



**National University of
Science and Technology**

Think in Other Terms



Faculty of Communication and Information Science

Department of Journalism and Media Studies

MSc in Journalism and Media Studies

Thesis Title:

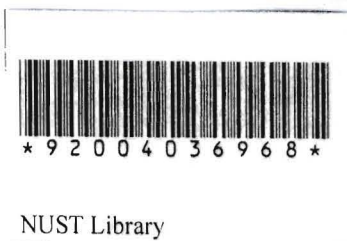
Mapping mobile phone use patterns and their impact on civic engagement: A
Survey Case Study of undergraduate students at the National University of
Science and Technology.

Author: Nkosana Dube

Registration Number: N0125253N

Supervisor: Mr. M. Mpofo

Year: 2012 – 2014



* 9 2 0 0 4 0 3 6 9 6 8 *

LIBRARY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PO BOX 216 BULAWAYO ZIMBABWE		
DATE	ACCESSION	CLASS No
24/10/14	14/605	

*Submitted to the National University of Science and Technology in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Science Degree in Journalism
and Media Studies*

ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe's growing youth population and the increasing mobile phone penetration rates present new opportunities and fears for democratisation prospects in the country. Some scholars have argued that a generational shift is taking place across Africa, and in the process altering patterns of media use and political participation in the continent. It is against such claims that this study examines the extent to which mobile phones are used as tools for civic participation among students in the Faculty of Communication and Information Science at the National University of Science and Technology. Further, the study attempts to gain understanding into how mobile phone use patterns enhance or impede youth participation in offline civic activities. The Public Sphere, Social Capital, the Uses and Gratifications theories provide the framework to the study. Using a mixed methodological approach comprising Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions the study demonstrates that students seldom use mobile phones for civic participation or civic-related activities. Although indications are that many students are increasingly connected and relay or exchange information with their peers through mobile phone platforms, the use of mobile phones in fostering an engaged youth was *not immediately apparent since most virtual interactions are still dominated by more trivial issues*. As such, the study concludes that despite ample opportunities presented by the mobile phone, many youths have not taken advantage of such opportunities to influence civic processes in their communities.