartheid addressed the social issues of the society, most of the Afrikaans filmmakers chose the commercially safe root of the romantic comedy. Where in the nineties the comedies of Leon Schuster and Willie Esterhuizen reigned amongst the white Afrikaans audiences, the commercial box office success of the romantic comedy *Semi Soet* in 2012, created a dawn for the new era – the Afrikaans romantic comedy. In the period between 2012 and 2015 about 17 Afrikaans romantic comedies were made – and most of them were the biggest local box office hits of the year. Although the romantic comedy is a genre with its own rules, conventions and formulas, it seemed that one device was frequenting all the Afrikaans romantic comedies that were being made. From *Semi Soet* to *Klein-Karoo*, *Pad najou hart* to *Vrou Soek Boer*, *Leading Lady* to *Moorivier* – in all of them the hero and heroine would meet by chance through him almost running her over with his motor vehicle. Why were all the filmmakers choosing this specific device in their story? This is not the most common "cute meet" in American romantic films, but it seems to be the one in Afrikaans romance films. As Joseph Campbell has correctly stated, there is only a certain amount of myths and stories in the world, and they keep on repeating themselves over and over again, however, it seems that the setting for the "boy meets girl" scenario in Afrikaans films seem to always stay the same. For the purpose of this paper the researcher will pose the question to the filmmakers "Why did you choose this way for the two main characters to meet?" and through their answers she will deduct some observations about the ideological viewpoints for the filmmakers and how it influences the narrative content that they make. This might seem to be a simple question, but if one considers that the Afrikaans target audience is a big part of the current South African cinema industry, it would be insightful to gain insight in how the creators of these commercially viable films make key decisions like these. In making films that are widely distributed and consumed, it would be giant leap for Afrikaans filmmakers to ask critical questions about South African society in their films, but instead they make the same romantic comedies, with the same formulas, not even changing the "call to action" for their two main protagonists. This paper will be an exploration into contemporary screen narratives and their creators: their beliefs about storytelling, narrative devices and plot, and how they regard this as influencing their audience and their identity construction.

## FASHIONING MEANING IN SOUTH AFRICAN FASHION BRAND MAGENTS LIFESTYLE APPAREL: THE GRAPHIC T-SHIRT AS SOCIO-POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Ms Ndu Ngcobo

Dr Lauren Dyll

University of KwaZulu-Natal

The graphic t-shirt as part of the fashion system constitutes part of a society's material culture used to articulate culture, politics and identity (Manan and Smith, 2014). As such, this paper regards the graphic t-shirt as part of the spectrum of communication channels used to convey socio-political information about specific South African collective identities. Drawing from the assumption that the meaning of clothing can be analysed from a designer's perspective (Barnard, 1996), this paper explores South African fashion brand Magents Lifestyle Apparel (Magents) as producers of graphic t-shirts that serve as visual communication about their target consumers' collective identity. The findings from this study reveal the manner in which Magents t-shirts utilise aesthetics to convey socio-political narratives about the shared histories and ideologies that informs their consumers' articulation of identity and belonging in contemporary South Africa.

The design process begins with the identification and analysis of the shared socio-cultural characteristics, opinions and lifestyle of a designer's intended micro-market (Jackson, 2007; Le Pechoux *et al.*, 2007). These shared characteristics enable the definition of each micro-market as a collective identity, and inform the design of a garment (Ashmore *et al.*, 2004; Loschek, 2009). The shared ideologies and history of Magents' micro-market inform the creation of particular messages conveyed through the process of fashion design. These messages communicate ideological teachings about black consciousness, socialism and the South African liberation struggle, contextualised within the broader narrative of a post-truth South Africa. The study of the aesthetics of graphic t-shirts thus reveals that designers are producers of cultural texts used by the consumer to express their beliefs and belonging (Melucci, 1995; Storey, 1996; Moletsane and Lolwana, 2012).

In equating the design process to the Encoding/Decoding model of communication, the knowledge used by the designer to encode meaning to a t-shirt reflects the frame of references required to decode the preferred meaning of a t-shirt (Hall, 2006 [1980]; Tomaselli, 2015). This serves as the rationale for the use of the Circuit of Culture's interlinked nodes of production; consumption representation and identity in arguing that fashion design— as a process of production — is a form of encoding communication. The t-shirt is the medium with the reading of its aesthetics (through decoding) the act of consumption. A Peircean semiotic framework assists in decoding the Magents *Are You Still With Me* and the *Bikonscious Social Club* t-shirts. The semiotic analysis reveals the preferred reading of each t-shirts' aesthetics as symbolic signifiers of a political nature. Interviews with Magents founder Didier De Villiers and graphic designer Mothei Letlabika serve as a verification of the semiotic readings of the above-mentioned t-shirts' intended meaning and representation of the ideological views associated with political heroes Steve Biko and Nelson Mandela in conveying contemporary socio-political narratives held by post-apartheid consumers.

## ACCOUNTING FOR THE POPULARITY OF #THISFLAG CITIZEN MOVEMENT AMONG ZIMBABWEAN NETIZENS

Dr Blessing Makwambeni

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

This paper seeks to account for the popularity of #ThisFlag, a monologue video recording posted on social media by Pastor Ivan Mawarire on the occasion of Zimbabwe's 36th independence. #ThisFlag evolved into a viral citizen driven movement and is believed to have played a critical role in galvanising citizens to engage in a mass stay away dubbed #ShutDownZimbabwe2016 on 6 July, 2016. Gramsci's notion of counter hegemony constitutes the conceptual framework of the study. The paper's methodology consists of two mutually reinforcing stages: Norman Fairclough's three dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis which is used to identify the discourses that are inscribed and contested in the text, and virtual ethnography which is employed in order to understand the resonances between the discourses embedded within #ThisFlag and the situated discourses that Zimbabwean netizens' negotiate in their consumption of #ThisFlag. The findings of the study are interpreted in light of Zimbabwe's polarised socio-political and economic context. The paper contends that #ThisFlag's popularity resides in its ability to use the national flag as a site for disarticulating the government's hegemonic patriotic discourse as the Alfa and Omega for defining Zimbabwe's

past, present and future. #Thisflag's resonance with Zimbabwean netizens lies in its ability to re-configure and resurrect citizens' national aspirations in line with the abandoned post-independence national development project which was premised on discourses of freedom and rights as well as material prosperity, among other ideals.

## **AGENCY IN A HASHTAG: A NEW BRANCH OF CIVIC AGENCY**

**Ms Tinika Nuen**

Rhodes University

Civic agency is an important aspect in studying the democratisation of the media. The average citizens take the role of the reporter and use social platforms to bring awareness and change, to interrogate and challenge systematic oppressions. Although media studies have focused on the underlying relationships among grass-root journalism, civic agency, and social media, I propose a focus on hashtags as a form of civic agency. Social media users and consumers create and proliferate hashtags to show solidarity and community, to circulate, to disseminate discussion around a socio-political crisis. My discussion considers how this form of agency participates at a distance, where individuals acknowledge a physical and geographical separation from the current events. I outline the positive and negative aspects of viewing hash tags as a form of civic agency. By considering the notion of a 'post-truth', hashtags represent an opportunity for multiple voices that raise opinions to interrogate, question, and support the validity of what has been reported. However, a negative consequence of using hashtags is that they become trendy and sensationalise the political cause. This paper examines how hashtags have shaped citizen participation to and in current events, which highlights the receiving of information within a local and global relationship, and questions the appropriate empathic response.

## **BEING TRUE TO YOURSELF**

**Elbie Lombard**

**Dr Luna Bergh**

University of the Free State

The aim of this paper is to investigate the role and functions of the tattoos as portrayed in the Disney movie, *Moana*.

Tattoos are normally not seen in Disney movies, nor are Disney princesses Polynesian, two facts which make the movie *Moana* ground breaking. In the movie, Moana is a Polynesian teenager. Accompanied by the demigod Maui, they set out on an adventure in their quest to save the Polynesian people. Maui is heavily tattooed with traditional Polynesian tattoos, while Moana's father, mother and grandmother are also tattooed. Moana's grandmother has a manta ray on her back which resembles her spirit while Maui has a tattoo which resembles himself, and which comes to life to tell about his adventures. In the film, Maui explains that after significant life events, tattoos appear on his body. With this movie, Disney assists in destigmatising the art and practice of tattooing, contributing to its rise in popularity.

In the recent past, tattooing has become more widespread. Life magazine estimated in 1936 that about 6% of the total American population had a tattoo (vanishingtattoo.com, online: 2015), compared to data from the Harris Poll of 2003 (theharrispoll.com, online: 2015) which estimated that this number increased to 16% in 2003. Fast forward to the Harris Poll of 2012 (theharrispoll.com, online: 2015) which estimated that 21% of all adult Americans had at least one tattoo in that poll year. Two years later, in April of 2014, the NBC News and Wall Street Journal conducted a poll with 1000 respondents and found that 40% of Americans said that a member of their household had at least one tattoo; a 19% jump from the reported 21% in 1999 (Murray, 2015).

In a postmodern world hallmarked by accelerated social, economic and cultural changes, identities are no longer settled in fixed social structures or on personal levels (Rattansi & Phoenix, 1997). Stuart Hall (1996) theorised about the crisis of identity, a crisis which was brought on by a double displacement: firstly, individuals have been dislodged from their place in the cultural as well as social world, and secondly, individuals have also been alienated from the self. In an era of unsettled identity the tattoo may become an anchor to the true self as it has played an important role throughout history in the construction of cultural identity (Caplan, 2000). DeMello (2000: 12) calls the tattoo a powerful symbol of "affiliation and identity" (DeMello, 2000: 12), while Holland et al. (1998) refer to tattoos as artefacts of identity. Tattoos can also identify one as belonging to a certain group, or it can be an expression of a unique character (Sanders, 1989). Doss and Hubbard (2009:64) suggest that "tattoos are informative and have significance". Furthermore, the tattoo as a memotic device (Sweetnam, 1999: 174) helps the tattooed person to connect to his/her past.

In the light of this discussion, the researchers aim to study how the art and practice of tattooing contributes to the identity and signifying practices of the characters in this movie.

## YOUNG PEOPLE, MOBILE PHONES AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN NEW FORMS OF COMMUNICATION IN LUSAKA

Ms Brenda Bukowa

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Social media has become a key term in Media and Communication Studies and public discourse for characterising platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, LinkedIn (Fuchs, 2014). Young People's online media consumption in Zambia has grown with the establishment of ICT clubs in schools (allafrica.com, 2011) and the integration of ICTs into the education curriculum (MOE, 2015). This means that more and more young people have access to the internet through mobile communication technologies ultimately contributing to the promotion of an idea public sphere.

Contributions to discussions of Internet, social media and the public sphere often tend to stress new technologies' transformative power leading to the establishment of a networked Public Sphere which Benkler (2006) stresses that, "The easy possibility of communicating effectively into the public sphere allows individuals to reorient themselves from passive readers and listeners to potential speakers and participants in a conversation". Fuchs (2014) quoting Benkler (2006) says that "The network allows all citizens to change their relationship to the public sphere. They no longer need be consumers and passive spectators. They can become creators and primary subjects. It is in this sense that the Internet democratizes"

This study explores and contextualises the use of mobile communication and social media by young people in Lusaka with the help of the concept of the public sphere theory.

The growth in the affordance and use of mobile communication infrastructure (Mambwe, 2014) has led to the popularity of mobile communication technology among the population. In this study mobile communication technology refers to what Castells M. et al (2009) singles out as mobile phones.

Because Social Media has contributed to what Habermas (1991) calls an "open for all" ideological perspective, young people's access to the internet is not void of both risks and opportunities (ZICTA, 2013). Possible risks include encountering pornography, bullying, sexting and online to offline meetings with what can be called "strangers" (Livingstone, 2011) possible opportunities include, research, networking and cheap, easy and fast communication.

It can be argued that the above perceived risks and opportunities are "adult" defined phenomenology and adults themselves tend to draw up the remedies to the problems. Seldom are teenagers themselves given a chance to express themselves so as to get an idea of how they access and interact online and dangers and opportunities they, themselves perceive online (Dunkels, 2010).

This study adopts a qualitative interpretative phenomenological approach encompassing interviews and focus group discussions to attain an in-depth approach. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of social media culture and young people's use of communication. Studies have been conducted focusing on how young people participate online see; Livingstone, S., and O'Neill, B. (2014), Livingstone, S. (2015), Buckingham (2008). While these and other studies have focused on participatory culture, convergence culture, social media, and teenagers, little research exists on these concepts in the African (global South) context in general and Zambia in particular. This study will therefore, argue away from western young people's online media participation and discourse and focus on teenager's internet and mobile phone internet use and public sphere.

The study provides a rich array of research data on social networking activities that young people engage in using mobile communication media. The study will also help to inform scholarship on "The construction of the new public sphere in the network(ed) society" (Castells 2009, 125).

## STOKING DIPLOMATIC TENSIONS: FRAMING XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS IN POST- TRUTH ERA

Emeka Umejei

University of the Witwatersrand

This paper examines Facebook posts and Tweets of Nigerians in relation to the 2017 xenophobic attacks in Pretoria, South Africa. The study uses Propp's and Todorov's narrative theories to examine the dominant framing of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians living in Pretoria, South Africa. The paper identifies South Africans are dominantly framed by Nigerians on Facebook and Twitter as villains and Nigerians as princesses. Furthermore, the paper also identifies the majority of posts on Facebook and Twitter in

relation to the xenophobic attacks were by Nigerians, who are not resident in South Africa and whose account of the incident relied on secondary sources. Consequently, the dominant narrative of the xenophobic attacks on Nigerians was informed by the promotion of alternative facts on *Facebook* and *Twitter* resulting in diplomatic tension between the Nigerian and South African governments.

## **LESBIAN SELF REPRESENTATION ON INSTAGRAM**

**Ms Sophie Patch**

University of Cape Town

The use of social media has grown exponentially over the last decade. With the growth of accessible online technology and the rapid popularity of smart phones and apps, social media has, arguably, become an integral part of modern living. Social media apps have become a platform for people to create and explore their online personalities. The ways in which people can conduct and perform their identity can now transcend beyond their real lives and into the online world. Online spaces can allow users the anonymity to create an online personality that contrasts to their offline persona, whilst conversely, it can also allow a person to perform their identity in exactly the same manner as they do within their offline lives. There has also been a notable rise in the inclusion of non-heteronormative characters; celebrities and notable persons, both within social media and within other forms of mainstream media. Furthermore, in the survey 'Progressive Prudes' conducted by 'The Other Foundation, 1.6% of women within South Africa identify as lesbian or bisexual. This is lower than the general figure of 5-10% within other developed countries.

The views of sexuality are changing across the globe, particularly within developing countries. Regarded as the gay capital of Africa, Cape Town could be seen as the most sexually liberated city upon the continent. However, this may not be an accurate representation of homosexuality on a social level. With 2.68 million people within South Africa using Instagram, and with its demographic age range being biased to the age groups of 18-25, this study aims to examine how the younger generation of homosexual South Africa women are using Instagram to showcase or express their sexual identities.

Using content analysis methods and online ethnography, the study will examine the ways in which young women utilise the tools that Instagram provides, for example; hashtags, image uploads and captions, to establish and perform their sexual identity and the ways in which young women within South Africa are using online spaces to explore their sexualities.

## **DIGITAL INEQUALITY AS THE CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO UNEMPLOYMENT: A CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH**

**Ms Maphuthi Elizabeth Choung**

University of Limpopo

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, unemployment became a major problem, no exception of inequality and poverty. In that context, the South African government introduced the National Development Plan (NDP) vision 2030 as long-term socio-economic path to redress the challenges thereof. Considering socio-economic major aspects, South Africans are still faced with unemployment where few people are working, quality of school education is low (particularly for black people), and there are inequalities; that are unabated in the democratic dispensation. Digital inequality as defined by scientific social researchers is the gap that exists between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. It is a concept that has been used interchangeably with the concept of digital inequalities, however, digital inequalities bring about the elements that leads to the gap that exist in digital inequality.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and the internet provides opportunities for employment, but it is limited because of the economic impact of the internet in the countries which have not yet developed. Collective capacities to acquire and store information, search through high volumes of data quickly and retrieve instantly are improved by daily usage of the internet. It expands the chance to access education, decent occupations, and improved health care services and thus creating new premeditated platforms for discussion. The paper explores the elements of digital inequality and analyses the impact which lack of digital tools have on the abilities of youth to find employment. Unemployment was 25% in the third quarter of 2014 and it is remaining the most pressing social and economic challenge. Specifically, youth unemployment remained extremely high looking at the other previous years, where it was between 50% and 51% during 2013. Furthermore, in the first quarter of 2016 the percentage of youth not in employment or education and training amounted to 33%. Thus, digital inequalities continue to repress the efforts of young unemployed graduates to get proper employment opportunities and hinders success in searching for and applying for employment.

To give this study context within the field of scientific research field, a Bourdieu's cultural capital approach was adopted. The relevance of this theory comes to play as it provides an understanding of inequality in relation to cultural capital and thus describes the lack of access to new ICTs as the objectified state of cultural capital. A research methodology adopted was

a qualitative approach as it allows the researcher get deeper into the phenomena that is being studied. The research design consisted of a descriptive design. The snowball sampling method was applied and the research instrument was a structured interview guide, which was used to collect data from a total of 18 young males and females who were distributed equally. To analyze data, a thematic analysis was used. Due to digital inequality, it is evident that the situation of youth unemployment is dire in the 21st century and young people are limited to search for and secure employment, particularly in rural areas. The significance of this study is to give an in-depth research which contribute to the existing body of knowledge and to fill a gap in the field of digital inequality considering the relationship it has with unemployment amongst youth.

## JOURNALISM PRACTICE 1

Venue: Eden Grove Seminar Room 1

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### **LOCATING THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL BY EXPLORING THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURING OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA WITHIN A MODERN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS CONTEXT.**

Dr Ewoudt Cloete

Dr Lida Holtzhausen

North West University

The far-reaching influence of social media on the radically changing modern world is evolving the way media producers are harnessing communications to persuade, provoke, disrupt and unsettle. Social media's increasing comparative importance within a broader marketing communication context has also resulted in increased pressure on internal social media custodians to tangibly and factually account for their social media strategies.

Although literature exists that explores optimum approaches to utilising the power of social media as a communication medium from an overall perspective, there is a noticeable scarcity of studies that specifically explore the strategic considerations of planning the organisational structuring of social media. Seeing as there is no clear guidelines on how to credibly inform a specific approach to the organisational structuring of professional social media, marketing communication practitioner's ability to harness the communication power of social media is hindered.

This PhD-study attempted to reduce the uncertainty regarding how internal social media custodians tangibly inform the organisational structuring of social media by exploring the key considerations of a strategic approach to the organisational structuring of social media.

By providing internal social media custodians with an informed approach to the planning and optimisation of the organisational structuring of social media, they are empowered to better account for and justify their organisational structuring choices. A more informed approach to social media organisational structuring can also assist internal social media custodians in demonstrating the overall worth of business-focussed social media initiatives to the broader organisation. This in turn can also increase the degree to which the organisation's social media team and initiatives integrates with and supports other organisational functions or departments.

The study challenges internal social media custodians to rethink and reevaluate the role that seemingly random and unconscious decisions regarding the organisational structuring of social media plays in effectively harnessing the communication power of social media.

One of the guiding insights from the research was that, even within the context of the increasing pressure of internal social media custodians to tangibly prove the value of their social media tactics, there was a non-substantial link between social media custodians' choice of an organisational structuring approach and the reaching of traditional marketing communication objectives.

Upon further analysis of the sample data however, it was observed that certain key favourable characteristics exist that internal social media custodians aim to attain through specific choices to the organisational structuring of social media. A guideline for attaining these aforementioned favourable characteristics was then formulated in the form of a step-by-step process:

1. Identifying the relative importance or priority of all possible favourable characteristics of social media, within the context of the unique circumstances and needs of the organisation.
2. Referencing this study's listing of how different approaches to social media organisational structuring impact the attainment of the prioritised favourable characteristics and identifying the most suitable approach to the organisational structuring of the organisation's social media initiatives.

3. Optimising the specific approach chosen by referencing this study's practical guidelines in order to maximise the potential benefits as well as negate the potential disadvantages that are most likely to manifest when applying the relevant chosen approach to social media's organisational structuring.

The following research design was implemented in the study: The study firstly undertook an exploration of organisational structuring and marketing communication theory. The study's empirical process then attempted to directly address the identified theoretical gaps, by extracting sample data from real world applications of social media organisational structuring practice. This was done by means of semi-structured interviews, as well as insights derived from the researcher himself, in his capacity as a social media marketing communication professional by means of self-interview.

## **CRITICAL INSIGHTS INTO THE COVERAGE OF THE FUKUSHIMA NUCLEAR CRISIS IN JAPAN'S ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS**

**Ms Carey Finn**

Rhodes University & Unisa

This study, completed in fulfilment of the requirements of a Masters in Communication degree, employed a mixed-method approach to analyse the coverage of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear crisis in Japan's two major English-language newspapers – *The Japan Times* and *The Daily Yomiuri*. The focus period was March 12 to May 11, 2011 (two months, starting from the day after the earthquake). The research was undertaken in response to criticisms that had been lobbied against the mass media for alleged sensationalisation of the crisis, and against the Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco), the utility in charge of the nuclear power plant, for apparent opacity in their communication of the risks.

In stark contrast to global trends, Japan's print newspaper industry remains robust and more popular than its online counterpart. This, together with the dearth of research on the Japanese media in general, makes studies like this one especially pertinent.

The study is relevant in South African, Japanese and other international contexts as the insights gained from the research have ramifications for the communication of nuclear agreements and crises the world over. Discussed in the study are problematic hierarchies of communication (particularly in the realm of risk), and the construction of dominant narratives around nuclear events by government and industry authorities. Furthermore, the study's methodology can be applied to local content analyses of different kinds.

The study is based in a broad literature framework that draws on agenda-setting theory, research about the roles and responsibilities of the media, the field of risk communication, and the reporting of radiation events and environmental disasters in history.

To conduct the research, quantitative coding was combined with critical discourse analysis. The research question sought to determine whether the coverage of the nuclear crisis could be said to have been, overall, predominantly alarming, reassuring, or relatively balanced and neutral. To make this assessment, key aspects of the coverage like foci, framing, sources, narratives, actors and agency, and any criticisms were examined. Use was made of specially created coding sheets, and inter-coder reliability was checked using Krippendorff's Alpha for the quantitative component.

The results indicated a complex answer to the research question, with varying degrees of reassurance and alarm for each newspaper and type of article. Insights were also gleaned about the political positioning – either right or left wing – of the publications. This is presented in detail in the study.

The implications of the findings, both for the Japanese media industry and international disaster reporting, are discussed, with recommendations made for further research.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION LEGISLATION: NEWSROOM EXPERIENCES**

**Dr Terje Skjerdal**

NLA University College

Freedom of and access to information are often considered a fundamental necessity for journalists in the fulfilment of their duties and as a pillar of well-functioning democracies. In recent times, more focus has been placed upon considering the existence of legislation and regulation that makes this a possibility. Where such legislation and regulation exists, a central question is how journalists make use of this within their role.

This study focuses on four national contexts in the eastern part of Sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda), where adoption of such legislation and regulation have taken place at various stages over the last decade. Uganda was among

the first nations in Sub-Saharan Africa to formulate an access to information act when it was passed by the Parliament in 2005, although the law was only implemented after government approval in 2011. Ethiopia passed similar legislation in 2008, while Rwanda and Kenya followed in 2013 and 2016, respectively.

Concentration in the paper is first placed upon outlining and discussing the structures that exist within these contexts to ensure access to information. This is followed by an empirical study of journalists working within these contexts, attempting to discover how the implementation of such legislation and regulation has affected and affects their working life, and in what ways it has influenced the profession of journalism on a wider scale within their contexts.

The research is a work-in-progress for an ongoing study 2017-18. The paper will present first results from the fieldwork.

## **PRINT MEDIA FRAMING OF NATIONAL DISASTERS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE DAILY GRAPHIC AND DAILY GUIDE**

**Ms Abena Abokoma Asemanyi**

University Of Education, Winneba

The study examined how the National Disasters are framed in the print media: a study of *Daily Graphic* newspaper in Ghana. The communication theories employed to conduct this study was Agenda Setting Theory by McCombs and Shaw and the Framing theory by Goffman and Entman.

The media's coverage of National Disasters are of much concern to the general public. This research seeks to know how the *Daily Graphic* framed National Disasters that occurred in January 2015 and June 2015 respectively. The January 2015 National Disasters was termed as Fire Outbreaks while the June 2015 National Disasters was Twin Disasters. A total of 43 disaster news stories were analysed for this study. Out of the total number, 9 headline stories were analysed in the month of January 2015 and 34 headline stories were looked at in the month of June 2015. The study came up with five (5) themes. Through Content Analysis, the study also revealed that the theme of Action featured more than the other themes which are Fear, Violence, Sympathy and Confusion.

Finally, the study showed the number of days disaster news headlines lasted in the *Daily Graphic* during the period stated above. It was revealed that the Fire Outbreaks in January 2015 appeared in the *Daily Graphic* for 8 days while the Twin Disasters appeared in 16 days in June 2015.

## **HEALTH COMMUNICATION 2**

Venue: Eden Grove Seminar Room 2

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## **VOICING THE VOICELESS: EXPLORING THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM) IN THE MSUNDUZI MUNICIPALITY TOWARDS PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PREP)**

**Mr Melusi Mntungwa**

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Though there have been great strides to curb the scourge of HIV/AIDS amongst vulnerable groups in South Africa over the past three decades these efforts have not managed to address the rising new infections rates among vulnerable groups such as Men who have sex with Men (MSM). According to epidemiology studies conducted in the country's major cities, the prevalence of HIV among MSM's is much higher than in heterosexual men (Smart, 2009). However, a shift towards biomedical methods of prevention such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) offers policy makers renewed hope for changing the country's current new infections trajectory, especially in MSM's.

Support from South Africa's Health Ministry and the shift towards using PrEP introduces new opportunities for research around this vulnerable group and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Therefore this study aims to contribute to this research area by providing an overview of the general awareness, perceptions and attitudes among MSM in the Msunduzi Municipality toward PrEP and concludes by devising creative ways to disseminate messages about PrEP which could facilitate uptake amongst MSM's.

To achieve the above, this paper will use the current #WETHEBRAVE PrEP communication campaign designed by the LGBTI Health provision organisation Heath4Men to establish how this campaign has influenced the attitudes and perceptions about PrEP among homosexuals and how effective this current communication strategy has been.

## **RADIO, COMMUNICATION AND CHILDREN: THE IMPACT OF RX RADIO ON PAST PARTICIPANTS**

**Ms Emmy Tither**

University of Cape Town

Community radio stations in South Africa come in two forms - those that serve a geographical community or those that serve a community of interest (Tacchi, 2003, p. 2185). In the case of Red Cross Children's Radio - henceforth referred to as RX Radio - this community comprises of the patients of a children's hospital in Rondebosch, Cape Town, South Africa, making it a special interest community radio station. While children's radio stations are not new, this will 'be the first in the world that patients are being involved as programme producers and broadcast presenters with the explicit aim of foregrounding and improving children's experiences of illness and hospital (The Children's Hospital Trust, 2017).

The research question to be answered by this paper is: what is the impact of RX radio on the first cohort child participants with regard to their communication skills with and confidence level in speaking about their medical conditions and lives?

This research will take place using two methods. The first stage is a content analysis which is a 'way of systematically surveying how often and in what categories things occur within texts' (Luker, K., 2008, p. 219). This method undergoes a slight restructuring in this context however, with the researcher listening to the audio content produced by the first cohort of producers at the radio station. Following the content analysis stage, the researcher will then interview the first cohort of child producers. The questions will focus on the participants' communication skills and feelings of confidence, as well as their perception of the impact of the radio on their lives years after their first participation.

The data collected using these methods will then be combined and analysed. The two methods used, along with a review of the literature that complements the research, will allow for triangulation of the findings.

Additionally, the research produced during this phase will be used for a future thesis project that will take place next year. This will be taken into account during the filing of the ethics proposal.

This study is particularly important as it is a first step towards building a greater body of research on the effect of hospitalisation on children. To wit, 'there are only a small number of participatory studies that focus on children and young people's experience of hospitalisation, and an even smaller number that include children and young people's experience of hospital environments' (Bishop, 2008, pg. v). RX Radio is trailblazing in this regard, and for good reason, as 'eliciting children's views and documenting their experiences are essential in providing services that are responsive to their needs' (Coyne, 2006, pp. 326-7).

## **SAWUBONA, BEWARE! MEANING AND COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS OF HIV DISCLOSURE AMONG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Dr Musara Lubombo**

**Dr Lauren Dyll**

University of KwaZulu-Natal

HIV (non-)disclosure is associated with individual rights violations evinced by increasing criminal prosecutions of people living with HIV (PLHIV) who have, or are believed to have exposed others to HIV. This article reflects on the communicative functions of HIV disclosure among South African people living openly with HIV. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 13 culturally diverse participants involved in social change communication for HIV prevention. The objective was to discover whether South African PLHIV use disclosure in responding to the epidemic, and if so, how disclosure is understood, and what its functions may be. Findings suggest that disclosure can be a functional property of HIV prevention communication owing to its illocutionary force in which an ubuntu philosophy is implicated. Participants were cynical about both the prosecution of PLHIV as well as the duplicity of rights-based approaches to end the HIV epidemic, particularly in light of the continued knowing transmission of HIV. To the extent of this limitation, the article ends with some thoughts on the possibility of a non-punitive approach that locates HIV disclosure at the centre of the HIV prevention cascade.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

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Chair: Mr Chikezie E Uzuegbunam

Venue: Eden Grove Blue

### THE MEANING OF DECOLONISATION FOR MEDIA STUDIES: RETHINKING JOURNALISM THEORY AND EDUCATION IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

**Taryn Isaacs De Vega**

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

**Colin Chasi and Ylva Rodney-Gumede**

University of Johannesburg

**Tshepang Molale, Boipelo Bahule, Henry Blignaut, Naledi Modise**

North West University

**Mathatha Tsedu and Lesley Cowling**

University of the Witwatersrand

**Isaac Riba and Carol Lesame**

University of Limpopo

**Mvuzo Ponono**

University of the Free State

Since the 2015 demand to extricate the colonial legacy in public institutions of Higher Learning, forcefully illustrated by the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes Statue at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the higher education sector has been irrevocably altered. South Africa's public universities have become a space of vocal contestation and debate. Critics have argued that the turbulence and disruption experienced by South African universities indicates that the higher education environment is not yet meeting the legitimate demands of a majority of students (Mellon Foundation 2017). The feesmustfall movement, which resulted in the "shutdown" of universities in 2015 and 2016, demands for tuition free higher education, and a decolonised curricula has also added to the call for radical change.

Democratising the university space by making it financially and ontologically accessible to the previously disadvantaged has become a central concern within the tertiary education sector. The issue, is, of course, interlinked with a myriad of other problems within the academy such as: governance, transforming demographics, curricula and institutional culture. As such, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has introduced targeted interventions aimed at redressing the racial inequities that defined apartheid's higher education policy since the University Education Act of 1959. Together with these institutional interventions, scholars who have argued for the substantive transformation of the university over the past two decades have pointed out that institutions of higher learning continue to be marked by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid (Mbembe 2015). Such critics have backed up the calls made by students to decolonise the academy by arguing that current curricula perpetuate colonial knowledge production, which accompanies deep exclusionary practices (Catherine Addora Hoppers 2012).

The current historical instance of social ferment offers a specific decolonial moment in which transformation imperatives may be rapidly advanced in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly in institutions of higher learning (Mellon Foundation 2017). Current pedagogical practice, therefore, requires the undertaking of strong action in order to rethink what universities do, and also, what universities teach through their curriculum. Given this context, the proposed panel aims to gather a mixture of emerging and established scholars within communications and media studies in South Africa, with the task of thinking about decolonising the curricula. The panel aims to grapple with the meanings of 'decolonisation', 'indigenization', 'africanisation' and 'transformation' within the context of communication and media studies. Furthermore, the panel seeks to combine a broad conversation about decolonisation within media studies with a pointed interrogation of the ways in which journalism education can be restructured to affect change in journalism practice. The overall aim of the panel is to gather insights from young and senior South African scholars about the direction media studies and journalism education could take to decolonise academic content.

***The participation of students and Journalists in the 'Decolonising Journalism pedagogy' debate at North West University: Paulo Freire's "dialogical praxis" approach to Participatory Communication.***

**Tshepang Molale, Boipelo Bahule, Henry Blignaut, Naledi Modise**

North West University

The demand for disconnecting the South African higher education system, and in particular Journalism education, from the country's bitter colonial past has come at a time when there is already a move within academic circles, particularly across the African continent, towards an "Africanized" approach to teaching and learning in higher education. In line with the dependency model (a paradigm within the development communication theory) there has been a strong reliance on western patterns of knowledge production in non-western nations over the years. Essentially, students need to receive the kind of training and teaching that will enable them, later as journalists, to report on salient issues affecting the continent as a whole. In line with the development communication theory (Communication for Development and Social Change), this study looks at the importance of participation by students (as end users of an ideal 'decolonized curriculum') and journalists (who can share practical experience about industry challenges), which should be made an integral part of an exercise intended to overhaul and 'Africanize' journalism curricula.

***Transformation, decolonization and communications in South African higher education***

**Colin Chasi and Ylva Rodny-Gumede**

University of Johannesburg

The recent student-led protests at universities in South Africa calling for free access to higher education, broad-based transformation and decolonialization of curricula have triggered a nation-wide debate around the decolonization of higher education in the country. Essentially, what is brewing, in South Africa and throughout the Continent and the global South, is a zeitgeist, in which scholars are recalling that universities are unique social institutions that should facilitate, share, create and use productive and reproductive epistemic orders in ways that transform misanthropic societies and orders into societies in which individuals can be the most they can be. Thus, our aim is to provide a philosophical as well as critical (and self-reflexive) discussion on the fundamental experiences, questions, and challenges underpinning the discussion of transformation and decolonization of higher education in South Africa. This with a particular focus on the role of Communications and what a decolonized media and communications discipline should, and can, contribute to the broader decolonization of the humanities and in the extension, higher education.

***African Philosophical Perspectives on the Decolonisation of Communication Practice***

**Isaac Riba and Carol Lesame**

University of Limpopo

This paper draws on reflections from the "New Era" of African philosophy, including the Calabar School of Philosophy, to make the case for decolonisation of communication in South Africa. Ghanaian philosopher, Kwasi Wiredu (1931- ), posited that the communal nature of African societies obligates professional communicators to be mindful of the moral life of the community as a whole (Fortner & Fackler, 2011). African philosophy is heritage to Africa and forms part of reflexive meta-communication in South Africa. Khapagawani & Malherbe (1998) have highlighted that African heritage is the media-culture that connects generations and communities, and ultimately is the most important element for social cohesion. The discussion in this paper will draw on insights observed by African philosophers of the "New Era" on the philosophical foundations of communication in African societies. Thus, this paper engages with epistemology by bringing to the fore the propositions of African philosophers on communication in society.

***Universities Curriculum Workshop report: "Confronting the Challenges of Africanising Curriculum in Media Disciplines"***

**Mathatha Tsedu and Lesley Cowling**

University of the Witwatersrand

The Wits Journalism Department brought together various media scholars from universities around the country to discuss the challenges facing media and communications programmes. The workshop, funded by NIHSS, was the first of many planned gatherings of university departments on curriculum issues. Participants included scholars from communication, media and journalism departments who gathered in the hope to discuss common concerns, as well as focus on issues particular to their

disciplines. In the main, the discussion centred on the transformation and decolonisation of the curriculum and teaching practices.

The point of departure was that, on the one hand, the decolonisation and Africanisation of our courses is a necessary, and, in some instances, long overdue process. On the other, educators are expected to produce graduates who can operate in a global world, and, as academics, are pushed to compete in international scholarship. Marrying the two by producing graduates steeped in their Africanness, but who are internationalist media and communication experts who can operate anywhere in the world, was the key talking point at the Wits workshop.

Other talking points included questions around what an Africa-centred journalism curriculum would look like, and what strategies could be taken to de-Westernise the journalism curriculum. Inputs from the scholars gathered assisted the discussion in grappling with whether decolonising a curriculum would achieve the same thing as producing an Africa-centred one. In other words, the workshop examined whether or current dialogue is simply a play of words or is there something more fundamental in their difference?

The report of proceedings will be presented at the Emerging Scholar panel entitled: The meaning of decolonisation for media studies: rethinking journalism theory and education in post-apartheid South Africa.

## ***Rethinking Journalism Education***

**Taryn Isaacs De Vega**

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Rethinking higher education and the academy is not a new idea, it has been written about by numerous academics on the continent who sought to critically engage with the knowledge traditions presented within an African context. This rethinking has been called for because of the legacy of knowledge traditions which were often “constituted as forms of colonial knowledge” (Magubane 2015), and “requires mindfulness of our context and location in history” to move beyond this point (Gqola 2015). The idea of context became a major point in which South African scholars in media studies diverted from their global counterparts, as context provided a possibility for media research which was accurate, whilst being true to African reality and experience. Reviewing the literature in question, this paper calls for the move towards context to be extended to include the curriculum of journalism education. The paper explores whether context could assist in understanding the lived experience of journalism students, the media environment which graduates will become a part of, the socio-economic and politico-historical nuances which journalism is imbedded in and the language and class issues which journalists are expected to circumnavigate in South Africa today.

## ***Post-Marikana journalism: Rethinking Journalism education in post-apartheid South Africa***

**Mvuzo Ponono**

University of the Free State

Critical scholarship of the early 2000's has highlighted that mainstream media's neoliberal bias is blind to the issues of the mostly black underclass in South Africa (Jacobs, 1999 & 2004; Friedman, 2011). Such criticism was largely justified in late 2012 by reportage of the Marikana massacre. Reviewing the coverage of the massacre, Jane Duncan (2012), argued that the problem with mainstream media's lopsided coverage of the massacre is that it ends up seeing the conflict through the eyes of those in positions of power. Nonetheless, the ability of South African journalists to paint a balanced and picture is empirical to ethical journalism. The challenge of fair representation faced by South African journalism is one that also needs to be confronted by journalism educators within the academy. The teachers of media producers need to evaluate their contribution to the current state of the profession because it is the theories and methodologies taught within the academy that are reproduced in the field. Considering the above stated context, the proposed paper wishes to explore new directions that can be taken in journalism training to address the marginalisation of the underclass in journalism practice.

## BELL POTTINGER AND THE DARK ART OF PR: ETHICS OF INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS ETHICS OF COMMUNALITY

Prof Sonja Verwey

Ms Clarissa Muir

University of Johannesburg

In the early part of 2017 spurious and unethical actions from the renowned global public relations (PR) firm Bell Pottinger have cast a pall over the U.K. PR industry, which has also tainted the moral standing of South African practitioners. There is little doubt that tactics such as offering to manipulate a client's online reputation through the use of fake online accounts, newly created blog pages or fake online reviews is unethical, and takes the industry back to a less glorious time in its history at a point in time when much emphasis is being placed on both ethics and values based practice in local contexts. Scholars such as Hurn (2008) suggest that ethical principles are devised mainly from the fundamental beliefs and value systems developed within a culture, and as such ethics attempts to tell us what is and what is not morally acceptable within a particular society or culture. In this regard moral philosophy provides a basis for rationalising human motivation in decision making and action. However, it can be argued that there is potentially a mismatch between theories and moral frameworks created for individualistic cultures, and their application within communal cultures. What is required are theories and moral frameworks that are more consistent with communal cultures otherwise a mismatch between theory and practice, or individual and practice is likely to result (Lutz, 2009).

As a communitarian philosophy that stresses the importance of inter-personal relationships and values such as harmony and care, Ubuntu clearly has relevance for the business sphere. While it can be theorised that the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* may provide a moral approach that is grounded in relational properties and ethics of communality, these assumptions are also closely aligned with the work of other scholars on multi-culturalism (Perez-Torres, 1993), social experience and community interaction (Mead, 1962) and ethics of inter-subjectivity (Levinas, 1991), as well as dialogical and relational perspectives on ethical public relations practice (Holmström, 2004). Heath (2000:81) argues that building social capital in any society begins with a commitment to support the "collective interests of the community".

Thus any discussion of the value of ethical communication practice for society must begin with a concern for the nature and integrity of community. Holmström (2004) in particular expands on the association between reflective practice and the assumptions of *Ubuntu*, because the notion of reflection requires professionals and organisations to see themselves as existing within society and "see themselves from the outside in" with regards to decision-making and ethical communication practice. Against this background this paper utilises the Bell Pottinger case study to examine the tensions that arise between individual values and communal PR practice, and to explore the moral implications of ethical PR practice in a communal context such as South Africa.

## POST-TRUTH OR POST-POWER? THE IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS OF POST-TRUTH

Mr Jateen Hansjee

AFDA

In 2016, The Oxford Dictionary declared "post-truth" to be the word of the year and noted a 2000% increase in its usage since 2015. The definition points to a climate in which policy or "facts" are less important than appeals to emotion in politics. Following the emergence of rightwing populism, most notably factors that compelled Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, many commentators go so far as to call this the "post-truth age". In this regard, they point to lies, propaganda, the dumbing down of journalism in the digital age, and the "echo-chamber" of social media which restricts information consumers' access to competing views.

This deployment of the term "post-truth" in public and media discourse, however, disguises its ideological origins and functions. "Post-truth" delineates a knowable reality with a reasonable amount of epistemological certainty. This is then tied to particular networks of information which are positioned as objective and the domain of experts. This view of information is utilised in specific regard to economic theory and statecraft. It develops alongside the emergence of Economics in the 1950s as the dominant social science, capable unlike many other disciplines of producing "universal truths" based on empirical observations and sound mathematics. Economics thus was afforded greater funding and this happened in conversation with vested corporate

and political interests. The pedalling of “universal” and “objective” economic theory became entwined with vested political interests. The rise of rightwing populism has challenged this prevailing economic orthodoxy, as well as the political class attached to it.

The deployment of the term “post-truth” is an ideological move. It positions knowledge as existing outside of the established matrices of power which it aims to reproduce and privilege. This paper discusses the origins and development of “post-truth” as ideology and as an effect of power.

## **MAINTAINING EMOTIONALLY RESONANT BRAND REPUTATIONS IN THE POST-TRUTH AGE OF PARODY AND FAKE CONTENT**

**Maritha Pritchard**

University of Johannesburg

Brand hijackers such as user-generated parody accounts and fake accounts typically use humour, clickbait, hoaxes and offensive content as emotionally provocative tactics to extend their reach. Moreover, as a complex genre that is easily misunderstood, parody is essentially a spoof or hoax that uses related expressions of humour such as subversive satire, sarcasm and subtle irony to imitate allusions. On Twitter, especially, both parody accounts and fake accounts misappropriate brand identities, yet unsuspecting social media users often cannot tell the difference between the two while also confusing these brand hijackers with the brand’s official social media account. Correspondingly, social media management teams are faced with a reputational risk or paracrisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2012) that may escalate into a full-blown crisis given the highly ambiguous, viral and volatile nature of social networks. To clarify, user-generated parody accounts are defined for the purpose of this study as social media accounts created by non-professional satirists as ironic imitations of the official account’s brand identities to satirise, ridicule or poke fun at a brand for comic effect on a social network. Notably, the parodying of brands on social media is already an established trend in developed countries to the extent that Fournier and Avery (2011:24) and Funnell (2015) describe the contemporary cultural zeitgeist as ‘the age of parody’. In South Africa, the influence and popularity of social media parody accounts is an emerging trend.

The purpose of this study was to measure the emotional resonance of parodied brands using the constructs of Fombrun and Van Riel’s (2004:96) Expressiveness Quotient, namely: (i) visibility, (ii) transparency, (iii) authenticity, (iv) consistency and (v) distinction. Using a synergistic approach (Hall & Howard, 2008:249) to mixed methods in a triangulation design the study collected and analysed data from a purposive and snowball sample of 207 social media experts. Data collection methods comprised an online survey and in-depth interviews. Data analysis comprised multiple linear stepwise regression analysis, Chi-square calculations and thematic analysis. The study formed part of a Doctoral thesis completed at the Tshwane University of Technology.

Findings indicated that the visibility construct of Fombrun and Van Riel’s (2004:96) Expressiveness Quotient scored the highest which suggested that prominent, top-of-mind brands are mostly at risk of being targeted by brand parodies and fake accounts with malicious intentions. Moreover, findings elaborated on the opportunistic tactics used by brand hijackers to compromise emotionally resonant brand reputations. These included hashtag hijacking, trolling, sensational clickbait, emotive humour and commenting on viral trending topics whereby content attracts algorithms to become immediately relevant, visible and influential. In addition, findings outlined contingency planning measures and responsive social media governance concerns for social media management teams to mitigate reputational risks in the post-truth age of parody where it is increasingly problematic to distinguish parody from fake content.

## **REDEFINING THE REEL: HOW SKAM CHALLENGES NOTIONS OF REALITY AND FICTIONAL TELEVISION**

**Mr Warwick Jones**

University of Kwazulu-Natal

*Skam* is an incredibly popular Norwegian television drama that first aired in 2015. However, *Skam* doesn’t air like traditional television shows as additional video footage, text messages, Instagram and Facebook posts appear in real time as the narrative progresses. *Skam* is, essentially, a television show that doesn’t leave its audience alone: if the characters go to a party on Friday night, a video documenting the outing will appear on the *Skam* webpage at the same time. Audiences are even able to follow the characters on social media through which, they appear to interact with each other. The show does everything in its power to convince audiences that they are watching the lives of real humans; everything except explicitly state that the programme is reality television.

This paper explores *Skam* as a transmedia narrative. Also referred to as “cross media” (Bechmann Petersen, 2006), “multiple

platforms” (Jeffery-Poulter, 2003), “hybrid media” (Boumans, 2004), “intertextual commodity”, “multimodality” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), or “intermedia” (Higgins, 1966), the term transmedia narrative essentially attempts to describe the same experience: the production and consumption of narratives that rely on coordinated collections of language and media (Scolari, 2009). It is this unique approach to storytelling that is of particular interest, for a number of reasons. It is argued by scholars that this dispersion of narrative across multiple platforms is a factor behind increased ‘experience’ in contemporary culture, and the complexity of modern storytelling.

On one hand, this paper aims to investigate *Skam* itself, comparing its unique distribution pattern and narrative structure to that of traditional television series, and reality television. On the other, this paper would utilise a more philosophical approach, looking at the hyperreal characteristics the show tends to embrace, and its utilisation of the ‘spectacle’ (a major component of reality television) - areas explored in great depths by the likes of Jean Baudrillard (1988, 2001, 2011) and Guy Debord (1995).

## JOURNALISM PRACTICE 2

Venue: Eden Grove Seminar Room 1

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### INFLUENCES ON SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNALISTS COVERING CHINA’S HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RECORD

Ms Willemien Calitz

University of Cape Town

This paper examines influences on South African journalists and its’ potential effects on their coverage of China, particularly regarding China’s role in human rights and sustainable development on the African continent. South Africa is significant to the growing China-Africa relationship, as a fellow member of the BRICS group of emerging nations, and therefore, through its’ soft power strategy, whether as a “charm offensive” (Kurlantzick, 2008), or “charm defensive” (Shi, 2013), China has expanded its media reach in South Africa. Flows and contraflows have emerged in the China-South Africa media relationship however, for example through the Chinese Interacom’s investments in Independent Media, while South Africa’s Naspers has significant investment in Tencent, owner of Chinese social media platforms such as Weibo and QQ.

Such flows, along with general global media shifts, are an indication of the range of influences in the work environments of South African journalists. Particularly in a context of a digitised South African media environment, which could potentially provide a large range of sources and voices, the influences on how media producers operate is significant. Can South African journalists withstand the influence of the current media environment of less resources, time, and employees and the influence of ownership on their reporting? This study explores those influences on journalists who specifically focus on the coverage of China’s sustainable development and human rights role in Africa.

Dominant media discourses have represented China as having little concern for good governance, transparency, freedom of the press, worker’s rights, human rights, and environmental protection in its relationship with Africa (Sautman & Hairong, 2009; French, 2014), and such portrayals could potentially influence global journalists’ perceptions of China and affect their coverage. China has aimed to counter these narratives, but has its’ soft power efforts managed to influence the perceptions of South African media workers? Which other influences on journalists have been significant to this media relationship and consequently journalistic coverage? Using Reese’s (2001) hierarchy of influences model as a guideline, this study explores the individual, routine, organizational, extra-media and ideological influences on South African journalists covering China’s human rights and sustainable development reputation.

My research question is: What specific influences are there on South African journalists and how could they potentially affect their coverage of China? Using semi-structured interviews as a method, 10 journalists from South African publications were interviewed in-depth, either face to face, or live via electronic media, with anonymity guaranteed if requested. The interview questions build on Reese’s (2001) sociology of the media approach, arguing that content produced by journalists can be affected by ownership, financial status of the publication, personal views and educational background of individual journalists, and political relations, among several others. This study examines the influences on how the South African journalist operates, particularly when covering China’s sustainable development and human rights reputation.

## **COPS BEHAVING BADLY: POLICE IN DAILY SUN CRIME NARRATIVES**

**Dr Priscilla Boshoff**

Rhodes University

South Africa is notorious for its high rate of crime, which has marred the transition to democracy. Unevenly distributed geographically and socially, the burden of crime is carried primarily by black working class township residents. These are the readers of the *Daily Sun*, South Africa's most popular tabloid newspaper, which regularly reports the role the police play in preventing crime and protecting its readers. Like their brethren elsewhere, South African police have historically been the object of intense scrutiny, due to their licence to wield power on behalf of the state in the form of physical coercion. However, in the local case, it is the legitimacy of the police that forms a primary concern. The *Daily Sun's* crime reports present a provocative picture of the police from the point of view of the marginalised citizens they are tasked with protecting. Drawing on a narrative analysis of these reports, I critique the usefulness for our circumstances of Sparks' model of the heroic cop narrative as the means through which an audience is reassured by the dialectical relationship between "anxiety and reassurance" (Sparks 1992: 120). Instead, using Derrida's (1998) concept of "the supplement," I examine the contradictory roles played by the police in *Daily Sun* stories, and explore the consequences of their representation not only as heroes, but also as villains and victims.

## **HOW EDITORIAL VALUES SHAPE THE PUBLICATION OF SCIENCE CONTENT IN A REGIONAL NEWSPAPER**

**Steven Lang**

Rhodes University

The national Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the South African Editors' Forum (SANEF) have both expressed concern about the mediocre quality and paucity of science content in local media. This presentation investigates these claims using The *Daily Dispatch*, a regional newspaper published in the Eastern Cape, as a case study.

Before beginning the research I hypothesised that there would not be many science articles in the newspaper and the presumed reason for this scarcity was that The *Daily Dispatch* did not have suitably qualified staff to cover science. My investigations showed that I was partially correct about the first supposition, but wrong about the second.

A quantitative content analysis was used to ascertain the number of science articles published in *Daily Dispatch* in a six-month period. It also investigated which science fields received the most coverage, and how prominently the articles are positioned.

The second phase of this research consisted of a series of interviews with senior editorial staff members aimed at probing the editorial thought processes that determine when and whether specific science stories should be covered. The personal views and biases of the editorial leadership were pivotal to this research because although the newspaper commissioned surveys to determine readership preferences, the questionnaires did not include any specific questions aimed at assessing readers' opinions on the desirability of articles on the natural sciences. Senior newsroom staff interviewed for this presentation, mindful of their readers' daily struggle for economic survival, did not express any misgivings about the newspaper's political agenda nor its lack of a science reporter. The third phase of the research took the form of a qualitative content analysis of selected articles designed to reveal how science articles were constructed.

My research showed that when science was included on the pages of the *Daily Dispatch* it was never the prime focus of a single article. A scientific explanation was usually incorporated into an article to add clarity to the main thrust of the story such as why Red Tides occurred or how pregnant women should modify their dietary habits.

It was also noted that health related content accounted for the highest proportion of articles that included at least a minimal amount of scientific explanation.

It became clear that science for the sake of science almost never appeared in the newspaper. There were two main reasons for this: the newspaper identified itself primarily as a political publication, prioritising content of socio-political value over all other content, and secondly it did not have a specialist science reporter on its staff.

This presentation explores the close correlation between the context of the *Daily Dispatch's* production as reflected in the news values of the editorial staff, and the paucity of its science coverage.

## USE OF SNS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RADIO BROADCASTING: HARNESSING THE POWER OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Moses Ofome Asak

North West University

The disruption of traditional broadcast media landscape is inevitable given the only constant which is change. For this reason, traditional radio is finding new ways to create and deliver relevant content by connecting with the public through social network sites (SNSs). This has further broadened the public sphere for dialogue and interaction thereby expanding the democratic and economic space in African countries like South Africa. However the argument in this paper borders on the premise that radio as the ombudsman in this context should be doing more in how messages on social media platforms are framed and how it negotiates relationships with the public in order to ignite healthy dialogue influencing peaceful behaviors that ultimately builds up social capital for radio and the public. The power of radio therefore, should be seen as a tool for mediating conflicts and building healthy relationships particularly with its integration and use of SNSs. Habermas theoretical approach of public sphere as a framework was adopted in this paper and inferences made based on a qualitative examination of relevant literatures. The paper concludes that the issues and how radio mediates public engagement on social media can ignite or douse the embers of peaceful co-existence which ultimately will affect social capital accrual.

### SOUTH PRODUCTION

Venue: Eden Grove Seminar Room 2

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## INVESTIGATING A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT, IN OPTIMIZING THE IMPACT OF A DOCUMENTARY FILM, THE CASE OF "MINERS SHOT DOWN", BY REHAD DESAI

Ms Miki Redelinghuys

University of Cape Town

A social documentary often has, at its core, the function of transforming the perception of the viewer to effect social change. It uses the medium of film as a tool of activism, while effectively using the creative language of film, in order to entertain audiences to the extent that they will engage with the content. The success of such a film is measured not only by critical acclaim, but also by the impact it has had in influencing public opinion and the socio-political events that follow.

*Miners Shot Down*, by filmmakers Rehad Desai and Anita Khanna, is a South African film that has not only won international film awards, but has had unprecedented success, in South Africa, in optimizing impact.

Research on the impact of documentaries have focused on production, distribution and potential impact of documentary film by looking at producers, activist organizations and decision makers, as well as the potential to inspire public discourse, but little documentation has emerged on the role of the participation of the people featured in the film in driving and measuring the impact of a documentary.

*Miners Shot Down* has also consciously involved people featured in the film in determining the impact, thereby creating a new measure that could be included in the development of methodologies.

This paper explores the factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the documentary. It will conduct a structural analysis of the film, as well as conduct qualitative research with the filmmakers and participants of the film, to examine the participatory approach to filmmaking and how this can support the social impact of the film.

The findings of this study could support documentary filmmakers when entering into production and planning an impact strategy. The paper proposes that *Miners Shot Down* can provide a model for optimizing a film's impact and this can become a useful tool for encouraging participatory documentary filmmaking to facilitate social transformation in South Africa.

## **SIBA MTONGANA AS TRANSNATIONAL DOMESTIC GODDESS: TRANSNATIONAL TELEVISION AND POST-FEMINISM**

Alexia Smit

University of Cape Town

Much of the theoretical work on African television has been framed in relation to distinct national contexts. However, since the 1990s satellite and, more recently, online distribution platforms have expanded the reach of television content made in Africa and has complicated the relationship between television texts and notions of the local. The lifestyle cooking show *Siba's Table* (Food Network) is a transnational success story for South African TV chef Siba Mtongana. She is the first South African to host a cooking show aired on U.S. Television. *Siba's Table* is made in South African but produced by a British company. The show was rated the number one cooking show in Poland and is also highly popular in Russia and Dubai. The transnational nature of the show's production and distribution raises interesting questions about how African identity and gender are negotiated for both local and global audiences.

In this paper I will explore the way in which *Siba's Table* engages with contemporary post-feminist sentiments surrounding the kitchen and the figure of the 'domestic goddess'. However, in applying theoretical engagements with post-feminism to *Siba's Table* means negotiating with the complexities of what postfeminism might mean beyond a Western framework. As such *Siba's Table* offers an opportunity to explore postfeminism in the context of transnational media. This article examines how Siba Mtongana positions her domestic pleasures in relation to a sense of being African in a global mediascape. In particular I consider the use Johanna Fahey's concept of flexible feminism to understand the formation of this complex transnational negotiation of identity, pleasure and domesticity.

## **PERHAPS A CHANCE? AN APPRAISAL OF THE 'OPPORTUNITIES' PRESENTED BY MULTICHOICE'S ZAMBEZI MAGIC FOR THE NOT SO WELL-KNOWN ZAMBIAN FILM INDUSTRY**

Mr. Elastus Mambwe

University of Cape Town

It is widely accepted that when used purposely, film can serve as an effective tool for education, information and awareness-building, mobilization and (economic) development (UNESCO, 1992). Film, in this argument therefore, can "help develop those who develop", and enhance knowledge and mutual understanding between people. Therefore the study of various aspects of film industries is important to seeing the full extent of this potential.

African film industry studies as an area of research has continued to grow and garner interest. Much of the interest in recent years has been a result of factors such as the growth the video film industry, particularly in Nigeria, and the fruits of policy measures and institutional support in countries such as South African as well as the increased interest in African cities as destinations for Hollywood productions. There has also been an increase in the amount literature on transnational cinema within the African context. While these two Sub-Saharan African countries have seen major developments in their film sectors since independence (Okome, 2010; Haynes 1995, Tomaselli, 1995, 2013), there appears to be very little known about the film industry in other countries such as Zambia.

While the Zambian mediascape has seen several cyclical changes in the last fifty years, and exponential growth sectors such as radio and more recently online media, little has been seen on the film front. Very few cinematic films have been produced, and where they have been made, these films have remained essentially unknown. Despite a rise in the number of productions over the last 25 years, local film products have continued to be birthed from a myriad of challenges such as the lack of funding and training, lack of a supporting industries for film and the nonexistence of a guiding national film policy.

Despite these factors, there is a growing optimism and positive sense that there is perhaps a chance that the film industry in Zambia is poised to grow. This paper explores two recent factors in the Zambian media space and presents them as opportunities for potential growth and shift from being part of the 'other', 'non-film' countries. These are: digital migration and the birth of a new regional channel Zambezi Magic on pay-television provider, DSTv.

This qualitative study employs in-depth interviews, document analysis, and content analysis in understanding the two phenomena stated as the focal points of the study. For filmmakers, the paper sees digital migration as an opportunity to increase the number of platforms on which Zambian voices and visuals can be heard and seen. This breaks the structural foothold that the state broadcaster has had on content as more and more people are now able to enter the content space. It further sees Zambezi Magic as an including factor as content from the sub-region has been given a viewing opportunity on a platform that has been dominated by western content and African content from South Africa and Nigeria mostly.

This paper also seeks to shift the conversation from the problems, which are often subject of research, to the opportunities

that growing film industries such as the one in Zambia have given the existing contexts. A key argument also made is that emerging film economies should be ready to explore existing potentials without the need to follow any particular trajectories taken by other countries. Digital technologies here present an opportunity for the growth of film in the 'other' countries, perhaps creating an opportunity for a shift in the status quo or the structure.

## **MEDIA, IDENTITY & AUDIENCES**

Venue: St. Peter's Building Seminar Room 34

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### **MECHA, SHINTO, SHOUJO – AN AUDIENCE STUDY OF HOW RHODES UNIVERSITY NEKO ANIME SOCIETY MEMBERS MAKE SENSE OF JAPANESE ANIME THEMES IN RELATION TO THEIR OWN IDENTITIES**

**Ms Tope Adebola**

Rhodes University

It's Sunday night, just after dinner, and eleven people are sharing popcorn and quiet laughter at the antics of Jet and Spike – bounty hunters from the year 2071 who travel the solar system trying to catch bad guys from all walks of life. The eleven are some of the members of the Rhodes University Neko Anime Society (Neko), a student society at Rhodes University that was established in 2009 and enjoys an active membership of about 200 members, representing all five population groups in South Africa. Neko enables the expression of fandom by creating a space for its members to engage in the conscious decoding of messages in Japanese anime by transforming personal reaction into social interaction. Cultural Studies is the relevant field for this research because it is dedicated to the study of cultural processes, especially those of popular culture. One way popular culture is shared is through the media, and in communications research debates over the implications of Western dominance over the international media export trade have been long-standing. Media imperialism is one such consequence of this dominance, and in this view mostly Anglo-American media interests tend to prevail in countries in the 'global South,' countries that often do not have adequate media infrastructure to counteract the influx of foreign media products. However, evidence of contra-flows and intra-regional non-Western flows serve to refute this claim of an overarching US-centric media hegemony. Additionally, since in the view of media imperialism proponents audiences are the most vulnerable victims of Anglo-American dominance, the conception of an active audience heavily contests the extent to which media imperialism is said to take place. This research focuses on how South African Neko members are exemplary of an active audience, through an investigation of how they make sense of themes in Japanese anime. The turn towards a conception of an active audience highlights the ability of media audiences to be actively involved in making sense of messages within their personal and social contexts. In its capacity to enable understanding of how meaning is enacted, and shared, among members of particular groups, fandom theory suggests that audiences are active. In fact, fans engage with media products in a manner that is more suggestive of 'investment,' which is the degree to which people care about their participation in a leisure activity. After all, who is more heavily invested than a fan?

This research on the meaning that South African Neko members make of themes in Japanese anime will add to the body of literature that strongly repudiates the paternalistic and short-sighted predictions of the media imperialism thesis.

### **INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC CONSUMPTION ON IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AMONG DIASPORIC NIGERIANS IN DURBAN**

**Miss Rhoda Abiolu**

University of KwaZulu-Natal

In my unique position as a Christian and a diasporic Nigerian in South Africa, I find myself in an environment quite different from where I come from in terms of culture, traditions, music, food and clothing. However, I still share a similar identity with Christian South Africans here and Nigerians back home which is that of religion. Accordingly, this study is premised on the concern to have a better understanding of how social constructs such as culture, religion and the media interact to define and influence human lives resulting in identity formation and reconstruction. My particular concern is tied to the consumption of Christian music among diverse and unique groups of home-based and diasporic people (home-based South Africans and Nigerians, and diasporic South Africans in Lagos, Nigeria and Nigerians in Durban, South Africa), who though they have different cultural identities, still share the same religious affiliation. The fact that these people have different identities is sufficient to indicate that there would be differences in how they see and relate with other people. However, the other fact that they share the same religious orientation

will show that there might be similarities as well in their religious identities which will rather create a new perception of 'the others' when compared with cultural identities. It is therefore a study that seeks to provide a connection to similarities and differences in identity formation in both cultural and religious contexts.

The mode of mediation of Christian music among these groups also proves important to study. Media of consumption such as traditional and new media (including social media, 'in real life' performances [IRL] and 'live' transmission) and the mediated experiences of these groups of people are factors to be considered and studied. In terms of mediation and identity, the part this study will play is to identify how media of Christian music consumption also influence identity through portrayal or representations in Christian music subgenres and their modes of reception. The preferences of these groups based on their use and consumption of Christian music subgenres are bound to be influenced by certain factors and preferred channels of reception thus necessitating this study. Various forms of media representation and consumption through which identities (cultural, religious and diasporic) find expression and the maintenance of these identities make the aspect of mediation essential.

This study is situated within the theoretical framework of 'the circuit of culture' as propounded by Richard Johnson in 1986 and expounded by scholars as Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Andres Madsen, Hugh Mackay and Keith Negus (1997, 2013). The circuit is made up of five moments of representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation but the moments that will guide this study are those of representation, identity and consumption. The application of this model to this study will exemplify the representation and consumption of Christian music as a phenomenon within the South African and Nigerian cultural landscapes, and how identities are reinforced or adapted as a result of representation and consumption of Christian music subgenres. The moments of identity; representation and consumption will also be supported by Stuart Hall's (1990) stance on identity and his encoding and decoding model (1993). The methodological approach is within qualitative research with the use of interview as the research instrument. Responses will be elicited from 32-40 respondents [i.e. seven-ten respondents per group] of home-based South Africans and Nigerians as well as diasporic South Africans in Lagos (Nigeria) and diasporic Nigerians in Durban (South Africa).

This study is in progress hence there are no findings to be reported yet.

## **MACRO-DYNAMICS OF RACE, CLASS AND DESEGREGATION: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THEY REFLECTED IN MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS AT A RELATIVE PRESTIGIOUS SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY?**

**Mr David Schieferdecker**

University of Mannheim

After the downfall of apartheid, the coterminous relationship between race and class has partly eroded. While the majority of people living under poverty are still Black, upper income layers are increasingly reflecting South Africa's diversity (Seekings and Natrass, 2015). In this macro-context, meaningful integration of daily lives predominantly happens in middle class settings, for example, in suburban neighborhoods and (semi-) private schools (e.g., Durrheim, Mtose and Brown 2011, Hunter 2015).

The present study investigated to what extent the increased importance of class over race is reflected in youth's media consumption. Theoretically, I built on ethnographic audience research that specifies the role of race and class in selection and consumption processes (e.g., Bosch, 2014; Dolby, 2001; Schenk, 2015; Strelitz, 2005). In order to complement, update and generalize this research, I implemented a survey study ( $n=1221$ ) among students at a relative prestigious university in the Eastern Cape province.

In a first step, I analyzed average group consumption and underlying consumption types and found that race remains a distinctive factor in the choice of traditional mass media, although consumption habits align along socio-economic background. The most marked difference revolved around students' entertainment orientation. While almost all White students and a considerable portion of Black students from higher income backgrounds strongly preferred globally-produced contents, Black students regularly consumed local productions too. I suggest that we can explain this two-folded audience segmentation with four mechanisms: linguistic barriers, physical access, symbolic relatability of global/local contents, and peer group influences in a context of audience targeting and persisting informal segregation.

In a second step, I investigated whether media preferences are correlated to measures of desegregation (i.e. intergroup contact, social distance and identification with racialized ingroup). The analysis suggested that two "desegregational milieus" exist at the university. On the one hand, I found a milieu that consisted mainly of income stronger White and Black students who drew strongly from global symbolic material and who reported regular contacts and relatively neutral attitudes. On the other hand, I found a milieu of Black students, who often came from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds, who were more inclined towards local media and who had lower levels of outgroup contact and felt higher social distance. Notably, Black students from lower income backgrounds who still attended a better school and White students from lower income backgrounds seemed most likely to transcend these milieus.

Altogether, the findings strongly suggest that media consumption is intertwined with processes of informal segregation, desegregation and resegregation. I conclude the presentation by relating the findings to the wider discussion on the fragmentation of the South African public sphere.

## THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION AND THE COMMUNICATION OF POWER: UBUNTU AND ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTIONS OF POWER

Dr Leyla Tavernaro-Haidarian

University of Johannesburg

This paper challenges the prevailing approach of current democratic discourses, which pan out as contests of power between inherently conflicting interests and which are riddled with challenges, costs and consequences. In light of these, other non-adversarial approaches to public discourse are worth considering. This requires adopting an alternative realism, which opens a space for discursive inquiry that is participatory, exploratory and effective and the question becomes: how can we reframe public discourses to promote this end? The African philosophy of Ubuntu offers valuable insights into this endeavor as it espouses relational notions of power that contrast and complement individualist facets. It provides the space to develop the language and concepts to think and speak in ways that support cooperative societal structures and practices, which rest on the premise that the various interests of individuals and groups, while diverse and textured, can be conceived of as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

As such, understanding power mostly in terms of 'domination', 'coercion' or the accumulation of resources may not be a sufficient basis for social theory and communication. It serves a significant analytical function yet reveals only one part of the spectrum of human relations. Elements of an alternative concept of power are found throughout the literature on feminism, systems theory or the capability approach. And although the distinction of 'power to' (denoting capability, capacity or ability) versus 'power over' is a prevalent way that scholars distinguish between some of these nuances, other ways of conceptualizing power can significantly expand our understanding. Power can be balanced or tensely maneuvered. Or, as Ubuntu suggests, power can be co-created and mutually empowering. This paper synthesizes some of these nuances and articulates a (non-exhaustive) framework can then be used to conceptualize and further refine the idea of harmonious and mutually empowering communication. It sets out a novel approach for 'discourse engagement' or 'discourse expansion' and contributes to the project of reorganizing social reality by rethinking the discourses that shape it. It provides a framework for how communication can move toward a relational understanding of power as 'co-created' force of social cohesion.

## JESUS COMES TO SOUTH AFRICA: BLACK TWITTER AND POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Dr Shepherd Mpfu

This qualitative study is a critical discourse analysis of political meanings of hashtags used and memes transmitted by South Africa's ruling ANC and ordinary citizens during the 2016 local government elections (hereafter LGE2016) and the 2017 African National Congress 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. A hashtag is symbolised by the sign # and it is usually used mainly on Twitter to call attention to social media users for multi-participation to certain issues or topics so as to mobilise those interested to join the conversation. Metaphorically speaking, a hashtag is a virtual room that 'calls' those who want to discuss and observe issues surrounding a particular topic to enter, take a seat and converse without moderation. A meme is a type of popular cultural media text usually composed of remixed or mimicry images and videos distributed online as a 'popular discursive tool for social, cultural, political, and consumer commentary' (Nowak 2016, 78) on topical issues. Internet memes are composed and shared horizontally by ordinary people in online social media platforms such as Twitter to visualise their everyday experiences and as commentary on topical issues. The usually unclear, complex and complicated status of authorship of internet memes hence it is safe to label them as multi-participant (Nowak 2016) diffusing from one user to another shaping and reflecting 'general social mindsets' (Shifman 2014, 4). President Jacob Zuma has been the most 'memed' and hashtagged South African president owing to his 'unpresidential' attributes. Journalist Adriaan Basson's three opening sentences to the preface to his book *Zuma Exposed* are instructive. He writes: 'Unlike his predecessors, Jacob Zuma didn't rise to power with a Big Idea. Nelson Mandela had the Rainbow nation and Thabo Mbeki had African Renaissance. Zuma had nothing but a corruption trial' (2012, 1). His scandals and the growth of the population of netizens, those with access to the internet, have provided enough material to make his name fodder for political activism, jokes and protest by ordinary citizens in a context where, after 1994, the state's propensity to use violence has weakened while densely connected ordinary citizens' voices, together with those of civil society have been amplified and strengthened. This article explores the wider role and meaning of social media— specifically Black Twitter — hashtags and memes that populated the Twittersphere in response to ANC messages during the August LGE2016 and its 105<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebrations. The ANC used the

hashtag #Asinavalo (We are fearless) as a campaign and bragging cry during the LGE2016 and #WeAreANC for its anniversary celebrations. The post LGE2016 provided for a moment of deep reflection for the ANC as it performed dismally with some of its traditional voters staying away or voting for opposition parties. Subsequent hashtags and memes have provided us with some critical insights into the minds of voters and their perception of the political situation especially during the elections. Flowing from the reactions towards the ANC in the LGE2016, this article discusses the related event, as deciphered from the reactions of Black Twitter to the #WeAreANC hashtag, to help shed light on the structures of feelings.

## **A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CARTOON IMAGES AND MEMES SHAPED DOMINANT POLITICAL DISCOURSES DURING NIGERIA'S 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

**Mr Chikezie E Uzuegbunam**

University of Cape Town

The new media ecology has continued to challenge traditional news flows and brings in new realities to the table of political communication in many regions of the world. With many online platforms that are seen as alternative information sources for the society, the notion of how text and talk are ideologically distributed is changing by the day. During the 2015 General Election in Nigeria, satirical cartoon images were disseminated across social media, going viral as they were shared by potential voters and election followers within Nigeria and the Diaspora. These images are encoded with meanings about the political landscape, embodying varied representations of the political parties, candidates and other actors in the political process. Indeed, the digital expressive culture has become one of the most fascinating aspects of the intersection among the digital, politics and the Nigerian society. Based on Stuart Hall's (2003) position that in our bid to understand society, it becomes critical to explore how meaning is symbolically created through the signifying practices of representation – signs, language, and media texts – this study, using focus groups and critical textual analysis, deconstructs the meanings embedded within the images and maps how they shaped discourses during the election and even after it. The cartoon images and memes were particularly widely shared among Internet users, over social network platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. The images as visible products of photo manipulators, Internet trolls and digital enthusiasts notwithstanding, are laden with very significant nuances that speak directly to the political climate in Nigeria during the period the 2015 election held. The two leading presidential candidates – Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari, candidates of PDP and APC, respectively, were locked in a deadly do-or-die electoral battle that raised lots of tension in the polity. The opposition party (APC) pragmatically sold their “Change” ideology to Nigerian populace who have become emotionally disappointed by the sitting government led by the PDP. The former utilised their “Change” mantra to position themselves in opposition and used same to win the majority of voters over. Equally, the social media images and memes unpack prevalent notions of an ailing nation that needed a redeemer, the reservations and historic distrust in the electoral body, the uncanny fears of the nation's democracy being replaced by tyranny, looming large, among other readings. What has become more interesting is that with the present political climate in the country full of frustration and shock, these images echoed important rhetoric of struggle and tension as experienced currently in Nigeria. In this way, they may have become self-fulfilling prophecies of sorts for a new political dispensation as witnessed in Nigeria. This research, in an African context, expands our knowledge of political communication by providing a more nuanced understanding of how social media users attach meanings to digital activist-political images. Since political images increasingly transform to semiotic sites of tension, contest and resistance in many parts of the world, the study highlights the ever more considerable role that digital technologies could play in the political world today.

## **'I WILL RETIRE WHEN YOU BRING AFCON TROPHY TO STATE HOUSE': ONLINE FOOTBALL FANDOM AND PROTEST CULTURES IN ZIMBABWE.**

**Dr Lyton Ncube**

This study shows intersections of online football fandom and growing anti-President Robert Mugabe protest cultures in Zimbabwe. There is a dearth of research on online football fandom and protest cultures in Africa and Zimbabwe. This paper utilises critical discourse analysis on selected politically intertwined WhatsApp memes circulated between January-February 2017, during the Warriors' (Zimbabwe men senior national football team) disastrous performance at the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals in Gabon. The study demonstrates that due to a restrictive environment prohibiting demonstrations against the president and ruling government, online social media platforms are critical sites where 'ordinary' Zimbabweans can speak truth to power. The Warriors' poor campaign at 2017 AFCON finals, triggered significant WhatsApp humorous memes insinuating that the national football team's poor show is a microcosm of Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government's failure to save a deteriorating Zimbabwean economy.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

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Chair: Dr Julie Reid

Venue: Eden Grove Blue

### **MAKING COMMUNICATION RESEARCH RELEVANT – STRATEGIES FOR THE PRINCIPLED PROMOTION, INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY AND THE DECOLONISATION OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION RESEARCH**

**Prof Pier Paolo Frassinelli**

University of Johannesburg

**Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede**

University of Johannesburg

**Prof viola c milton**

University of South Africa

**Dr Julie Reid**

University of South Africa

### **MAKING COMMUNICATION RESEARCH RELEVANT – STRATEGIES FOR THE PRINCIPLED PROMOTION, INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY AND THE DECOLONISATION OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION RESEARCH**

The SACOMM Communications Advocacy and Activism (CAA) focus area aims to encourage social scientific research which is politically relevant, that promotes positive social change in the interest of democracy and social justice, and that can 1) be made more openly available for the purpose of increasing its impact, 2) be promoted among key stakeholders, 3) be inserted into communication/media policy making processes, 4) inform advocacy and activism and, 5) contribute to the extension of the body of knowledge within the communication sciences from a decolonised position.

Key to this aim is the provision of opportunities for, and the enabling of, academics and scholars working in the communication sciences to produce research which is politically relevant, democratic in its purpose, and that promotes positive social change, to collaborate and engage one another, as well as showcase their findings to the relevant stakeholders, including media/communications policy makers and advocacy/campaigning groups and organisations. Also central to this CAA focus area is the notion of encouraging, promoting and showcasing research which is relevant to, and can have a material impact on, media and communication policy making processes, in order to bridge the divide between academically produced research, and the spheres of policy making and advocacy/activism. Additionally, the CAA focus area is concerned with promoting the development of research methodologies which are relevant, applicable and suitable to Global South and African positions and contexts, as part of the decolonisation project.

This panel will focus on some of the more practical tasks involved in the above. Panelists will discuss strategies for the promotion of socially and politically relevant research findings outside of the more traditional frameworks of academe, which often confines relevant research to a small community of scholars only. Public awareness raising, media engagement, the open and public promotion of researched findings, public and community engagement, as well as alternative and decolonised research methodologies are necessary for the broadening of public accessibility to, and the relevancy of, academic research. While much research may be performed with the intention of addressing societal needs and challenges, such work cannot begin to have a positive impact or contribute to social change if it is not broadly accessible to either key stakeholders, or the active citizenry and public, and while it remains out of touch with local specificities and positions.

This panel will adopt an informal structure and operate similarly to a workshop format. A brief five to ten minute presentation will be offered by each of the panelists, after which the panel chair will facilitate a workshop discussion on the panel topic.

#### ***Breaking the tradition: learning to un-learn the dominant and mythologised mainstream framework and culture of performing research within the academy and beyond***

**Dr Julie Reid**

University of South Africa

Research traditions, methodologies and common practices which have become naturalised, normative, hegemonically traditional, and mythologised as authoritative within mainstream academe are proving largely inadequate within a number of contexts, particularly within the Global South, and are increasingly emphasised as such by the decolonisation intellectual project. This

presentation will discuss a variety of alternative strategies to producing and promoting research. It will argue, firstly, for the prioritisation and encouragement of research that is politically and socially relevant in the interests of democracy and social justice. Secondly, it will make a case for the promotion of collaborative research collectives as opposed to the individualised or isolated pursuit of research aims. Thirdly, the importance of the establishment of new research methodologies and approaches which are appropriate to Global South conditions will be emphasised. Here, the case study of the audience centred approach, developed by the Media Policy and Democracy Project, will be presented. Fourthly, it will discuss the importance of, and strategies for the enabling of, access and accessibility to research findings for audiences and citizens beyond academia.

### ***Roads taken and not taken: how we publish***

**Prof Pier Paolo Frassinelli**

University of Johannesburg

In my contribution I would like to explore some of the publishing opportunities made available to us by digital platforms. We still tend to think of academic writing in terms of bounded and discrete texts, of products rather than processes. However, the digital environment opens up new possibilities. The digital environment is unbounded and hyperlinked. It facilitates open access: it has been argued that the Internet is the most powerful tool we have invented to distribute, share and link content and ideas on a massive scale. Yet academic publishing is still dominated by closed proprietary systems. Content is routinely hidden behind pay walls. Access is artificially restricted. This is because academic publishing is ruled by a for profit model in which the interests and needs of publishers, rather than those of writers and readers, are privileged. Against this backdrop, I would like to discuss new possibilities for more collaborative work and writing projects, and also strategies for making our work more widely and easily accessible. Rethinking how we publish is a contribution to rethinking the university and what we do in it as a public good.

### ***Bridging critical and administrative research paradigms in the interest of a social and politically engaged African research agenda***

**Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede**

University of Johannesburg

Amidst renewed and amplified calls for addressing colonialism in higher education in South Africa, calls that are increasingly reverberating throughout the global South as well as the global North, the challenge put to higher education is one of moving beyond the constraints of a higher education system shaped by the legacies as well as continuations and mutations of Colonialism, and later apartheid and its aberrations throughout Southern Africa. Such calls are also calls for scholars to work towards a decolonisation of scholarship and the underlying epistemologies that informs scholarship. This for research to be applicable to, and relevant for, the context that it serves. And as both a site and agent of transformation, the academy has a crucial role to fulfill to ensure relevance in both teaching and research, and scholar will have to take seriously their role as a change agents. In this context, the question becomes how to facilitate and foster socially and politically engaged methodologies that can address acute challenges and needs in our society. I will argue that one way of doing so is looking towards methodologies that bridge paradigms of critical and administrative research.

### ***Decoloniality and the Responsibilities of the Communication Studies Intellectual***

**Prof viola c milton**

University of South Africa

In the field of Communication Studies – and Media Studies in particular – decoloniality as concept, as well as a lens and field of study – appear to have surpassed Cultural Studies as a privileged concern among (left-leaning) academics. In this presentation I would like to expound some of the implications of this concern as it relates to the Communication Studies curriculum. In particular, I will be reflecting on decoloniality and the (pedagogical) responsibilities of the Communication Studies intellectual. I will start by comparing the Decoloniality Project with the Cultural Studies project and deliberate a bit about what the “transformative powers of a radical educational agenda”, “wars of position” and the “intersection of politics and pedagogy” (Mullen, 2005; Giroux, 1999; Giroux, 2004) might mean within the context of a decolonized Communication Studies curriculum. Paraphrasing Giroux, I will ask questions about our political will and professional ability to incorporate decoloniality into Communication Studies curriculum reform. Finally, I will cogitate on the relationship between critical pedagogy, decoloniality, and a transformative Communication Studies curriculum.

## THE EMPIRICAL IMPERATIVE: BUILDING A CULTURE OF POST-GRADUATE RESEARCH IN A POST-TRUTH PARADIGM

Dr Jenni Underhill

AFDA

At AFDA campus, Johannesburg, a drive to develop a comprehensive post graduate course comprising of both Honours and Masters programmes has been implemented recently. The challenge of this is two-fold. The first, is that AFDA lacks a scholarly culture in that few opportunities for research and academic writing exist at the undergraduate level. Moreover, traditional academic research is not the immediate focus of the School. The second challenge is that creative film research in a post-truth paradigm does not readily fit into an academic mould. This paper explores the effectiveness of a series of workshops offered to Honours students, devised to equip these students with academic literacy concepts, as well as critical thinking skills, with a view of producing a thesis at the end of the year. Qualitative data, collected from student questionnaires will attempt to evaluate the workshops from the student perspective of valuing research in a post-truth world. In addition, the workshops will be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they enabled students to think critically and to write academically. A critical thinking approach is about questioning conventions, suppositions, taken-for-granted assumptions, and popular orthodoxy. Critical thinking is also fundamentally evidence-based and dependent upon the empirical imperative. This is because to produce convincing knowledge a sufficient factual basis is required. In a post-truth context, and the age of “alternative facts”, the methodology by which research is conducted is what determines whether such knowledge is verifiable and dependable, and therefore, meets the empirical imperative. The post-truth moment demands of scholars to face up to the challenges of teaching the value of methodologically sound knowledge. The workshops will explore these challenges and ways to confront them through an emphasis on research, evidence and methodology. The results will help inform a way forward for building a post-graduate culture of research at AFDA and is intended to produce transferable insights for post-graduate research in other settings.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRICULA 5.0

Ms Carike Verbooy

Boston Media House

At the 2016 PRISA conference, Daniel Munslow presented insights into the South African Communications landscape based on a study conducted by the VMA Group in association with PRISA and IABC. His presentation included research on skills that are currently lacking in the marketplace such as strategic thinking, digital communication skills and more. A review of current articles and conference discussions regarding skills needed for the future Public Relations professional mirror the skills identified in the South African Communications landscape research namely social media community management; multimedia content creation; creativity, insight and planning; and measurement and analytical skills. This led to an internal questioning of the Public Relations curricula at Boston Media House – are we preparing our Public Relations students adequately for the world of work?

Dodd (2016) writes that “Public relations educators regularly walk the line between top-down theoretical discussions and the bottom-up tactical skill sets that students often desire most.” Dodd (2016) offer some key strategies for the future of public relations education: “connect the dots, integrate interdisciplinary, research-based articles, engage in the community and play like a champion today”. In an article about the three pillars of public relations education in the future, Duhé (2016) argues that these three pillars must be fast forward thinking, interdisciplinary learning, and analytical prowess. Fast forward thinking refers to “preparing students not so much for their first job, but rather their third or fourth position” (Duhé, 2016). Therefore the curricula must be based on “interdisciplinary learning that includes business, economics, political science, sociology, and organizational behavior, among other fields” (Duhé, 2016). An analytical mindset goes beyond crunching numbers, it involves teaching students to “synthesize, filter, and present information in a way that is relevant, accurate, and succinct – and recognizing that information comes from a myriad of sources they encounter on a daily basis” (Duhé, 2016). It is interesting to note how similar the three pillars of public relations education in the future according to Duhé compare to the research findings of the insights into the South African Communications landscape, especially with reference to skills that are currently lacking in the marketplace.

The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of research conducted with current Public Relations students, graduates, host companies or employers and lecturers. This is done in an effort to understand if the current Public Relations curricula prepares students adequately for the world of work based on the insights into the South African Communications landscape study and question how do we continue to educate the future Public Relations practitioner in this post-truth, digital world.

## **STUDENTS AS CONVERSATIONS: USING PURPOSE AS AN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR APPLIED PEDAGOGY IN A POST-COLONIAL AND POST-TRUTH CONTEXT.**

**Ms Roela Hattingh**

University of Johannesburg

If we imagine the world the way it ought to be, Reiman (2012) proposes, “it would be ever expanding and ever contributing, our civilization would have reached a higher purpose together by serving our world.” However, the reality is that in the post-colonial post-truth South Africa, things truly seem to fall apart. Even for millennials.

How can educators in the emerging field of strategic communication use purpose as an engagement strategy? “Purpose not as “a glib statement to be drafted in PowerPoint, slapped on a website and printed for a plaque in reception.” (Karaian, 2016) but rather as a sustainable strategy that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Verbach, 2009).

The 2030 global goals for sustainable development, were used as a starting point to inspire millennials who are, according to Minar (2016) characterised by the defining parameters of “the digital, technological and internet revolution” as well as “new socialism”. The exploratory research project aims to study recursively and reflexively students’ involvement and strategies to create sustainable change in themselves and their immediate communities.

Nelson Mandela said we are not able to change people. We can only change ourselves and influence people (La Grange, 2015).

Honours students in Strategic Communication are tasked to individually create, measure and present a sustainable change in the field of sustainability; to change themselves and influence their immediate community within the timeframe of 16 weeks and to create digital content that supports the process. Continuous reflection, the setting and measurement of short, medium and long-term goals and physical evidence of the process, measurement and “sustainable change” are required.

Data collection utilises a three-phase approach. Presentations of 52 Strategic Comm honours students will be assessed by lecturer and peers; engagement with social media content - “goodvertising” (Minár) will be measured and finally in-depth interviews with 9 students will be conducted.

The metadiscipline of second-order cybernetics will be used to identify the cognitive processes and communicative practices of learners in the journey of “coming to know” and “knowledge sharing” (Scott: 2001). The results can be utilised as pedagogic and cultural tools to communicate insights regarding strategic communication and change management.

## **INTEGRATION OF NEW MEDIA AND PEDAGOGY IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY CLASSROOMS: A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA.**

**Miss Yolisa Mhlomi**

University of Fort Hare

This paper seeks to analyse the integration of new media and pedagogy into the curriculum and teaching practices of the twenty first century in order to meet and bridge the gaps of technological divide. The theoretical frameworks for this paper are cognitive learning theory which focuses mainly on what goes on in learners’ heads instead of observable behaviour. Also, the diffusion of innovations theory which promotes the idea of incorporating school curriculum and technology. It is therefore important to note that the need for new media in the education system is something that has long existed but lacking the right implementation and funding of tools necessary to accommodate the change in curriculum. Integrating new media and pedagogy is necessary to shift away from teacher-centred classrooms whereby teachers are regarded as the main sources of information to learner-centred classrooms. This changes the perspective that learners are passive participants in learning, but active individuals who are able to solve constructive problems encountered. This paper therefore discusses related literature such as challenges and benefits of new media integration into pedagogy and implementation of new media into education. Hence, this paper employed the mixed methods approach, whereby three hundred questionnaires were collected from the respondents of three different schools (learners) and nine teachers were interviewed, three from each school. Key discussions in this paper reveal that the integration of new media and pedagogy into the curriculum exposes learners to constructive learning rather than the traditional instructional learning system whereby the teacher provides information to learners. Therefore, teachers should develop their computer literacy skills in order to enhance the intellectual capacity and computer literacy skills of learners to utilise their new media technologies when searching for school related information.

## **TECHNOLOGY USE AND RISK-TAKING: A STUDY OF DRIVERS' AWARENESS OF THE DANGER OF TEXTING WHILE DRIVING AND WHY THEY DO IT**

**Mr Tshepho Justice Kgasago**

University of Limpopo

The development of technology has brought enormous impact on society, affecting both social and cultural practices of people across the world. The focus, however, has been on the positive results of technology use than the negatives. South Africa is faced with high level of accidents and some of these accidents are caused by technological distraction. Road safety statistics in South Africa show that in 2009 there were 13 768 fatalities, 13 967 in 2010 and 13 954 in 2011 (Arrive Alive, 2015). Considering the potential for accident due to texting while driving, it raises a critical question: Why do people text and drive? What does this habit reveal about human use of technology? And more specifically, are people aware of the risk of texting while driving? These questions arouse a need for a critical scholarly study of human behaviour and technology use, specifically the culture of risk-taking with technology use. This study is part of broader research study on technological distractions, with a focus on the prevalence and impact of technology use and distracted driving. Particularly, this paper explores an aspect of this broad research project, which is to examine if drivers are aware of danger of texting and driving and investigate why people take such risk.

Risk-taking and technology use is a specific area of study in technology and society that draws theoretically from the dystopian approach of technological determinist framework. The dystopian approach of technological determinist was used because it highlights the potentials of technology for social and cultural accidents. A mixed methodology of data collection was used in this study because it offers strength that equalises the limitations of both qualitative and quantitative research. The researcher conducted a survey with adults and youth drivers, focus group discussions with drivers that text and drive, and interviews with Traffic Officers to investigate the awareness of the potential dangers of texting while driving. The study also investigates reasons why drivers text and drive, even when they are knowledgeable of its potential dangers, and the general culture of risk taking in technology use was broadly examined.

Preliminary findings from this study show that most of the research participants are aware of the danger of texting while driving. Specifically, the survey revealed that 96% of drivers believed that texting while driving was dangerous and 95% also believed that it reduces one's level of concentration while driving. However, the preliminary findings of the study reveal that the reasons why drivers continue to text while driving in spite of their awareness of its danger are both cultural and psychological. The culture of 'nowness' in communication has shaped a belief that communication should be instantaneous since people can be reached anywhere and anytime. This culture then influenced a psychological need to be connected at all time and to share moments on social networking platforms even at own risk. Risk-taking itself then becomes a psychological pleasure. This research is significant in the social analysis of technology use and distraction; this significance is made more important considering that there is paucity of research on this social issue in South Africa.

## **PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION APPROACHES FOR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE**

**Ms Oluwatola F. Fasakin**

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Today's adolescents are at risk due to the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and unplanned pregnancy which results from risky sexual behaviour. The increase of risky sexual behaviours and lifestyles among adolescents could be attributed to poor interpersonal relationship between parents and their children. This paper examines parents' communication approaches with their children (authoritative, advisory, fear-inducing, dialogic etc.) for behavioural change. The paper explores if these communication approaches create fear in adolescents in developing self-efficacy in the face of threat (un protected sex, peer pressure, and other risky behaviours) which will be understood through the theoretical lens of the Extended Parallel Process Model. Even though, fear appeals are typically studied within the context of the mass media, this paper will show how they may also be applicable in interpersonal relationships.

The study was conducted in Mayville Township, Durban. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting four adolescents between the ages 18-21 and four parents who have adolescents above age 18. Data was collected via in-depth interviews based on open-ended questions. Thematic analysis assisted in identifying content of the communication between the parent and adolescent.

The study's findings are yet to be concluded but this paper presents a critical examination of literature that contextualises the study and delineates the value of the chosen theory and methodology. Overall, this study aims to understand parent-adolescent communication within the context of risky sexual behavior in order to identify possible ways that this communicative relationship may be improved for positive behavioural change.

## **BECOMING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE: THE EFFECT OF RADICAL LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY TOWARD COLLABORATION**

**Ayesha Toyer**

**Rifqah Abrahams**

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of change in leadership and how it affects the organizational culture and management style within a multidisciplinary organisation. In this study, we plan to discuss the role management plays in, influencing radical change. The role public relations management plays within management and organizational change will also be addressed, followed by an investigation and discussion of the changes made by this organisation. All of these changes are in response to our changing social environment, which expects organisations to be more socially responsible and sustainable.

The role of public relations has remarkably changed since the inception of social media;  and the reality of media convergence and citizen journalism – as tools of communication. Organisations have had to change the way they communicate with their stakeholders and take ownership of their brands. Representatives of the brand are considered public property and are expected to lead by example. Many theorists believe leaders who are in touch with public relations thinking are the ideal leaders of the organisation. These leaders fundamentally shape the organisation and are the custodians of any change within the company. Leadership and Change cannot exist independently of one another. This study explores both the changes made in the organisation based on the change in leadership at the organisation; as well as the change within the organisation's business environment and by its respective stakeholders. Through the use of the qualitative research design we will explore the internal changes within espAfrica, in response to the many changes within their business environment, which have called for more collaborative and responsible business practice. Steyn's Mirror Function is relevant here (2000:19), she asserts that when an institution/entity monitors its environment and the developments therein, they are able to anticipate changes that would affect them and proactively adjust their behaviour. They are then able to harness the power of communication to adapt to any social changes. Steyn relates the mirror function to that of the window function which can be compared to the reflective paradigm. The positivist and reflective paradigms are relevant within this study because these paradigms assert that the organisation should reflect outwardly, on what occurs within the society from which they operate with regard to policies, procedures, common practices, beliefs, norms, and culture for example. espAfrica have led the way when it comes to progressive and collaborative management and performance. They have introduced programmes and initiatives that address many of the social and economic issues within their surrounding community. Their Training and Development department offer workshops, skills-transfer programmes and work-integrated learning initiatives that directly and legitimately improve the lives of hundreds of South Africans in a meaningful and sustainable manner. This study will explore these initiatives and discuss its impact.

According to Nielsen (2014), "Fifty-five percent of global consumers across 60 countries say they are willing to pay more for products and services provided by companies that are committed to positive social and environmental impact. Additionally, being socially responsible can also help you obtain funding, boost employee performance, and can lead to innovation, collaboration, and even reduce costs. Being socially responsible is a change all organisations must make if they are to remain competitive and relevant.

Gregory and Willis (2013:28-29) suggest that the public relations leader is ideally placed as the CEO. They explain that the CEO should serve as the public relations leader because the chief executive has "a much wider operation scope as well as much higher levels of accountability and personal exposure." The strategic space that the CEO operates within is familiar territory for public relations professionals. Gregory and Willis go as far as to state that, "Strategic capabilities of the public relations adviser directly support and complement the CEO's key preoccupations." The above sentiments are echoed by others from outside the public relations fraternity. The Harvard Business Review produced a short film that comprised of a series of interviews with some of the world's leading experts on leadership. "Their conclusions serve to outline the role of tomorrow's chief executive," Gregory and Willis (2013:29). Many of the qualities mirror the strategic functions of public relations professionals. Alan Lafley (2009: 54-62), former CEO of Proctor & Gamble also describes the essence of his job in the same way a public relations director might conceptualise his role. He believes the CEO's most important role is to link the external world with the internal organisation.

According to Fernandez-Araoz (2014:48) change within the business environment is inevitable and despite impressive backgrounds and past accolades, the ability to adjust and adapt in the competitive, technological and regulatory changing market is vitally important. Credentials and track records in today's vast changing environment are not the only sought after experience needed in business. According to Fernandez-Araoz (2014:51) the qualities that are considered as essential for success, in today's

most desirable organisations; are curiosity, insight, engagement, adaptability, determination and most importantly - leadership. These are what set companies apart in our changing business. The industry is changing and organisations are expected to be flexible and in so doing, lead the way, within their specific fields of expertise.

“The role of the communicator is to act as brand guardian and champion, and to act as a catalyst for change if the reality of the brand is to be experienced,” Gregory and Willis (2013:42). EspAfrika (responsible for the Cape Town International Jazz Festival) has undergone considerable change over the past few months. The appointment of a new Director has led to considerable changes within espAfrika. Billy Domingo is in touch with his stakeholders and places considerable value on the importance of public relations and social media. He runs his company with its people in mind. “We don’t have golden circles because people should be able to mix freely with whomever they want. We’ve equalled the playing field and allowed the people to deal with each other,” says festival director Billy Domingo. Domingo leads his brand in a transparent fashion; he makes decisions based on how they affect the people whom are in contact with the brand both internally, as well as externally.

## GENDER & REPRESENTATION

Venue: St. Peter’s Building Seminar Room 34

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### BLACK ERASURE AND CELEBRITY PEDDLING OF WHITENESS: A STUDY OF SKIN BLEACHING AMONG BLACK WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Ms Mpho Motseki

University of Limpopo

Skin bleaching has become a growing norm in South Africa among black women (Dlova, 2012). A 2012 study showed that Durban and Johannesburg are the two cities leading by 32.2% of Africans and Indian women who admitted to using skin lightening products (Dlova, 2012). Well-known South African celebrity Nomasonto Mshoza Mnisi a South African artist, bleached her skin because she was ‘tired of being ugly’ (DRUM, 17 November 2011). Other celebrities such as Kelly Khumalo, Khanyi Mbau and Surisha Naidoo have also been associated with lightening their skin. Moving up Africa the Cameroonian artist Dencia has developed her own skin lightening product called *Whitenious* where she confirmed that she herself is using the product. In contrast to these celebrities encouraging skin lightening use, Lupita Nyong’o, in her acceptance speech after winning an Oscar embraced her blackness and spoke openly of her own insecurities over her dark skin and how she learned to love her skin (Hunter, 2011). Celebrities carry credibility and prestige, and their use of skin lighteners are perceived as being acceptable, even encouraged (Hill, 2013).

The use of skin lightening products is popularised by some female celebrities in their social media sites, while music stars produce songs that celebrate fair skin as symbol of beauty, for example, *ngiphete mtwana yellow in Hamba nge vura* song by DJ Citi Lytes and *Sjava* (I am hanging out with a yellow bone).

Using ideology and society theory (Gramsci, 1969) and social power theory (Castells, 2011) and rearticulating post-colonial theory (Fanon, 1967). This study tackles four critical questions: what is the rationale behind black South African women bleaching their skin? Secondly what intervention is necessary in order to address skin bleaching culture among black women? Thirdly why do some celebrities propagate the ideology of fair skin as beauty among black women especially the culture of ‘yellow bone’? Lastly how do celebrities contribute to the ideology of fair skin as epitome of beauty?

A non-participant digital ethnography was used to collect texts from the three female celebrities namely Nomasonto Mshoza Mnisi kwaito singer, Khanyi Mbau a television personality and Kelly Khumalo a pop singer on Instagram and Facebook pages. A standardised open-ended interview will be used to interview the street vendors who sell skin lightning products in Mankweng. Focus group discussions will be divided into three sub groups. Digital ethnography findings show that celebrity performances of skin bleaching have a big influence on the perception of fair skin as epitome of beauty among ordinary South Africans. This study is not a complete paper yet but work in progress.

### THE REPRESENTATION OF POWER IN WOMEN’S MAGAZINES

Ms Janell Le Roux

University of Limpopo

Throughout the last decade women have advanced and have contributed immensely to education, business and politics however, the power of women remains to be linked to their physical appearance. Women’s physical appearance is subject to unrealistic beauty ideals which cannot be attained, yet women tend to spend a considerable amount of time and energy on their physical appearance in order to attain power. Hair texture/hairstyles is one of the aspects women use to accentuate their beauty. Other

important determinants of women's beauty include skin colour and thinness. For e.g. Black women with lighter skin and straight hair receive preferential treatment over those without (Hughes and Hertel, 1990). The significance of hair in apartheid South Africa played a role in shaping the race and identity of the individual. The historical discrimination and cultural baggage that comes with hair seems to be perpetuated in a post-apartheid era. While many changes have taken place culturally, there seems to be an underlined mind-set to which South Africans are being held captive. Even if it is only in the subconscious psyche, long straight Caucasian hair is seen as more beautiful and powerful than Black African hair (Banks, 2000; Byrd and Tharps, 2014).

In current South Africa hair texture no longer determines legislated social class, but it tends to shape the identity of a South African woman, and determines the criteria for beauty, social acceptance and a woman's power. The media plays an important role in the social construction of women's identity, beauty and power. This study investigated this representation of power in two South African magazines namely True Love and Cosmopolitan using six issues of each magazine to constitute the sample. The representation of power was engaged from a feminist/womanist/Marxist perspective. A comparative textual content analysis of feature content and advertisements relating to beauty and hair was undertaken. The findings of the study revealed that a significant trend in representing beautiful hair is the attainment of long Caucasian hair, as a result natural hair of non-white South African women is shunned in the pursuit of power with serious implications on identity. It was also found that the power of a woman lies in her looks, specifically as shown in this study- her hair. Hair is considered as the most important mode of expressing power and creating an identity for women.

## **GENDER SENSITIVITY ISSUES IN SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM**

**Ms Kwena Letswalela Manamela**

University of Limpopo

Media sector is one of the critical sectors in South Africa when it comes to gender sensitivity in employment equity and practice. Since the rise of independence in South Africa control and leadership of media sector has been male dominated. The power of communication in the media fraternity is not just simply the power of making messages; it is also a power to persuade, to grip the imagination, to provoke, to unsettle, to disrupt, and to redirect. How do we come to terms with this invisible and often unacknowledged form of this power? Then when this is the case, is the society not empowering the empowered by making the platform male dominated? How is the industry thinking about the future of the communications and media professions? How do we continue to educate communication and media practitioners and theorists for the future? This article is going to be qualitatively designed. Gender sensitivity issues are not common in media and communication alone, but at this juncture the research is concerned with this issue under South African context. The research is advocating that male dominance in the media and communication industry should get to normal levels. This is not a patriarchal debate but an argument presented to bring about balance in the so called gender imbalanced sector. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a critical analysis of the third millennium development goal 3. According to United Nations Department of Public Information – DPI/2517 I – September 2008 of the 113 countries that failed to achieve gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment by the target date of 2005, only 18 were likely to achieve the goal by 2015. In South Africa this paper optimizes that there are more females in schools and university than in the industry's top echelons. Then the question is where they are (meaning the girls) going after their education.

The problem lies in the way issues of gender equity are being addressed from homes, schools, colleges and universities as well as the industry. South Africa as one of the democratic economies in Africa people and citizens in particular are over expectant of this "animal" so called gender sensitivity. Gender sensitivity refers to the aim of understanding and taking account of the societal and cultural factors involved in gender-based exclusion and discrimination in the most diverse spheres of public and private life. It focuses mainly on instances of structural disadvantage in the positions and roles of women. Historically, some scholars argue that folklore and oratory stages were mainly dominated by women and what turned the tables in this era and time is a nightmare. The objectives of this paper include establishing gender sensitivity issues in media and communications of South Africa. A number of scholars when they look at gender sensitivity issues, they over generalise and stress more on the physical insensitisations forgetting the social, economic, political and religious ones. They also look at the effects of gender sensitivity on societal levels and ignoring the industrial levels. And as it can be perceived, women are at the grill by men and yet sometime it is not the case. There are number of different strategies that can be used to express gender relationships with accuracy, such as avoiding, to the greatest possible extent, the use of language that refers explicitly or implicitly to only one gender, and ensuring, through inclusionary alternatives and according to each language's characteristics, the use of gender-sensitive and inclusive language.

The sample of 150 personnel staff from media and communication sector will be purposively selected from Limpopo province and Gauteng province. These two provinces are chosen because they can fulfill the purpose of the sample and the research. Gauteng is taken as a representation of the modern day epitome and Limpopo will also represent some of the traditional society tastes and views of media and communication industry. Among the staff there would be human resources managers, female staff

and male staff. An open ended questionnaire will be administered.

The key variables to this paper are gender sensitivity being the independent variable media and communication being the dependent variables. Addressing these variables will give rise to proper address of the problem. This paper purports to come out with a framework which would be very useful in the communication and media grounds. Some theoretical frameworks are also going to be elaborated to hinge the variables.

Recommendations on gender sensitivity in media and communications sector are going to be passed from this discussion, once there is union, harmony, equity, empathy and group feeling the communications and media sector will get into the future generations well oiled. These twin evils, communication and media have the capacity to take our economy high or to let it fall, depending on how they are promoted and used. Engendering ICT policy is an area of great importance, perhaps the most important in securing the benefits of the information age for girls and women. If gender issues are not articulated in ICT policy, it is unlikely that girls and women will reap the benefits of the information age which is composed of media, information and communication. The evidence lies in the facts: women are vastly under-represented in government, business, political and social institutions; men still hold most of the management and control positions in telecommunication companies and regulatory or policy making bodies; regulatory decisions are made without any impact analysis; service licenses are attributed to companies without equal opportunity policies and controlled mostly by men. (Jorge 2001:1).

The paper will generally look at gender sensitivity in communication and media sector in South Africa based on the following policy issues, physical access to infrastructure, social and cultural issues, education and skills, financial resources, limitations of the media on gender issues, for what uses? And Statistics and indicators these would best answer most of the research questions and come up with satisfactory achievement of the objectives. The 1995 Beijing Conference on Women identified the media as one of the critical areas of concern for the advancement of women's equality and development. In an era of globalisation, its role in the struggle for gender equality is critical. Efforts to promote participation in projects, programs and policy consultation would appear to offer the prospect of giving everyone who has a stake a voice and a choice in communication and media sector. But community-driven development, participatory planning and other fine-sounding initiatives that make claims of participatory democracy and women empowerment can turn out to be driven by particular gendered interests, leaving the least powerful without voice or much in the way of choice. Bringing a gender perspective to bear on the practice of participation in development of media and communication policy of South Africa may assist in identifying strategies for amplifying voice and access to decision making of those who tend to be marginalized or excluded by mainstream development initiatives of the state.

There are a number of ways the South African governance can take to go about the issues of gender sensitivity in media and communication, of late the state through the pushes and pulls from gender based organisations the voices of the majority were being heard but not on an equal tone. Problematizing the way in which "gender" is used is essential for addressing the transformatory goals of participatory development. The practical equivalence between "gender" and "women's issues," and the narrow focus of "gender relations" on particular kinds of male-female relations, obscure the analytic importance of gender as a constitutive element of all social relationships and as signifying a relationship of power (Scott, 1989; Wieringa, 1998). This paper is looking at this issue based on observation of the South African population when it comes to males and females. Above all as earlier referred to, there are more females in South African schools than males, which imply that females are of date much educated than males.

## **IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO: ANALYSING DANCE AND ITS REPRESENTATION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN STEP UP**

**Miss Shivona Maharaj**

University of Kwazulu-Natal

The *Step Up* film series (2006-2014) comprises an elaborate display of dance to highlight how characters gain everything from love and fame to money and saving communities. The characters follow a narrative of 'bottom to the top', finding themselves in dire straits and overcoming these to reach their goals. However, despite the strong messages of working hard, and as a team, among many others, my observation of the film seems to constantly come back to gender stereotypes.

Previous studies regarding gender in the *Step Up* series has focused more on the percentage of female appearance and their roles in the narrative, and how this impacted on their representation and the subsequent impact on audiences. A study conducted by Lauzen, Dozier, and Horan, (2008) considers how male and female characters are portrayed on prime-time television and the affect it had on perceptions of gender. In this study, it was noted that characters either inhabited roles that were personal (relationship, family, love interest) or professional (breadwinner and career oriented) (Lauzen et al, 2008). It was concluded that these characterizations were built on social roles of daily life, that can range from home and domestic life to workplace tasks (Lauzen et al, 2008). According to Eagly and Steffen (1984), these can be broken down further into, firstly, agentic roles which highlight self-assertiveness, self-expansion and the need to master one's skills and secondly, communal roles which are manifested by selflessness, concern for others and the desire to get on with others (Lauzen et al, 2008). These roles

are built on stereotypes, which are generalizations based on the groups people are part of (Lauzen et al, 2008). Traditionally, male stereotypes portray men as “the ideal or norm against which women are judged” and women are consequently ‘othered’ (Lauzen et al, 2008:20). Research has shown that basic social roles assigned to female and male characters has a great impact to the maintenance of gender stereotypes (Lauzen et al, 2008). Women are most commonly placed in personal and communal roles while male characters were focused on the professional and agentic roles.

This research focuses on how the dance sequences of *Step Up* (2006), *Step Up 3D* (2010) and *Step Up: All in* (2014) perpetuates hegemonic gender roles and reinforces stereotypes as social norms. These dance sequences have been broken down, using a semiotic analysis to analyse the elements of clothing, dance movements, framing/shots and characterizations in relation to the narrative of the films. The findings of this analysis are used to determine how the genders are represented and how these confirm the prevalent gender stereotypes considering theories of the pre-existing gender stereotypes, feminism and masculinity.

The ‘Step Up’ film series is a Hollywood production which reaches a global audience, who are subsequently exposed to these gender inequalities. Therefore, it is imperative that awareness is raised about these inequalities, so that gender portrayal in modern society can be transformed into positive and equal representations.

## **EXAMINING THE CONSTRUCTION OF [LEAD] FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SOAP OPERA: A CASE STUDY OF UZALO**

**Ms Shannon Leigh Landers**

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Soap operas have been described as modern myths through which meaning can be inscribed. Just like the previous role of folktales and pictography, the soap opera genre has served to propagate ideologies as unquestionable facts through its mundane portrayal of the everyday world. The danger of this is that such depictions can influence social attitudes towards gender which are often unfavourable to women.

Previous studies on soap opera have revealed that femininity is often constructed against the backdrop of male hegemony (Mulvey, 1975; Kuhn, 1989; Geraghty, 1991; Brown, 1994). It is only through deconstructing existing binaries located within these narratives that it becomes possible to identify the underlying issues. At times these oppositions can divert attention away from possible absent power structures.

This research examines the construction of the two lead female characters in *Uzalo* (a popular South African soap opera). The aim is to establish whether they conform to, or challenge male hegemony in their characterisation. The study employs structuralist narrative theory (Propp, 1968; Lévi-Strauss, 1978) and feminist theory (Hooks, 1982; Kaplan, 1987; Rivkin and Ryan, 2004). Data has been collected by means of a scene-by-scene qualitative content analysis of five episodes (52 scenes) followed by a semiotic analysis, to elucidate the ideological functions of these roles.

The results revealed that despite evident binaries between the two protagonists, the adoption of their husband’s character traits, coupled with the conventional adaption of femininity (through gender normative constructions) further perpetuates dominant patriarchal myths; thus potentially inhabiting the ability to create a truly empowered female voice.

### **THE VISUAL**

Venue: St. Peter’s Building Seminar Room 36

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## **THE (UN)FUNNY PORNOGRAPHIC INTERSECTIONS?: RACE AND GENITALIA IN SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL ART IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL MEDIA**

**Dr Shepherd Mpofo**

University of Johannesburg

The post-Apartheid South Africa has been characterised by fractious relationships between the races that compose this society and also between the rulers and the ruled. In order to cope, understand, resist, oppose and bring about change society has devised many strategies ranging from expressing themselves in elections, social media, protests and humour. This paper is concerned with the deployment of almost pornographic satirical humour in South African politics and experiences. Using critical discourse analysis of the paintings, citizen’s comments and news media reports, this paper questions the (un)funniness and democracy of these images and their broader meanings. Race seems to be the most dominant lens through which the paintings that are the foci of this paper are read. In a racially charged South Africa race is not a funny subject. The paper concludes that the

refusal to see the (un)funny might be informed by the shocking manner of aesthetic representations in these paintings, the reader agreeing to the grave levels the depicted political situation has fallen or it could be in opposition to the ways in which the situation has been represented. All these seem to interplay with race politics and South Africa's problematic democracy.

Humour, while making people laugh and at times appreciate their condition or even make alterations – as a capacitor for change – has been one of the accessible ways of bringing about change in society. However, in some cases attempts at humorously depicting societal ills and perceived realities sometimes lead debates and attitudes that may drive people apart, moreso in ethnically or racially fractious communities like South Africa where the privileged few stained with 'whiteness' and white privilege insists that the world be seen, and understood to function only through the way they see and understand it. This paper uses three politically and sexually pornographic artworks by South African based artistes Brett Murray, Ayanda Mabulu and Iven Amali together with commentary by citizen journalists on social media – more specifically – Twitter, Facebook and responses to online stories in South African media to argue that art remains one of the most potent, incisive, controversial and yet polysemic ways of speaking to and about the post-Apartheid political temperature of the current South Africa. The article is concerned with four art works: Brett Murray's *The Spear*, Ayanda Mabulu's two pieces *The pornography of power* and *State Capture* and Iven Amali's *Modern Slavery*. The paper concludes that the paintings discussed in here occupy an important position in the debates surrounding politics of representation in race relations, understandings of democracy and the role of the media, civil society and ordinary citizens in resisting the excesses of the political elite. The contention of this article has been that even though art could provide relevant and incisive commentary on the country's political situation there is a probability, due to its polysemic nature, to implicate race and politics of democracy that may end up causing friction not only between the political elite and the ordinary citizens but amongst ordinary citizens themselves. In some contexts these tensions take racial, sexist, xenophobic or ethnic tones. The article also provides an insight and acts as an "indicator of the democratic health of the polity" as suggested by Hammett (2012, 2). The problematics of the democracy are further noted in the (un)funny of the artworks. The (un)funny of these images comes into play in a similar way Billig defines 'unlaughterness' in Laughter and ridicule. The refusal to see the funny might be informed by the shocking manner of the assemblage of aesthetic representations, might be due to the reader of the art agreeing to the grave levels the depicted situation has fallen or it could be in opposition to the ways in which the situation has been represented.

## WHOSE PUBLIC? OPENING UP THE DIALOGUE AROUND SELECTED WORKS OF FAITH47 BY EMPLOYING A MEDIA SPACE FRAMEWORK

Ms Storm Brown

University of Cape Town

Traditionally, art created in public spaces in South Africa has been primarily observed through an aesthetic lens, however it has been aptly pointed out that "[i]t is virtually impossible for artists working in public art in South Africa to escape the burden of history embedded in the landscape" (Minty 2006:423). This paper suggests Media Studies, more specifically Couldry and McCarthy's (2004:4) concept of *mediaspace* as a potential alternative to studying art and art objects created in South African public space, in order to confront "the complex social formation which should not that be simplified" (Ndebele 1991:2).

It starts by explaining the ways that the interdisciplinary approach of Media Studies allows the individual and collective appropriation of what Willis (2005:85) calls the "invisible aesthetics of the everyday rest to move away from the privileging of established art institutions ...and comprehending the role of aesthetics in mundane lifeworlds". The public art object presents a key case study for this view, as Williams (2008:18) points out that "reactions to controversial artwork by both the apartheid and post-apartheid governments have at times been unfortunately similar". Furthermore, it highlights the ways that a movement away from the aesthetic categories of the art object, allows this research to better understand how arts have historically been used as "cultural devices to disseminate news of a country suffering under apartheid" (Williamson 2008:18).

The central focus of this paper will therefore move away from the aesthetic criteria of the art object and towards the role of the artist (or visual communicator) as a political mediator or potential spatial and social transformer in South Africa. By employing a key case study in the selected works of street artist and muralist *Faith47*, this paper shows how a Media Studies approach highlights the ways in which art in public spaces in South Africa functions primarily as a polysemic communication mechanism. It then becomes an active site for proxy battles (Dubin 2012:178) where the necessary broadening of horizons and entanglement lines result in a space where art and politics find each other. It is in this complex interplay of semantics and 'publicness' where Williamson (2008:17) points out that "[a]rt and politics were not seen as separate spheres of practice but complex systems in which artists play important cultural and intellectual roles".

The paper then concludes by arguing the effectiveness of a "geographically informed and spatially sensitive analysis of media artefacts, discourses and practices [which] reveals forms of inequality and dominance, knowledge and practice that are hidden from other analytical techniques" (Couldry & McCarthy 2004:4). This opens up a form of inquiry that "undercuts the infinite space of narrative that media appear to promise; it insists that our object of analysis is never just a collection of texts, but a specific and material organization of space" (Couldry & McCarthy 2004:4).

## ALAIN BADIOU'S 'TRUTH EVENT' AND THE GREAT GATSBY: FIDELITY IN FILM ADAPTATION REVISITED

Ms Ursula Vooght

Durban University of Technology & University of KwaZulu-Natal

Contemporary philosopher Alain Badiou's ethical model of truth is an active, experiential model whereby an individual enters into a truth through an experience of fidelity, that is, through a faithful and authentic engagement with an event. This paper uses Badiou's idea of the 'truth event' as a means to challenge and reimagine conventional conceptions of fidelity in adaptation. The concept of fidelity has long been one of the seminal debates within adaptation studies – often roundly denounced by key critics as a reductive model in which the so-called secondary version of a text, the adaptation, is routinely diminished. Equally, the very concept of 'truth' has, until recently, been consistently under fire from relativist theorists with the result that comparative and evaluative methods of looking at adaptation have sometimes been characterised as untenable within the discipline. Badiou's model is unusual because it invokes an individualism in terms of personal response whilst at the same time it states, radically, that the truth is 'the same for all': a significant deviation from relativist notions of truth. Using the film adaptations of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as a case study, I suggest that deriving an approach from Badiou's conception of truth would require analysis of the discoverable intentions of the directors and writers involved, how formal manifestations reveal these intentions and the cultural environment and marketing surrounding the film's production. These give us tools to interrogate the perceived consensus around success or failure of films of *The Great Gatsby*, as derived from professional critical reaction. I propose that by using Badiou's model, we change the locus of fidelity in ways that can shed new light on the adaptation and adaptive processes – giving us back a way of talking about adaptations 'as adaptations' and reasserting the value of a concept of truth and truthfulness.

### DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION 1

Venue: Eden Grove Blue

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## BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Ms L de Lange

Dr D Mulder

University of the Free State

In the global stakeholder era, effective leadership communication that is relational is of the essence. Organisations and their leaders face the challenge of weaving a web of sustainable relationships, through engaging a multitude of stakeholders to establish resonance, trust, and ultimately social capital. Social capital refers to the sum of actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. It is argued in this article that effective leadership communication could contribute to building social capital, and ultimately positively impacts the organisational performance.

The study was approached from a qualitative paradigm and comprised four phases. Phase I of the research entailed Rodger's (2000) evolutionary concept analysis of leadership communication to discover the essence of this phenomenon. During this phase the development and history of leadership communication was explored, similar and surrogate terms of the concept were discussed, and attributes, antecedents and consequences of leadership communication were identified.

Phase II comprised a hermeneutic phenomenological study. During this phase in-depth phenomenological interviews, with respondents who are regularly exposed to leadership communication, were conducted. An adapted version of Groenewald's (2004) five step explication process were employed during this phase. The unit of analysis was employees (communication practitioners) exposed to leadership communication. Social capital were analysed during the third phase. An evolutionary conceptual analysis was conducted to establish the conceptual foundation of social capital. During phase IV the results of the first three phases were synthesised to provide guidelines to employ leadership communication more effectively to build social capital and enhance organisational performance. A framework was proposed to illustrate the links between effective leadership communication and social capital. It was established that effective leadership communication may contribute to the creation of value networks with multiple stakeholders which build social capital and thereby contribute to sustainable organisations.

## **NONPROFITS: HARNESSING THEIR COMMUNICATIVE POWER AND INFLUENCE**

**Dr Lida Holtzhausen**

The South African nonprofit sector encompasses a vast number of organizations, from universities to hospitals to environmental and human rights groups. All of which compete for funding, involvement, support, volunteers and many more aspects. It is a context characterised by emotionally draining and stressful times as donors tend to consider where to invest their hard earned money whilst trying to determine the nonprofit's effectiveness over time. The truth of the matter is that nonprofits are more than ever in an attempt to be effective in what they do, underfinanced and stretched to their limits. They often suffer the consequences of very limited budgets, poorly developed finance, management and fundraising systems and inadequate training in essential skills.

The fact is that the actions of South African nonprofits are needed now more than ever, and it's critical that organizations across all issues and areas attentively consider what role they can play in navigating the country through these uncertain political and often volatile times. Some nonprofits whose missions and visions are under threat seem well equipped to deal with different issues pertaining to the macro environment in which these organisations find themselves, but the same cannot be said for all. Many nonprofits aren't in the same position of power and influence. It is often difficult to determine how and what to communicate to different constituencies. To know what to tweet next. What statements to issue to the media. What actions steps should be utilised. The truth is that a reactive approach can spiral out of control fast, lead nonprofits to inflate their connections to a particular issue, and is just unsustainable for most communications teams running with limited staff, resources and infrastructures. Staying silent on current events that impact communities may not be an option either. Nonprofits might then be perceived as out of touch and miss opportunities to make a powerful statement about what they stand for.

The question is what's the right communications approach for South African nonprofits? How could these organizations harness the power of communication to deliver results and have impact in their communities whilst at the same time embracing their constituencies as vibrant, powerful entities? South Africa's nonprofit organizations should measure their progress in fulfilling their mission, their successes in mobilizing their resources, and their staff's effectiveness on the job. Nonprofits able to strengthen themselves in alignment with their goals will be organisations faced with several opportunities even in the midst of uncertainty and power struggles.

The research approach to this study is qualitative in nature drawing on communication theory, semi-structured interviews and qualitative content analysis.

## **THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ADVOCACY – UNDERSTANDING IMPACT AND VISIBILITY IN THE CASE OF EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE EASTERN CAPE**

**Dr Vanessa Malila**

PSAM, Rhodes University

The education sector in South Africa has a multitude of challenges and problems which plague service delivery and result in a "high-cost, low-performance education system that does not compare favourably with education systems in other African countries." The Eastern Cape education landscape is the pinnacle of all the challenges faced at the national level and often performs worse than the poorly performing national level. It is within this context of poor delivery, a lack of regulatory and legislative implementation, the influence of trade unions, a lack of transparency in public resource management, and failing infrastructure that the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) Education Programme carries out research, analysis and commentary on the work of the EC Department of Education.

This paper will use the Eastern Cape education context to understand how social accountability work, particularly that around education advocacy done by the PSAM, is reported and made visible through the mainstream media. The aim is to understand what impact, if any, damning reports made in the provinces main broadsheet newspapers have on the way in which education is delivered in the province. It will specifically look at the way in which education is reported on in the Eastern Cape, who those reports are targeted at, and levels of visibility of education failures in the province between 2005 and 2016.

The mainstream media in South Africa have been accused of reporting from the suburbs, and neglecting the lived realities of the most marginalised in South Africa. In addition, they have been accused by the ANC of consciously adoption an anti-ANC sentiment in their reporting. The education sector, particularly in the Eastern Cape, is a product of its historical context and the lasting legacy of the homeland system. The ANC government adopted a dysfunctional and disadvantaging education system from the previous apartheid government, which had implemented education policies aimed at ensuring the suppression of all races other than the minority whites. This has resulted in extensive neglect of many learners needs and has been further manifested in

a system which continues to disadvantage poor and marginalized communities who do not have the means to access private or former model-C schools that exhibit more stable human and financial resources and tend to produce more encouraging learner results and outcomes. In addition to a dysfunctional schooling system, the governance structures within the province perpetuate a lack of transparency and accountability from public officials and a lack of awareness on the part of citizens about their basic rights in demanding both transparency and accountability.

What role then does the media play in ensuring the visibility of those neglected within the education system, and providing voice to the most marginalised in society? And, how does that visibility impact on the advocacy efforts by civil society organisations by highlighting the failures of the provincial government, and in doing so, advocate for change in the system?

## **SOME FINDINGS FROM PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH INTO THE UNDERSTANDING AND COMMUNICATION OF HOME LITERACY PRACTICES BY WORKING CLASS PARENTS**

**Ms Cathy Gush**

Rhodes University

Utilising theories of Communication for Development, the paper will explore how literacy practices in the homes of a group of working class, English second language parents in Grahamstown are affected by the introduction of new literacy material and insights, and how and through which forms of media, these dynamics and changes in practice are best communicated to similar households.

The context is one in which South African children have performed very poorly with regard to literacy levels in international benchmark testing as well as in national assessments. The summary report on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) found that some of the factors contributing to these poor results were the lack of reading resources in homes, as well as the lack of strong home-school partnerships where parents took up the role of co-educators, or even primary educators at the preschool stage.

Critical literacy theorists argue that literacy practices are socially embedded (Street 2001: 2). With this in mind, the research and related project work locates itself within a framework of development support communication, described by Melkote and Steeves as “operating within an empowerment paradigm where the communication model is non-linear and participatory, useful for conveying information as well as building organisations and capacity at a grassroots level” (2001: 352).

A group of parents employed by Rhodes University at the Grade 1 - 5 levels signed up to be the recipients of a programme supporting the literacy development of their primary and pre-primary school children. The Intsomi Programme is run by the Rhodes Community Engagement Office as part of the Vice-Chancellor’s Education Initiative and provides close to 100 families with weekly reading material and educational games for their children, as well as workshops on the use of these materials and how they might benefit the children.

Following a Participatory Action Research approach, a “vanguard” group of parent participants became co-creators of media messages, utilising and building on the first stage of their communication within the group. The intra-group communication is supported through a Facebook page for all the participants where they can share their ideas and news with each other in a ‘safe’ media space, as well as a WhatsApp group. In addition, there has been advocacy for the entire parent group to gain access to the Internet through being linked into Eduroam, which is freely available to students and academic staff.

The paper will explore how the principles and techniques of development support communication and those of communicative ecologies were applied to explore, enhance and disseminate those qualitative changes in behaviour within households that positively affect children’s literacy development. In the process it aims to explore whether media representations that reflect the struggles of parents trying out new literacy practices, can create authentic, endogenous messages that resonate with people in similar circumstances and open up an alternative public sphere around the issue.

## MEASURING AND IMPROVING QUALITY DIMENSIONS IN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Dr Thalyta Swanepoel

North-West University

The quality of mainstream and local newspapers globally has been criticised for years. In fact, traditional local newspapers in South Africa are often viewed as step-siblings that have to operate with less (and lesser) resources (human and otherwise) despite playing an important role in creating a platform for intimate community news. A lack of effective and efficient media management is one factor influencing quality (see Swanepoel, 2012), raising the question: *How can managers/editors at local newspapers be empowered to continuously improve the quality of their products?*

The main argument in this paper is that providing tools for managers in the community media sector to *evaluate/measure* quality (the topic of this paper), can empower them to take steps to improve quality in all processes involved in the production of a newspaper product. It could also contribute to curbing quality concerns in this sector.

This paper presents such a measuring instrument by refining Swanepoel's (2012) comprehensive quality management model for community newspapers into a final level of complexity. The model was created following a systems- and process-based approach. Theories and models of systems, processes, quality and (total) quality management, and performance management form the theoretical framework. Models particularly informative within a journalism context include Six Sigma, the ISO management principles, core competence, Servqual and the European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM) model.

Swanepoel's model has three levels of complexity:

A (macro) presents the main components of a community newspaper organisation in terms of the systems theory, i.e. editorial, advertising, production and circulation/distribution;

B (intermediate) deconstructs the components by defining and documenting key processes – a key activity in managing and improving processes because it helps organisations to identify and locate quality problems; and

C (micro) deconstructs the key processes in each component by defining quality criteria in order to move towards measuring and improving quality in community newspapers.

The refinement process this paper reports on will be conducted from an interpretivist research perspective and following a qualitative approach. Depth interviews with managers, editors, owners and journalists; document surveys and literature analysis will be used as research instruments to gather data, complying with the requirements of data triangulation.

Refining this model into the final level of complexity involves unpacking every quality criterion defined for every key process across all four components into specific measures to establish standards for ensuring continuous quality management and improvement in community newspaper organisations. The lack of scholarly investigation into quality and quality management in this media sector complicated the process. However, resources such as the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership's study into the key editorial and business strategies of six independent community newspapers, the Human Science Research Council's investigation into scarce and critical skills in the publishing and print media sectors, and the judging criteria of several South African journalism competitions offered valuable guidance.

The process of refinement is an extensive incremental and evolutionary course and creates a magnitude of data. The objective of this paper is thus to present the *contours* of an instrument to evaluate/measure the quality of inputs (e.g. human resources and capital), transformation/processes (e.g. editorial and design), outputs (the printed and distributed paper) of a community newspaper organisation, taking cognisance of the variables influencing quality in this sector.

Managers/editors/owners of community newspaper organisations can use this measurement instrument as a baseline for continuous process improvement that should allow the organisations to evolve from low to high maturity levels.

## **MAKING SENSE OF THE ROLE OF ANALYTICS IN SHAPING NEWS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION CULTURES AND PRACTICES: CASE OF ZIMBABWEAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN NEWSROOMS**

**Dr Admire Mare**

**Prof Dumisani Moyo**

**Trust Matsilele**

University of Johannesburg

Although the notion of measuring the impact and performance of news stories is not entirely a new phenomenon, the advent of analytics and analytical tools such as Facebook, Google and Chartbeat analytics have redefined the whole terrain of the sociology of online news production and distribution. The ability of news organizations to attract advertisers, justify funding, and compare themselves to their peers have depended largely on elaborate audience measurement techniques. This presentation which draws from an on-going cross-national comparative study of Zimbabwean and South African newsrooms such as CNBC, Times Media Group, Zimpapers and Alpha Media Holdings focuses on the use and role of analytics in news production and distribution. It seeks to investigate how newsroom analytics are used in editorial decision making, how the culture of analytics is reshaping the evaluation of the impact, reach and relevance of news stories and how this phenomenon is influencing the performance evaluation of individual journalists in Africa. Based on a qualitative research design, the study deploys a combination of in-depth interviews and virtual ethnography in order to understand how the utilization of analytic tools and big data is influencing online journalistic cultures and routines in selected African newsrooms. The presentation argues that the over-reliance on analytic tools and big data has created an entirely new culture of assessing the impact and reach of online news stories. All the four newsrooms studied have set up dedicated teams responsible for rolling out digital, mobile and audience first strategies. Digital media platforms have significantly altered how African news organizations monitor, track, and interact with their audiences, ultimately creating the conditions to imagine journalism's relationships with others in new ways. Like their counterparts in the global North, African newsrooms are more concerned about metrics such as unique users, click rates, time spent, type of devices used to click on a story and engagement on their websites, social media platforms and other distribution platforms. These metrics are also used by newsrooms to convince advertisers to continue doing business with these newsrooms. The study also demonstrates that advertisers are no longer interested about news content and offline audience studies but more concerned about daily, weekly and monthly online impressions and statistics. However, this analytic turn in news production and distribution has contributed immensely to the institutionalization of click-baiting and dumping down as newsrooms ignore public interest stories in pursuit of clickable headlines and sensationalized content. Findings also show that online and multi-media editors are now spending most of their time tweaking headlines and intros in order to make news stories more appetizing for the target audience. The presentation will also show that headlines and intros have become the most important parts of the online news stories in most African newsrooms. Overall, this model of "measurable journalism" has also recasted and further complicated journalists' professional judgment, normative ideas of autonomy and privacy issues related to audience surveillance.

## **THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS PRACTITIONERS AND THEORISTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONS**

**Mr Mncedi "Eddie" Magade**

Walter Sisulu University

Technical communication is defined as the translation of the language of the expert into the language of the novice. In order to do this job effectively, organisations which undertake the communication function need change rapidly as the professional environment also changes from time to time. This will enable these organisations to be competitive and stay ahead of other organisations that they are competing with. These changes have also influenced the role of the communicator in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Academics and industry professionals argue that it seems as if we are at a crossroads in terms of the future prospects of the profession and so, what this means is that, the role of a technical communicator in this day and age also needs to change. This is mainly due the fact this role requires someone who can be more than just a writer. No definition of the technical communicator today would be complete without a mention of the persona of the communicator. Thus, coupled with our complex skill set, is a complex personality that puts us, as communication practitioners, in our unique place in the professional world.

In order to effectively attract respectable and skilled communication professionals, there needs to be change in the educational direction of the profession itself. What this means is that the training of technical communicators must also shift in order to fit the needs and the required skills of the industry. This direction includes the introduction training courses that offer

an understanding of the business goals of the organisation and also adding an in- depth understanding of the target audiences.

This paper therefore outlines the entrepreneurial understanding that communicators must have in order to fit well within the potential organisations that they might find themselves working with or for. The paper also argues for a linkage between the academics and industry professionals in order to engage on developing new programmes which will focus on the specific needs of the communication profession.

## **INPUTS JOURNALISTS IN SATELLITE OFFICES OF SOUTH AFRICAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS NEED TO EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY MANAGE THEIR WORK.**

**Ms Susan Cilliers**

**Dr Thalyta Swanepoel**

North West University

New communication technologies and news platforms as well as changing news consumer patterns, caused a decline in print media circulation and retrenchment of journalists worldwide over the last two decades (McNair, 2013:75). The quick news-producing pace nowadays to constantly feed websites, combined with the declining number of skilled, experienced journalists, have a negative impact on the quality of news (Schweigern & Urban: 2014; Porlezza & Russ-Mohl, 2013:45; Schoenbach & Van der Wuff, 2014:435-436).

Journalists working alone in satellite offices of daily newspapers, cover general news in a vast area. They are especially affected by the changes because they now often also have to cover news beyond their traditional region due to personnel shortages at head office.

Against this background, this paper will address the resources (inputs) journalists in a satellite office of a daily newspaper need to produce quality news reports. This forms part of an ongoing qualitative study about quality process management in satellite offices of South African daily newspapers.

The research question is thus: *What inputs do journalists in satellite offices of South African daily newspapers need to effectively and efficiently manage their work?*

This study uses systems and process theory as a meta-theoretical framework. According to the literature, specific input needs to be transformed into output. Within the context of a satellite office as a subsystem or the bigger corporate environment, the desired output would be quality news reports. The quality itself will not be measured, but the input and processes necessary to reach the outcome are investigated.

This paper reports on the first phase of the ongoing research. To this end, inputs were identified from the literature, including a proper job description, adequate infrastructure, proper communication with supervisors, journalistic skills and professional goals. The findings were verified with journalists currently working in satellite offices of South African daily newspapers.

Data was gathered through a questionnaire containing open-ended questions, and based on the results from the literature study. The respondents include 8 of the 12 satellite journalists in South Africa who fit the definition of a satellite journalist for the purpose of the ongoing study. Follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify information as needed.

On the positive side, inputs regarding clear responsibilities and job-related standards seem to be sufficient, and equipment generally works.

However, several challenges have also been identified, including:

- Insufficient communication with superiors due to unavailability or inexperience;
- Technological difficulties;
- Added pressure due to the continuous demand to feed webpages;
- A lack of emotional support; and
- A lack of training opportunities.

# ADVERTISING NARRATIVES

Venue: Eden Grove Seminar Room 2

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## **A SOCIAL SEMIOTIC QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC) TELEVISION POLITICAL ADVERTISING OF THE 2014 ELECTION CAMPAIGNS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

**Mr Mopailo Thomas Thatelo**

University of South Africa

In 2009 South African saw another landmark with the introduction of political advertisements on television. This paper intends to critique images selected from African National Congress (ANC) television elections advertisements of 2014 national elections, using the social semiotic dimension of myth to frame the critique of the visual rhetoric of the 2014 ANC television election commercial. This presentation will focus on screenshots and images from the advertisement in question with a specific focus on myth: the “hero” or “heroic” myth (especially that of the late ex-President Mr Nelson “Madiba” Mandela); the “master” myth (specifically that of the ANC liberation myth); the “order” myth; and, the altruistic democracy myth (cf. Nimmo & Combs 1980; Hodge & Kress 1988; Kress & van Leeuwen 1996 and 2001; van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001; van Leeuwen 2005). How televisual and cinematic apparatus techniques and cinematic grammar have been used to reinforce these myths will also form part of this interpretation.

## **DETERMINING THE CONTRIBUTION OF ONLINE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION TO BRAND REPUTATION AMONG GENERATION Y CONSUMERS IN THE VAAL REGION**

**Ms Sibongile Kunene**

Vaal University of Technology

Much has been written over the past few years about the rise and use of online communication, but there is still very limited research on the use of online communication by Generation Y members and corporations in an African context. The internet has therefore, become one of the most powerful communication tool. This has led to the evolution of the public relations discipline in keeping up with trends, embracing new opportunities and using diverse and effective communication mediums to engage with different stakeholders. Therefore, this study determined the contribution of online corporate communication to brand reputation amongst Generation Y members in the Vaal Region and the effect it can have on the perceived reputation of an organisation.

This was done through ascertaining ways in which Generation Y in the Vaal Region use different online corporate communication tools to engage with brands, looking at different online tools, online communication behaviour and online reputation management. This quantitative study used a cross-sectional descriptive research approach. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed amongst Generation Y members in the Vaal Region between the ages of 18-35 and data was analysed through SPSS 23.0.

From the findings it is evident that the growth of the internet and the development of smartphones, iPads and tablets have drastically changed the way people communicate, especially Generation Y members, thus forcing brands to go actively online. Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube have taken over the technological aspect of two way interaction between customers and brands thereby influencing an organisation’s reputation. In as much as online communication has brought about change to the public relations discipline it has a detrimental impact on a company’s reputation if not managed properly which entails rapid feedback, comprehensive information about their products and services when engaging online with the Generation Y members.

# THE CONTRIBUTION OF BRAND JOURNALISM TO CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Mr Werner Theron

Dr Lida Holtzhausen

Prof De La Rey van der Waldt

North-West University

The digital world has shifted the power of communication from large companies to the consumer who now has the means to express their thoughts and feelings through social media. The consumer is no longer dependant on the traditional media for their voices to be heard and uses their communicative power to influence ideas and beliefs. Consumers now create their own audiences. At the same time, the image and reputation of companies have also become more important as consumers have become more discerning with who they prefer to do business with. To this end, corporate communication has become an increasingly significant discipline within companies as their future depends on how they are viewed by their key stakeholders.

Brand journalism has recently come to the fore as part of the discipline of corporate communication as an important communication element. Storytelling as part of brand journalism is a way companies now use to directly communicate with their customers without the help of a third party whom they used to “rent” an audience from. Companies can now own their audience. The power of communication has shifted and does not only lie with media houses or traditional publishers anymore. Marketers are therefore moving away from traditional advertising in traditional media to telling stories that appeal to their customers. In this way, they are not only communicating with customers but are also sharing information to answer customers’ questions and to help solve their problems. Brand storytelling has therefore now become part of corporate communication.

Storytelling as part of brand journalism has therefore changed the practise of corporate communication and while some companies are leading the way, others are lagging behind. Brand journalism, in the form of storytelling, is also an effective branding tool and a strong corporate brand can hugely increase a company’s market value. Companies have also moved away from traditional branding to emotional branding. Emotions have therefore become an important part of corporate branding and that is why storytelling has appeared as a new tool for brand building. Storytelling can create an emotional bond between customers and companies and companies are increasingly turning to the practise of brand journalism as part of their marketing and communication efforts.

Academic research, however, is limited about the influence of brand journalism on corporate communication. This research sheds more light on the way companies practise brand journalism, the reason/s why and how companies do it differently, the platforms and channels they use, the scope of brand journalism they produce, how it is consumed and their perspective on brand journalism and how it fits in with corporate communication. It also explains how strategic brand journalism supports the function of corporate communication and the contribution of brand journalism to corporate communication.

To this end, the way companies such as Coca-Cola, General Electric, Red Bull and Boeing practice brand journalism has been researched. Coca-Cola’s content is related to its brand, business, history and culture, Boeing aims to “sell” the company, General Electric makes science “cool” and Red Bull has become a publisher in its own right. Finally, a conceptual framework was developed in order to manage brand journalism within the corporate communication subject field. It explains how to best use brand journalism to connect, engage, demand attention, persuade and influence. The conceptual framework came to being as a result of a PhD-study. The conceptual framework lists essential elements for brand journalisms’ contribution to corporate communication.

## **LEGITIMISING OR DELEGITIMISING POLITICAL LEADERS? THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROBERT MUGABE AND MORGAN TSVANGIRAI'S LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN SELECTED NEWSPAPERS IN POST-2013 ZIMBABWEAN ELECTIONS EPOCH.**

**Mr Collen Chambwera**

University of Johannesburg

This study takes a constructionist approach to framing to establish how the state-controlled, *The Herald* and the privately owned *Daily News*, framed the political leadership of Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai after the 31 July 2013 elections in Zimbabwe. It departs from many studies that have largely focused on the period prior to elections in the country and the representation of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), to which the two leaders belong respectively. It is also important in that it covers a period soon after a government of national unity (GNU) in which Robert Mugabe was the president and Morgan Tsvangirai the prime minister of the country. The GNU period was marked by efforts to bridge the media divide that characterised the country before. This qualitative study argues that frames available to journalists consciously or unconsciously are rooted in the culture and discursive formations in which they operate. *The Herald* and the *Daily News* operating within the prevailing culture could make use of similar frames as well as different ones to frame the political leadership of the winner and loser of an election. It further argues a similar frame can be used by two different newspapers to legitimise or delegitimise political leaders. Likewise, different frames can be used to achieve the same ends. Online archives of the two newspapers were used to collect data which was analysed through critical discourse analysis. Four frames were found to have been used by both newspapers while only one was exclusive to *The Herald*.

## **THE VOICE OF REASON: A THEMATIC APPRAISAL OF EDITORIAL COVERAGE OF NIGERIA'S 2015 ELECTIONS**

**Mr Ogemdi Uchenna Eze**

Rhodes University

For many observers, the 2015 elections in Nigeria posed a danger to the peace of the country owing to the manner in which the two main political parties – Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) – conducted their campaigns. From the beginning of the electioneering period in November 2014, the campaigns were marred by reports of violent attacks by rival political groups on each other. Following the Department of State Security Services' (DSS) raid on APC offices in Lagos, which was instigated by the allegation of illegal duplication of voter cards, the then opposition party, APC accused the PDP of engaging in state-sponsored violence. Far from campaigning on issue-based manifestoes that outlined positive and plausible visions for the future of Nigeria, the two parties engaged in "negative campaign tactics involving fierce personal attacks on the candidates and prominent party members" (Orji 2015). In addition, the long-term political rivalry between the country's geographical north and south, underpinned by religion and ethnicity, became particularly acute during this period. With the PDP's presidential candidate, President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from south and the APC's candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim from the north, heightened the ethno-religious-geographical sense of schism.

Despite this charged political atmosphere, the elections were much less violent than expected, and more credible than anyone had hoped. The incumbent was swept from power, and the results, although close, were more or less accepted by all political parties. Expected post-results violence also did not materialise. What might account for this unexpected outcome?

This paper suggests that as scholars have begun to create accounts of the interrelated elements that might have contributed to what is now seen as Nigeria's most successful election (Owen & Usman 2015, Otobo 2015), it is important to consider the role played by the news media. As part of this, this paper explores the contribution of four Nigerian newspapers (*The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Independent* and *Leadership*) and, in particular, their editorials, to the relatively peaceful and mostly credible 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The paper draws on theoretical insights from normative theories of journalism, and particularly social responsibility theory which suggests that news media, in exchange to the rights and privileges granted to it, is obliged to discharge important functions of mass communication in modern society. This seems to be taken to heart especially by the 'serious' press in Nigeria, and may have had an important moderating influence on the 2015 election landscape. The papers made particularly strident, clear and repeated calls for a different kind of outcome. Based on a sample of 101 election-related editorials, this paper

shows that three clear themes emerge: a morality infused call for violence-free polls, careful arguments made for rational voting and continued pressure on authorities to ensure credible electoral processes. The paper suggests that these editorials sought to redirect the attention of the electorates caught up in the personalisation of issues by politicians to more pressing key issues affecting the nation. The editorials also simultaneously appealed to political actors and applied moral suasion and ethical pressure to stem the threat of imminent violence. The editorials made these moral and ethical appeals using “supra-national” and patriotic themes, to position the papers as a “voice of reason”, and this strategy appears to have resonated with both the political class in Nigeria, and the voting population more generally.

## **THE PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED POLITICALLY ACTIVE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG REGARDING THE REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF FEMALE POLITICIANS WITHIN THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS (EFF) STUDENTS COMMAND**

**Ms Duduzile Dlamini**

University of Johannesburg

Female political representation is arguably the most pertinent issue in South African politics and moving into Students politics. The following essay looks at political representation and participation of female members in the EFF Students Command at the University of Johannesburg. This research argues that political freedom and democracy in South Africa is meaningless without gender equality in politics and beyond. The research explored the level of female politicians in the EFF Students Command and found that there is a lack of female political representation in key leadership positions as a result denying female politicians the right to be decision makers in the organisation. The introduction of political gender quotas has enabled gender equality to be a reality however, grass root challenges such as patriarchy, misogyny and sexism should be addressed by EFF Students Command as this is the reason for the slow progress of witnessing equal political gender representation in the party. This study underpins the importance of female political representation in the EFF in a democratic South Africa and explores some of the measures that are in place to ensure that gender equality prevails in the EFF Students Command. The EFF Students Command is the most progressive political movement in various higher education institutions, thus the amounting pressure for the political party to introduce reforms policies in their political agenda in ensuring equal political participation for both men and women. The lack of female politicians in the EFF Students Command speaks to the ideals of gender exclusion this subsequently rejects the political parties founding manifesto which clearly states that the movement vows to end patriarchy, misogyny and direct political exclusion of female politicians. Political exclusion or exclusion speaks to power relation as well, in terms of who has the power to elect or de-elect politicians, based on what criteria, who decides on the finer details of the criteria and why. The study found that male politicians receive some sort of privilege primarily based on their gender something that female politicians find problematic, political appointment and treatment is different for both politicians which in turn rejects equal gender political representation and participation. Political freedom speaks to the end of gender oppression however witnessing continues oppression in the hands of democratically elected political party's post-apartheid it is problematic to say the least. The EFF Students Command has great improvement to make going forward, where the representation and participation of female politicians is concerned, public discourse has played its part in organizing public discussions and dialogues it is now in the power of the EFF Students Command to lead a non-patriarchal, non- misogynistic, and non-sexist political party.

### **MOBILITY**

Venue: Eden Grove Blue

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## **EXPLORING THE USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CREATING COMMUNITY, MAINTAINING LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY AMONGST EAST ASIAN IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Tzu Ting Hsu 'Tina'**

University of Cape Town

The proliferation of smartphone usage and the rise of social media in the past two decades have produced different ways of communication. Adequate infrastructure and accessible technologies have contributed to high levels of Internet penetration in East Asian countries such as South Korea, China and Japan. While Asia clearly has one of the largest communities connected to

the Internet, Africa has one of the lowest Internet penetration rates in the world. However, Internet penetration growth in Africa has been significant. The increased use in cellphones has contributed to the Internet penetration with social networks being used as a point of entry to the Internet. In South Africa alone, Internet penetration rates have increased to 51.6% of the population, which has allowed immigrants to reconnect with friends and family in their home countries. Recent decades has seen a growth in the population of East Asian immigrants in South Africa. The use of social media by East Asian immigrants living in South Africa may assist their assimilation into their host society while maintaining communication and a bond with their compatriots from their countries of origin.

Drawing on research done in America, South Africa also has an ethnically and culturally diverse population, although certain minority groups are often treated as “perpetual foreigners”. Furthermore, xenophobic acts of violence have often been targeted towards the general immigrant population in South Africa. With these issues in mind, communication with friends and family and the need for a “community” may be increasingly important amongst East Asian immigrants living in South Africa in the face of prejudice and discriminatory attitudes towards foreigners. It is in this area that this study seeks to explore the extent of online communication these immigrants have with their compatriots and its effectiveness in maintaining a sense of community, culture, language and identity.

This study will seek to find out what types of social media East Asian immigrants living in South Africa use and how they use it, if these immigrants experience a sense of community with their compatriots from their home country on social media, if the use of social media helps in maintaining culture, identity and language and if immigrants use social media as a type of buffer against xenophobic attitudes and conflicts.

Qualitative methods will be used to address the research objectives. It will include participation from the “new wave” of East Asian immigrants who arrived from the 1970s onwards who may still have established friends and family ties in their country of origin and/or have family and friends living in South Africa. Research participants will be recruited through a snowball approach. The researcher will make initial contact with friends and family who are East Asian immigrants living in South Africa and these initial participants will introduce other immigrants whom may also be interviewed. Standardised surveys will be given out prior to the interviews to gather demographic data.

Theoretically, the chapter will draw on literature on acculturation and transnational contact to explore the roles and uses of social media in maintaining culture, identity, language and a sense of community.

## **ALWAYS-AVAILABLE COMMUNICATION CULTURE: TECHNOLOGY USE, TEXTING AND DISTRACTED DRIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Mr Tshepo Justice Kgasago**

Texting has become one of the most regular everyday communication practices (Haste 2005, Gold, Rauscher & Motao 2015), and studies show that texting while driving is a pervasive social concern (Harrison 2011, Seiler 2015, Crocket 2014, Bernstein & Bernstein 2015). Texting culture is a reflection of how digital mobile communication tools have become cultural artefacts for everyday sociability. Embedded in communication tools is the social power inherent in technology innovations. This social power is conspicuous in the manner that communication technologies influence and ‘demand’ a change in cultural practices. Since the constant connection to media and communication technologies is no longer confined to home; we now live in an era of ‘nomadcity’ (Gitlin 2007), where we carry our media and communication currents with us across spaces. We are always connected and always available to communicate. Texting and mobility emerged from this ‘always-available communication culture’. Of critical importance in this study is the culture of technology use while driving.

As technology use becomes pervasive in society, it brings many advantages for everyday social relations, but these benefits come in tandem with some disadvantages and unintended consequences. One such consequence is the tendency for distraction due to technology use while driving. The prevalence of technology use, texting and distracted driving is profoundly a result of a cultural revolution that is engendered by ‘24/7’ engagements with technology and increasing miniaturisation of technology devices. This results in the flexibility and portability of technological devices that encourage mobility in communication and in media consumption. This means that people are able to carry their devices anywhere and anytime, hence, can communicate without limitation of space and time, and can multi-task more when communicating. This invariably leads to distractions and loss of concentration away from primary activities, with potential for accidents.

Road accident is a major problem in the country. The South African Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) reports that in the year 2014 to 2015 more than 4,500 people died on South African roads (Lindeque 2015). Although many factors have been identified as causes of road crashes, including drunk driving and speeding, there are no specific national data about the influence of texting, distracted driving and accidents in South Africa. This notwithstanding, some reports have claimed that around 25% of accidents are caused by cellphone use while driving (BusinessTech 2015). But how prevalent technology use and distracted driving is in South Africa remains a key area of research interest.

The focus of this study was to explore the prevalence of texting, making phone calls, and other technology use, such as

adjusting or tuning dashboard music players or radio while driving. Through methodological triangulation that includes a survey of drivers, roadside ethnographic observations of drivers and interviews with traffic officers, this study broadly examines the social and cultural impact of technology and mobility with specific focus on technology use and distracted driving. The findings reveal a prevalence of texting while driving with 60% of participants reporting that they have sent a text while driving and majority of the participants (88%) acknowledged that they have seen drivers texting while driving. This study is significant considering the limited study on this social issue in South Africa. It is also significant in understanding the power of technology to shape cultural practices that may be socially detrimental to society, in this case that technology use and distraction portends potential for road accident, a serious social concern in South Africa.

## **A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF NEWS MEDIA TEXTS ABOUT ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN MIGRANTS**

**Ms Joanah Gadzikwa**

Monash South Africa

**Dr Nicola Jones**

University of Kwazulu-Natal

The exodus of Zimbabweans to neighbouring countries following the economic meltdown has been documented by the media in several ways. While migration was previously a male dominated activity, recent trends have seen more women joining the mobile, a phenomenon dubbed the feminisation of migration. Human movements of such magnitude have never evaded the surveillance eye of the media. The iconic images of Aylan Kurdi splashed across the world on various media platforms, remains, to date, the quintessential reminder of the devastating consequences of the migration crisis in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This paper considers the South African media in the form of the Johannesburg-based newspapers' reportage of Zimbabwean women migrants in the time frame of 2012 to 2015. News stories written about the women migrants were retrieved from the news websites through a content analysis. A uniform search using the phrase 'Zimbabwean women migrants in Johannesburg' was conducted on all the news websites headquartered in the metropolis of Johannesburg. 20 news stories were retrieved and were analysed for the themes they bring out using the Grounded Theory Method (GTM). Key findings of this paper reveal that, the media are not only instrumental in constructing negative themes about migrant women but also re-define their identities.

## **THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF MOBILITY IN THE FILMS OF SARA BLECHER: REPRESENTING MOBILITY, MOBILISING REPRESENTATION**

**Dr Sarah Gibson**

University of Kwazulu-Natal

From the representation of the railways and the mobile figure of the 'train surfer' in *Surfing Soweto* (2010), the equation of surfing with freedom in *Otelo Burning* (2013), and to the figuration of Afropolitanism as automobility in *Ayanda* (2015), the films of Sara Blecher are all characterised by an attention to both the politics and poetics of mobility in the South African cultural imagination. This paper seeks to explore this intersection of how a South African "politics of mobility" (Cressell, 2006) is represented in Blecher's films through her distinctive "poetics of mobility."

A key aspect of the "new mobilities paradigm" (Sheller and Urry, 2006) is how mobility is imagined and conveyed through a "diverse range of representational strategies" including film (Cresswell, 2006: 3). Film is a mobile media that provides "a visual representation of a mobile world" (Creswell and Dixon, 2002: 4) and while some work has been done on mobilities from within the discipline of film studies, little attention has been paid to the representation of mobilities within South African cinema. This is indicative of wider critiques of the "mobilities turn" as being "firmly located in the global North" (Pirie, 2009).

South Africa's (im)mobilities are foregrounded both narratively and aesthetically in Sara Blecher's films. The participatory documentary *Surfing Soweto* focuses on the journey from Soweto to Johannesburg, documenting how the practice of 'train surfing' is both escape from and resistance to the space of the township. The train is also central to the journey from the township to the beach in the workshop-created film *Otelo Burning*, where surfing in the Indian Ocean and the marginal space of the beach functions as an escape from the township of Lamontville. It is the car, driving and the space of the garage that become central motifs in the construction of a post-apartheid Johannesburg in *Ayanda*. While the narratives of these films all imagine the "politics of mobility" in the South African context through their representation of technologies of mobility and the embodied experiences of mobility, these films also foreground a "poetics of mobility" through their innovative visual aesthetics, which foregrounds a representational mobility across genres (drama and documentary) and media (photography and film).

## **REVEALING CITY DIVISIONS: A STUDY ON RECLAIM THE CITY'S INFLUENCE ON MAINSTREAM MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACIAL INEQUALITY IN CAPE TOWN**

Vanessa Clark

Sophie Patch

Wallace Chuma

University of Cape Town

Spatial inequality remains one of the most pressing problems inherited from the apartheid state. While many property investors celebrate the rising value of Cape Town's real estate, such changes often push out inner city residents, and make it more difficult for already marginalised commuters to live close to places of work and the city's resource-rich centre. This in turn increases commuting costs and economic inequality.

The campaign Reclaim the City was launched in February 2016 to advocate for desegregation and affordable housing development in the city. Part of their aim is to draw attention to the plight of displaced families and to lobby for the state to legislate against the negative effects of 'urban regeneration'. To do this, Reclaim the City needs to focus media attention on the issue. This paper aims to determine the success of the campaign.

Through a content analysis of over 150 national print media articles, this paper examines how the problem of spatial inequality was framed between 1 January 2016 and 13 April 2017, asking the following questions: How and in which publications is spatial inequality represented and which voices are privileged and given salience? What are the key problems identified by journalists? And in what ways might have Reclaim the City's advocacy influenced coverage?

These findings are assessed against activists' perceptions of media coverage of spatial issues in Cape Town. Researchers conducted qualitative interviews with key activists from Reclaim The City to explore their views of the media's coverage and to establish how they engage with the media in promoting advocating for change.

Preliminary findings suggest that Reclaim the City has been largely successful in focusing attention on the problem of spatial inequality, but that the experiences and voices of those directly affected by the problem still remain secondary. The research also finds that while property developers and business representatives are frequently identified as key actors in the deepening of spatial inequality, they are seldom consulted as sources in coverage.

## **9/11 TO 9/11 15 YEARS LATER: CONSIDERING THE NARRATIVE SHIFT FROM HOPE TO SELF-PROMOTION**

Miss Liezel Fourie

University of Kwazulu-Natal

The ramifications of the events of September 11th 2001 (9/11) are still being felt by many individuals the world over, but possibly none more so than the first responders who lived through the event.

In their documentary *9/11*, the Naudet brothers provided a unique and insightful witness account to these events, focusing on firefighters within a firehouse and those attending to the lobby of the North Trade Center tower. Ten years later, the brothers created a sequel and, more recently, produced *9/11 15 Years Later* which focused on the aftermath of 9/11 and how its effects have resulted in first responders dying because of diseases related to the toxic air they were inhaling at ground zero.

This paper offers a comparative textual analysis of the documentaries: *9/11* and *9/11 15 Years Later* highlighting the changes in the way the events of 9/11 were represented. In 2002, when the first documentary was broadcast, Americans were "grappling to understand the meaning of particular events." (Rabiger, 1998:6). However, in 2016 the rights for the *9/11* documentaries were bought by CNN which refocused the narrative of the latest documentary to one which dealt with the transformation and evolution of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY).

The research concludes that there is a distinct narrative shift over time which saw the documentaries move from a message of hope to one of personal congratulations and in the process, minimized the health concerns faced by firefighters. While complimentary stories of the FDNY deserves credit, this paper argues why *9/11 15 Years Later* is not the ideal platform to represent this narrative, especially in light of the representations presented in the first film which aimed to look to the future and how firefighters from FDNY were to carry on in light of the tragedy.

## **THE SOCIAL MEDIA ECOLOGY OF SPATIAL INEQUALITY IN CAPE TOWN: FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM**

Tina Hsu

Alex Gwaze

University of Cape Town

While Cape Town is considered a 'global city', high levels of inequality persist as a consequence of post-independence apartheid practices. The legacy of apartheid spatial polarisation has sparked ongoing debates about gentrification, infrastructural inequalities and affordable housing in mainstream media, with Cape Town at the centre of the contestation. Cape Town based activists, organisations and campaigners for the desegregation of urban land (we identified Reclaim The City, Ndifuna Ukwazi and Future Cape Town as the key actors using social media to campaign for spatial equality in Cape Town), have opted to use social media platforms to advertise and coordinate protest action.

As Juris (2012) has argued, social media has contributed to an emerging logic of aggregation involving the assembling of masses of individuals from diverse backgrounds to come together in physical spaces. Social media platforms become a "temporary performative terrain," a space for activists to make their struggles visible and to mobilise "crowds of individuals" through viral communication flows. (Juris, 2012, pg. 267). Over the past decade and a half, social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have become an integral part of contemporary communicative practices providing personal, political, entertainment, sport, technological and scientific information to local communities often before convention media outlets like radio, television and print. "The quick rise of social media platforms in the first decade of this century was part of a more general networked culture where information and communication got increasingly defined by the affordances of web technologies" (Van Dijk & Poell, p5) By focusing on three of the most popular social networking sites in South Africa: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, this paper explores how social media has been used to foster awareness, share information and initiate discourse around spatial inequality in Cape Town. Using a combination of quantitative data scraping approaches and qualitative content analysis, we explored the central question: What are the prevailing narratives on social media around spatial inequality (including issues related to affordable housing) in Cape Town by developing (3) sub-questions tailored to a specific social media platform's intricacies:

What types of conversations take place on the Facebook pages of the key actors Reclaim the City, Ndifuna Ukwazi, and Future Cape Town? What is the key discourse on these pages around spatial inequality? How do these central organisations engage with stakeholders/ how do they frame the issues?

How is Twitter used to organise discussions around spatial equality? How are hashtags used? How do citizens use these hashtags (versus professional journalists) to frame/moderate the discourse?

How do the key campaigners for spatial equality in Cape Town use digital identifiers, specifically hashtags, locations and tags, to engage the social media audience on Instagram?

Key tools used to collect data were open source tools Netvizz, Twitonomy and Mecodify. With regard to Instagram, the study initially collected quantitative data focused on identifying the hashtags used by the (3) social actors identified. Once the hashtags were retrieved, their impact in the larger discourse (corresponding hashtag page) was measured, taking into account the social engagement (likes and comments) of the post. Lastly this study gauged how effectively these key actors contextualised their post by using supporting metadata such as tags (did they tag other activists) and locations (did they geographically locate their image in Cape Town).

The paper concludes that the social media ecology of spatial inequality is complex and cosmopolitan due to the interconnectivity and global reach of social media platforms. In order to connect the local agenda to the immediate community and foster international awareness, activist, organisations and campaigners should choreograph their 'own' cohesive narrative that they frequently stimulate in public social media spaces.

## **"MEMORIALIZING STRUGGLE: DYNAMICS OF MEMORY, SPACE AND POWER IN POST-LIBERATION AFRICA"**

Dr Stephanie Cawood

University of the Free State

Dr Jonathan Fisher

University of Birmingham, UK

The ways in which states and societies communicate the past is imbued with meaning and significance. Choices around which events, episodes or historical figures should be commemorated – and how their stories should be told are sensitive and politically-charged, as the recent #RhodesMustFall movement has demonstrated. Memorialisation is also a dynamic, evolving and subjective phenomenon; museum pieces, statues or road names may stand for a version of history to be remembered and be proud

of for some and at certain times, just as they may stand for a past to be ashamed of and critiqued for others, at other times. What “truths” are remembered, or re-remembered, is often just as significant as those which are forgotten or suppressed. Critical too is the issue of which narratives and discourses the state seeks to memorialise and the extent to which these are challenged – or whether space even exists to challenge them – in private and community-level initiatives and practices.

These issues are arguably particularly acute in post-liberation polities, where the ruling party owes a significant part of its domestic legitimacy to its successful struggle against a past colonial or post-colonial oppressor. Many post-liberation parties in Africa have nevertheless been in power for decades – 37 years in Zimbabwe, 31 in Uganda, 26 in Ethiopia and Eritrea, 23 in South Africa – sometimes under the same leader, and their early popularity has in many cases given way to disillusionment and dissent among populations who have not yet experienced the promised benefits of independence or liberation. Long periods in office have also promoted factionalism and splits within ruling movements. In such circumstances, the struggles that brought these movements to power represent a pivotal point of reference for contemporary state discourses and memorialisation practices but also an important source of contestation in the context of modern debates on the country’s trajectory and the (non-) realisation of liberation era visions of the future.

This paper, which draws on on-going research undertaken as part of a 3-year Newton Fund project, scopes out the different ways in which liberation struggle is communicated and memorialised in the contemporary era, focusing in particular on the cases of South Africa and Uganda. The key questions we address are:

- What forms of communication are used in memorialising struggle, and which audiences are these intended for?
- Which actors and organizations play a role in memorialisation?
- Which “truths” and discourses are commemorated and which are neglected, and why?

In addressing these questions, the paper builds on preliminary fieldwork undertaken in Free State, Eastern Cape and Kampala to distinguish between “formal” and “informal” memorialisation spaces and practices as well as those initiated by state actors versus those outside the state machinery. In doing so, the paper reflects on the different roles that memorialisation practices perform for post-liberation states and societies, and the complex relationships between historical “truth” and contemporary politics.

## SOCIAL MEDIA & THE EVERYDAY

Venue: Eden Grove Seminar Room 2

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### EXPLORING FAN COMMUNITIES AS POSSIBLE LEARNING SPACES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE YOUTUBE CHANNEL “THE VLOGBROTHER’S” FANDOM NERDFIGHTERIA AS A POSSIBLE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Ms Elri Steenkamp

Rhodes University

A middle-aged man with puffy hair and big round glasses appears on the screen: “Hello, Hank it’s Tuesday!” Even though he is addressing his brother, John Green is, in fact, talking to about 3 million of their current subscribers on YouTube. In 2007 brothers John and Hank Green started a video blogging (vlogging) project to repair, as they characterised it, their waning relationship. They signed up to YouTube under the channel name “The Vlogbrothers” and agreed that for the rest of the year they would only communicate via daily videos to one another discussing their various interests; which varied from light-hearted videos about their everyday lives and discussions about popular books and films and other perceived “nerdy” interests, to more serious topics such as science, literature or politics. Within that year, the brothers had unintentionally created a global virtual community that has been going strong ever since. This online fan community, which called itself Nerdfighteria, celebrates friendship, reading, creativity, intellectualism and all things nerdy, while acting as a safe environment for fans of the brothers to virtually gather and converse. Fans of the Vlogbrothers are actively involved in their fan community, or fandom, and have developed a sense of common culture, identity and shared symbols, such as their own recognisable handshake, as well as branded merchandise, slogans and jokes. The year 2017 marks The Vlogbrothers’s 10th year of being active on YouTube and it highlights the way in which audiences, particularly fan audience, have been shifting and changing.

It is essential to understand fan culture not merely as a reduced collective of others, but to acknowledge that different fandoms have specific dynamics both with the texts of their chosen fandom and within these communities. The development of technology and social media has had a substantial impact on the way in which individuals interact and participate within their media of choice and with the fan communities of their choosing. The expansive, malleable nature of the Internet has allowed for audiences to easily extend their fan experience beyond the mere reception of the original text and into a much more active form of participation. Fans studies have focused extensively on these fan practices and the way in which fans are perceived, both

by themselves and by others. In the past many media theorists have also focused on the pleasure and enjoyment elements that encourages these individuals to cohere socially in 'fan clubs'.

My presentation will explore the reasons individuals join, stay and participate within these fan communities. It will build on a key current in recent theorising of fandom by considering how communal involvement with popular media extends beyond mere enjoyment and involves more active connection with other fans, development of social capital and, centrally for my presentation, learning and cohering in a Community of Practice (CoP). It will foreground two relatively neglected areas of study that, through drawing on Wenger's CoP social learning theory, illuminates: the rich sense of community that develops in some online communities and the deep satisfaction of learning, and how this learning effects individual -- and collective -- fan identity. In order to explore whether this is the case I will be observing three of the many Facebook groups that have been created around this fan community; namely a global NERDFIGHTERIA group, a Single Adult Nerdfighters group and a Nerdfighter: South Africa group. Examples such as the Vlogbrothers create new opportunities for us, as media theorists and practitioners, to explore the changing nature of audiences and the value of these fan communities.

## **NEW MEDIA INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYEES' INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN A MEDIA ORGANIZATION IN KENYA**

**Ms Caroline Kiarie**

University of KwaZulu-Natal

The influence of new media which includes social network sites cannot be ignored in communication studies. The significance of these sites at the workplace is contentious, with some claims that they are beneficial (Ashraf & Javed, 2014; Leidner, Koch, & Gonzalez, 2010; Patel & Jasani, 2010) while other scholars claim they are inconsequential (Leidner, Koch & Gonzalez, 2010; North, 2010; Nucleus, 2009). Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp are used to share ideas and allow users to interact and feel a sense of belonging, transcending geographical boundaries. In reference to Kenya, should the users adapt to platforms and use them? What are the effects or power of these platforms and messages on employees' interpersonal communication at the workplace? The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of the usage of social network sites and their effect on employees' interpersonal communication at the workplace in one of the largest media organizations in Kenya. The study provides a better understanding of the impact social network sites have on interpersonal communication from both a personal and relational perspective in a media organization in Kenya where communication is predominantly face to face. The research employs both questionnaires and in-depth interviews to explore the interdependence of employees' consumption, participation, and production motives on user-generated media. The research findings establish that social network sites affect the personal, relational and effectiveness of employees in the organization. It highlights the various ways in which employees within specific departments rely on social media and suggests that the conceptualisation of interpersonal organisational communication should not be limited to the exchange of verbal and non-verbal cues in a face to face environment by recommending ways to utilise social media platforms in a productive way for the organisation. It contributes to Uses and Gratification theory, a media theory that is grounded on users selecting media, consume its content to satisfy their felt needs and the theoretical framework presents the interdependence of people's consumption, participation, and production motives on user-generated media (Shao, 2008). Finally, it argues that the pervasive influence of communication technologies in Kenya cannot be ignored when conceptualising relationships within the workplace as they have become pervasive relational tools which help to gratify workers employment needs.

## **IT TAKES A VILLAGE...: LOCATING THE SURVEILLANT POWER OF BLACK TWITTER TO AUTHENTICATE PERFORMATIVITY ON DATE MY FAMILY**

**Linda Fekisi**

**Mthobeli Ngcongco**

University of the Free State

The proliferation of new media has undoubtedly created vast possibilities for an integrated user experience between traditional and social media. No clearer is that experience more exemplified than through the immediacy afforded by Twitter for audiences of reality television shows.

Viewers of South African reality dating show, Date My Family, have found a platform to radically change the manner in which they consume content of the show on Twitter. Audiences of Date My Family use this social media platform as an opportunity to express their views and judgements about the show and in particular about the performances of those seeking love on the show. The traditionally private act of courtship in an African context is reimaged in the manner in which Date My Family audiences

have brought the scrutiny of private act into the public realm. This scrutiny has been evidenced by various episodes in which the impressions that those seeking love on the show have attempted to make on both the family and unwittingly on the audience.

The case of Mduzuzi 'Mdu' Nyoni, a contestant on the show, illustrates how the authenticity of his performativity in the quest to find a love partner was severely called into question through what has been dubbed as black Twitter— represented by a group of Twitter users who are vocal about their unconventional and conscious views on debates and current affairs that are trending. These views are normally black narratives which are hidden or neglected in society are given renewed prominence through Twitter, reminiscent of the traditional close knit African village.

Through a frame analysis of Mdu Nyoni's performativity and subsequent value judgement by viewers on Twitter, this paper argues that there is nothing inherently surprising about the seeming shift of power to the audience in authenticating contestant performance on *Date My Family*. The power of the public to decide on love within an African community has always been at the heart of African Communalism. Using relational dialectics, we investigate the public and private dialectic evident through juxtaposing the private nature of love with its public spectacle through mass media. We propose that black Twitter is simply an extension and reification of the public power that the African village has always had in authenticating performativity in private issues of romance.

## HOW CHURCH ENTERPRISES WITH SPECIFIC SOVEREIGN ROOTS USE FACEBOOK TO LOCALISE THEIR OPERATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Miss Deborah Prudence Mayuni

University of Cape Town

In a dynamic era where globalisation has taken its toll, organisations all around the world continue to use various tools to expand their global reach. Recently, the ever increasing use of social media has proven popular among many institutions, churches included. This paper explores how church enterprises that have a specific sovereign identity localise their operations in South Africa, through their engagement with their Facebook audience. The churches in focus for this case study are Hillsong Church from Australia and Enlightened Christian Gathering (ECG) originally from Malawi.

The study is a collection of descriptive data a dedicated thematic analysis of how they used their Facebook pages to localise and translate virtual engagement to real-life engagement prior to and subsequent to their two respectively 'big' events – Hillsong's *2017 Colour Conference* for women and ECG's New Year's eve *Night of Honey 2016*. A qualitative approach is employed – Combining the observation of Facebook content with focus group discussions and guided interviews, consolidating the entirety with a content analysis. Conclusions will be drawn by using a comparison of findings alongside reviewed literature to generate personal theories and suppositions.

### STORYTELLING

Venue: St. Peter's Building Seminar Room 34

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## THE SUPERHERO NARRATIVE: ARE WOMEN THE BEARER OF MEANING OF THE MAKER OF MEANING? AN ANALYSIS OF THE FEMALE CHARACTER'S IN NETFLIX'S JESSICA JONES

Ms Kate Wilkinson

University of KwaZulu-Natal

The birth of the Super Hero Genre can be traced back to the early 1930's, when *Superman* was introduced to popular culture. With his super-human strength, super-human powers and his inherent drive to rescue and protect humans from 'evil', he embodied the values that were thought to signify masculinity (Lawrence & Jewett, 2002). This set the standard in comic-book culture which allowed for the development of several more Super Heroes, all of whom were structured using exaggerated, patriarchal qualities and a strong male physique. This satisfied the audience as it reinforced and reflected (and was maintained through measures such as Comics Code Authority) the classic social and gender roles that were prevalent in America during the 1930's-1950's.

However, during the late 1950's, the post-war impact and the awareness of propaganda led to a social and political shift. Further, movements such as Civil Rights and second-wave feminism began to penetrate all areas of society. A key expression of these social movements was the use of art and popular culture. For comic-book culture (which was traditionally graphics-

based) this called the archetypal white-male Super Hero protagonist into question. Audiences were no longer satisfied with the traditional depiction of a Super Hero and sought queerer and more complex beings. Notable influences when considering the changed nature of super hero culture (in relation to feminism) include studies by Judith Butler (1987) and Laura Mulvey (1989) whose research contributed particularly to the rise of Feminist Film Theory and which enabled the deconstruction of traditional social-role parameters.

This shift in the stereotypical depiction of Super Heroes (IE the deconstruction of the traditional protagonist) encouraged an increase in both queer and female protagonists, with new social roles and more complex relationships with others as well as a deeper sense of self-actualisation. Female characters in particular were no longer confined to their role as the “damsel” but were able to assist their male counter-parts. However, these female characters - although given an equal social status, a greater role in the work place and a direct role in the resolution of the ‘evil’ – were still highly sexualized beings who, upon completion of assisting their male counterparts, were reassigned to their traditional child-bearing and home-making ways. Mulvey (1989) for example investigated the idea of “female masquerade” in which a female protagonist would be considered a Super Hero character only if she took on the pre-existing qualities of her male counterpart or reverted to her role as home-maker once the complication had been resolved.

Recently there has been a fluctuation in the number of Super Heroes that have been cinematically adapted due to the continued popularity of the genre and the enhancement of technology. It is thus my intention to analyse a recently made-for-screen, female Super-Hero in the context of today’s society. I have chosen the character of Jessica Jones whose story was made into a 13-part television series by *Netflix* in 2015. I intend to analyse her as well as the 2 other main female characters – namely Trish Walker and Jeri Hogarth- as well as the social and cultural environment in which they exist (and have been constructed in). I also intend to touch on the development of the female character in the superhero genre and use my research of Jessica Jones to provide an understanding of the role of women in the Comic Book Universe today. This will be achieved through the use of textual analysis – namely narrative construction and close film analysis. The findings will be discussed and compared to the relevant literature, which will provide the context needed for this research.

## **THE HERO AND HIS SHADOW – DECONSTRUCTING MYTHICAL ARCHETYPES IN SOUTH AFRICAN WAR FILM AND DRAMA NARRATIVES**

**Dr Anna-Marie Jansen van Vuuren**

University of Johannesburg

*How does the predominant myth of a society influence the narratives told by its popular culture?* That is the key question the author asks in this paper concerning the ideological representation of the hero archetype in selected films and drama series set during the Anglo-Boer War, also known as the South African War of 1899 – 1902. The author’s hypothesis is that the Boer soldier, one of the prominent figures of the white Afrikaner history, has been transformed into a mythical hero during the past century – from the first South African short film, *Sarie Marais* (1931) to the drama series *Arende* (1991) and *Feast of the Uninvited* (2008) to the most recent case study, the South African film, *Blood and Glory* (2016). Through investigating the various archetypal guises that the Boer Hero wears, whether it be the willing hero, anti-hero, or the tragic hero, the author proposes that the context and time period of the production of the specific case study directly correlates with the way in which the hero fulfills its task or mandate within the story. Therefore, the predominant ideology or the identity that the creator subscribes to, directly influences the representation of the hero figure.

## **HOW IMPLEMENTING TRANSMEDIA INTO A MARKETING STRATEGY CAN ATTRACT AN AUDIENCE FOR THE SCREENING OF A SHORT FILM (AND ULTIMATELY ANY PRODUCTION)**

**Ms Aleksandra Surogina**

AFDA Cape Town

With the rapid development of technology and communication platforms, information access and dispersion has changed and will be ever-changing. In order to reach a production or a product’s desired market, it is important for a brand to evaluate and utilize popular and trending platforms.

Transmedia is a notion defining the process of information being dispersed among multiple platforms. The use of Transmedia is known to engage audiences on a combination of various platforms, which create an exciting experiential narrative journey. Transmedia creates multiple access points for audience members, which results in a growing market. This research project will analyse the way in which Transmedia can be used as a marketing strategy to attract an audience for a short-film without revealing its

narrative content. This research paper will also discuss the reasons why this method has not been utilized in short-film marketing campaigns before. A short film by definition conveys a message or story in a short period of time. Most of these short-films do not address back-story, in-depth character introduction or elaboration of the root problem or dramatic issue. This is because these short stories are simple. This research project presents a marketing strategy where the lack of information is utilized by designing an effective marketing strategy. This marketing plan makes use of various media platforms to prepare the audience for the upcoming film. Narrative elements are shared, which add to the story world of the film. This research project also discusses when Transmedia becomes effective and how audience engagement is monitored. The Transmedia marketing plan within this research project utilizes both offline and online platforms, with a specific concentration on Social Media.

The hypothesis of this research project is using Transmedia storytelling as marketing for the short-film *The Rain Bringer* will attract a full cinema for the premier. The theoretical framework that will inform this research, discusses the elements necessary to compose a Transmedia marketing campaign. These elements include; the understanding of Transmedia storytelling, the ways in which Transmedia has already been used, short-film marketing and implementation methodologies. An AFDA Honours film production; *The Rain Bringer*, will be used to test this research projects hypothesis. This research project will be supported by the analysis of the case study; *Pandemic*, which is the only known short film to have implemented a Transmedia marketing campaign. This research project will also make use of a survey that will analyse the target audience of *The Rain Bringer* to make informed decisions for the Transmedia campaign. Implementing the marketing strategy to *The Rain Bringer* will test the hypothesis. The measurement of success of the reception theory will be analysed by the outcome of the AFDA Graduation Festival 2016 (26 November 2016, The Labia Theatre).

## THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE USAGE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND SHARED NARRATIVE IN ITS "GOOD STORY"

Dr Ronald Irwin

University of Cape Town

The African National Congress, South Africa's ruling party since its liberation from apartheid in 1994, has one of the most compelling stories in modern political history. Few political parties in the world have such a momentous, historically moving narrative; and few have used it to such effect. It has specialized in associating itself with the "collective memory" of the South African people, ensuring that the ANC has been strongly associated with the South African struggle narrative of the twentieth century. Senior party members and President Jacob Zuma have made sure that their representations of the ANC to the media continue this struggle narrative long after the struggle for power has been won. This is the heart of the "good story" that has kept the ruling party in power since 1994 and made it very difficult for other political groupings to claim to have played a major role in the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

### DECOLONISATION

Venue: St. Peter's Building Seminar Room 36

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## STUDENT RECRUITMENT IN THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr Koos Degenaar

Dr Lida Holtzhausen

North-West University

Communication institutions of all kinds are being forced to prove their worth and effectiveness and account for their approaches, particularly when these approaches are of the fact-based, verification variety. But media institutions of all kinds are compelled to adjust their social role, to work with and alongside new platforms and to think of their audiences as active and capable of speaking back, or even as competitors. This is also applicable to the Higher Education context in South Africa.

In the last two decades universities were exposed to new challenges such as globalisation, privatization, diversification, mergers, funding and access. This has brought about new challenges in the way universities communicate to their target audience namely prospective students who have now a greater say and is more empowered in their decision-making when choosing a university. With social media and mobile usage readily available, students are now able to contribute to marketing communications and universities should tap into this source to create content that not only resonates with prospective students, but also relates

with them. A new way of thinking is necessary and communication practises needs to be adjusted to take into account how they talk, listen, consume information and how they utilize the different communication platforms and channels. With the fierce competition to reach their enrolment targets, Higher Education institutions have to implement different marketing strategies in their recruitment campaigns to communicate, engage and building a relationship with prospective students.

With the restructuring of the Higher Education sector, the University of North West (former University of Bophuthatswana) and Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education as well as the Vista Sebokeng campus merged into North-West University (NWU). This merger resulted in the systematic growth into a diverse multi-campus university which may have an effect on how the Marketing Communication Departments at the Mafikeng campus, Potchefstroom campus and Vaal Triangle campus of the NWU approach student recruitment.

The power of communication is not just simply the power of creating messages, it is also a power to persuade, to grip the imagination, to provoke, to unsettle, to disrupt, and to redirect. How do we come to terms with this invisible and often unacknowledged form of power?

The study was done by means of: 1) a literature study on what marketing communication with the aim of recruiting prospective students entail according to marketing literature, 2) semi-structured interviews to establish which marketing communication strategy is applied by the respective directors for recruiting students and 3) electronic questionnaires to determine what are prospective students' perceptions of the marketing communication strategy applied by the three campuses of North-West University? The results should assist the Marketing and Communication department of the NWU in their recruitment campaigns.

The findings confirmed that although the NWU follow a marketing communication strategy by utilizing the marketing communication mix elements it is not strategic, deliberated and calculated at all its campuses. It is recommended that the Marketing Communication strategy should entail an environmental scan taking into account the diverse background of each campus to establish what opportunities and threats exist on each campus. The different stages of the student decision-making process on each campus should also be identified, as the student profiles of each campus differs vastly. Furthermore, it should be established who the main competition for each campus is from other universities when it comes to recruiting students. This needs to be followed by defining the marketing opportunities and collecting and analysing marketing information to enhance the strategic managerial decision-making process enabling the NWU to prove its worth.

## **BECOMING THE PROTAGONIST DURING AN ERA OF RADICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND CRISIS - THE CASE OF CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

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The academic fraternity in South Africa finds itself in a position that requires change from being ivory towers to being socially reflective institutions of the country's status quo. The past two years saw a cohesive energy of university protests in the country through the #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall #EndOutsourcing student-led movements. This radical shift on most campuses required and forced university management to be in constant communication with all its stakeholders. Calls for non-fee increments, student accommodation, a call to decolonise the curriculum, transformation and ending outsourcing meant that management had to be both proactive and be open to consultations with all stakeholders. At a time of uncertainty, fears and change, management is the first point of call as everyone seeks clarity and resolutions. Communication literature suggests that in times of crises, management should be as transparent as possible and constantly provide leadership. In this paper, the researchers observe the management's communication actions and efforts during the period of campus protests on campus. The survey is conducted with two of the university's stakeholders, namely, the staff and students. It's interesting to note that during #FMF, the students provided leadership to their colleagues by utilising non-traditional forms of communication by means of mostly mass meetings and social media. They were the protagonists most of the time, while management was responsive with only one-on-one meetings with student leadership. In contrast to that, the institution did not do the same with staff, as the student leadership were able to do with the student masses.

With the use of both the quantitative and qualitative research design, we plan to present a case study report of management's communication style and activities during the crisis period. This review will be followed by surveying the experiences of staff and students during the protest period, with regard to the communication style of the university. Recommendations and suggestions will be posited to unlock the power of communication during a period of radical change. Through the use of the two-way symmetrical model, links will be drawn between the organisation's communication practices and leadership style within the

context of a changing and volatile environment. The focus of the study is therefore to identify ways in which the organisation (university) can improve its communication practices with its respective stakeholder groups. The study is embedded within the framework of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetrical model of communication.

Crisis management is a complex process that has enormous pressures on organisations, where organisational chaos, media pressure, stress, and inaccurate information are leading factors that influence the management decisions during periods of crises. According to Boin and Hart (2003:545) "The modern crisis is the product of several modernisation processes — globalization, deregulation, decolonization, information and communication technology, developments and technological advances, to name but a few." Organisations are therefore vulnerable to a large number of threats that could profoundly impact the organisation's overall effectiveness. Never has this sentiment been more relevant, than in recent years – in the wake of student protests. Boin & Hart (2003:546) further state that crises are "dynamic and chaotic processes", where the event is not discrete or planned. A crisis is influenced by mass media, politics and the general public, and does not stay leveled. Instead a crisis starts, dials down and then escalates further. Organisations are rarely able to manage, let alone get ahead of a crisis situation. The changing environment we find ourselves in today; further mitigates the organisation's ability to effectively manage how they lead their workforce and communicate with their stakeholders during periods of crisis and stress. Effective crisis management does however posit ways in which the organisation can lead the discussion and become the protagonist within the scenario. This study will explore ways in which the organisation can take charge and become a communication champion.

Zarella (2009:3) confirms that radical change is attributed to the changing communication landscape in lieu of new media. New media provides an opportunity to build a meaningful relationship with community and reinforce the position of the brand. Protesting students across the country were very effective in harnessing support for their movement because of their leadership style and communication prowess. According to Hennig-Tharau (2010:1), new media has made participation online more interactive which has changed digital innovation and interaction between a brand and its audience. If protesting students are able to take advantage of such developments and changes, then large corporate organisations like universities should be able to do the same. Organisations should be setting the agenda and leading the conversation as opposed to responding to the narrative set by protesting students. New media makes everyone connected to your organisational network, and a representative of the brand – this is where corporate communication should lead the way. For many organisations, social media is their only form of communication with both their internal and external stakeholders – especially in periods of crisis. The public relations team is responsible for managing the overall brand voice on all social media platforms and it is in this area that they must lead the way. The recent scourge of protests, many of which crippled institutions across the country; were possible because universities failed to take the lead as the protagonist of the discussion. They were reactive in their leadership and communication style and were never in control of the crisis.

## **MEDIA STUDIES: A RESPONSE TO CALLS FOR DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

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Following 2016 university students' calls for decolonising the curricula at South African universities, this paper discusses a Media Studies course which attempted to address some of the issues raised by the students, as well as some issues that we thought needed to be responded to. In this light the paper discusses the key issues that underpinned the new course, namely colonisation, coloniality, and decoloniality. These debates were located within a broader history of pre-colonial Africa in order to give students some sense of what had existed on the Continent prior to colonisation. One of the perceived gaps in the students' knowledge was not only of pre-colonial African history, but also South African history. The paper argues that Media Studies must provide a local context in order for students to make sense of both the national and international media world in which they live. The aim of the course was thus to give students a framework for making sense of these worlds, and in particular for South African students to see themselves as part of a global world system--both economically and politically--to which media systems respond. In this regard, the course also aimed at challenging a South African sense of exceptionalism. Pedagogically the course draw extensively on the use of videos from across the globe so that similarities could be seen despite an acknowledgement of local differences. We argue that the basics of this course could provide a departure point for a 'decolonial turn' in Media Studies.

## THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS IN PROMOTING POSSIBLE CHANNELS OF FOOD SECURITY IN THE RURAL AREAS OF SOUTH AFRICA: A LITERATURE

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Food (in) security is one of the crucial problems that have been noted worldwide, in various communities. It is critical because it is linked with poverty. It has also been discovered that many South African rural communities in many parts of the country at large are regarded as most food (in) secure even though they are comprised of many rural areas that own large vacant land which can be used for agricultural purposes and therefore possible provide channels for food security. However, it is noted that amongst other reasons that cause food (in) security is lack of knowledge and the lack support system from those in charge. The community newspapers as stools that its social role is to inform, educate and communicate at a local level, for different purposes which include social change and strengthening of environmental communication and as a tool that develops messages and approaches that encourages and sustain positive behaviour towards, developmental actions they should intervene in aiding possible channels of food security that are available in rural areas. Therefore, the aim of this paper is through, a review of literature to discuss and debate the role that could be played by community newspapers in community mobilization, promoting community participation and empowering rural communities for food securing purposes. This paper recommends that with media content framing the issue of food security together with the actions that have to be taken by society taking responsibility and stressing people as agents of change of food security is possible.

## THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE, UNIVERSITIES' DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT AND A RESPONSE FROM FEMALE URBAN FARMERS

Dr Mariekie Burger

The recent protests of the last three years at public universities called for a rethinking of the role of public universities in the country. It has been suggested that this rethinking takes place against the backdrop of discussions about the decolonisation of the university, the decolonisation of the curriculum, and a critical assessment of the epistemology of knowledge. Against this background, this research project took shape to, on the one hand, critically consider the politics of knowledge production, and on the other, to imagine new ways in which ways universities can do their community engagement projects in line with current discourses and discussions.

The majority of universities' development-oriented community engagement initiatives are project-based with clear goals, timelines, and budgets that correspond with sponsor's year end reports. In this paper this clinical treatment of development is critically engaged with, and by drawing on elements of the social movement perspective of social development (cf Tufte and Mefalopoulos, 2006), an alternative is put forth. It is argued that instead of the locus of power residing outside the developing community (namely with the university and its expert knowledge) that a different approach based on forming networks with local communities where different forms of social capital are pooled, be used for a community development project.

The case study presented in this paper started off as a fairly conventional research project that is a minor part of a larger university engagement project about food security in urban and peri-urban areas in Gauteng. The case study specifically aims at investigating how female urban farmers/food processors/chefs in Soweto makes sense of their urban farming/food processing/cooking. Preliminary findings of this study pointed to socio-economic aspects impacting on how food is seen as a medium of communicating heritage, history, memory, culture and affinity with lineage. The conventional roles of the researcher and researched – as is presented in positivist research was maintained.

However, the study took an unexpected turn when, on request of the community participants of this study, the researcher posted the transcribed audio and in some instances videographed interviews on a newly formed community blog. The ownership of the blog (the passwords are owned by the community and not the researcher) gave community members a mouthpiece to communicate their relationship with food and how they make sense of their urban farming. Subsequently more members of the community started blogging and these blog posts elicited considerable public response.

Retrospectively, this is a participatory action research project where some socio-economic aspects related to urban female

farmers were investigated, and that was turned into a project that is now used by the participants of the study to take action and address their dire needs for markets of their farm produce, and impacting the public sphere about their urban farming and food processing activities to make a political statement. The participants of this study is now using their community blog to be the locus of their social movement action (cf Castells, 2001) trying to impact the Soweto food system to bring change that will ensure that the food produced in Soweto yields the maximum return before leaving the area.

This case study critically reflects on and tries to make sense of the epistemology of knowledge production by public universities in the country: Who is doing research about community engagement projects and for which purpose?

## **MENTAL HEALTH REPORTING AS A DISCURSIVE PRACTICE: ANALYSIS OF COVERAGE OF THE LIFE ESIDIMENI STORY**

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This paper gives an explication of the nature of reporting of mental illness in South Africa, with particular focus on the “Life Esidimeni” story, where more than 100 patients were deceased as a result of alleged mismanagement of mental health care- also linked to efforts to de-institutionalise mental health care in South Africa. Through this analysis, the power of discourse about mental illness is highlighted. The analysis of the power elements, positions and action orientations involves a theoretical outlook aligned to poststructuralism and theories of Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1980).

The concept of governmentality was adopted as a lens to understand how the health choices of the reader of the news are biased by the mentality of government (Foucault, 1984). Foucault noted how individuals shape their own lives in society: “the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group” (Foucault, 1988). In the Foucauldian sense, government is construed rather as statecraft that exists in a neoliberal order. Osborne (1997:176) summarised the notion of Foucauldian governmentality in following statement: “collections of practices constitute mentalities of governmental reasoning”. Thus mental health reporting as a collection of practices has a potential to shape how people construe mental illness. If, according to Foucault, culture can be imposed, it may imply that mental health reporting of online news stories is a cultural practice laden with power relations. This paper sought to analyse the relations of power within the discourse of mental illness. Thus, the analysis in this paper used Foucauldian Discourse Analysis to identify subject positions and action orientations. According to Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2007:91), Foucauldian Discourse Analysis comprises of three broad dimensions (historical inquiry, otherwise known as ‘genealogy’; analysis of mechanisms of power and the material/signifying practices of subjectification).

An emergent sample of four online news stories from popular news websites in South Africa was drawn; two stories were selected from Television-based websites and two stories were selected from the print-based online news stories. The story about the Life Esidimeni tragedy gained popularity when the Health Ombudsman published a report about the death of more than 100 patients who were moved from Life Esidimeni to 27 unregistered care centres in the Gauteng Province, South Africa; the Ombudsman declared that the deaths resulted from neglect and lack of food. The MEC for Health, Qedani Mahlangu at the time of writing resigned from her post as a result of pressure from various stakeholders in the mental health care fraternity.

This paper argues that mental illness reporting operates within a discourse that encourages the governmentality of citizens to the favour of a neoliberalist order, where the risk of the individual in society is relegated to the individual. Discourse about de-institutionalisation of mental health care is linked to the responsibilisation of life by individuals (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2002). The nature of reporting about mental illness propagates the official discourse about mental illness, which, in a neoliberal order, relegates the responsibility on the individual to recover- a reductionist outlook on people with a mental health condition (Rose, 2016). This paper also sought to question the way in which biomedical knowledge, which can be embedded in news reporting language, is positioned at the centre of diagnoses, prognoses as well as nosology. It is important to explore this discourse as it relates directly with the intrapersonal and interpersonal communication spheres and how people make health choices. The positionings of power in the online news stories analysed highlight the relations of power in the online news stories as well as a broader dominant rational-scientific-biomedical discourse. Moments of conflict occur between biomedical discourse and discourse about traditional health care (Wreford, 2005). South Africa, as a neoliberal order is not immune to neoliberal discourse about health; thus, it was pertinent to interrogate the manner in which discourse shapes the manner in which individuals live with mental illness in society.

# **DEMYSTIFYING THE EPIDEMIC: UNDERSTANDING EDUCATED PERCEPTIONS OF ZULU CULTURAL BELIEFS ABOUT HIV AND AIDS COMMUNICATION**

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The impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic continues to echo in many regions around the world. About 6.2% of the world's population resides in Eastern and Southern Africa, yet this region carries the heaviest burden of HIV infection as it accommodates close to half of all people living with HIV in the world. An estimated 24.7 million people were living with HIV in 2015 in Eastern and Southern Africa and this accounts for 71% of the global total (UNAIDS, 2016).

Using the Culture Centred Approach (CCA), this exploratory study considers the case of KwaZulu-Natal, which is the third populous province in South Africa after Gauteng and the Western Cape. This province bears the highest prevalence rate of HIV infection in the country. Despite high knowledge of HIV and access to testing services on campus, university students remain susceptible to HIV infection. Statistics reveal that young women aged 15 -24 years are disproportionately infected by HIV compared to their male counterparts due to various factors, including culture. Therefore, this study seeks to understand whether Zulu culture influences University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) students' perceptions of HIV and AIDS and their treatment seeking options. Focus group discussions were used as a primary source of data collection in this qualitative study and emerging themes were analysed through thematic analysis.

Findings reveal that while students may have high knowledge of HIV and AIDS transmission, this does not translate to high knowledge about AIDS treatment and care. Further, findings imply that culture does influence treatment seeking options among students at Howard College, UKZN. Therefore, this makes it imperative for health communication to be culturally sensitive if it is to be accepted by cultural members.