

**FRAMING THE 2017 CAPE TOWN “SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS”: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA  
COVERAGE**

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

This study is set out to conduct a comparative analysis of mainstream and alternative media to understand how *The Cape Times* mainstream newspaper and *GroundUp* alternative online media outlet framed the 2017 “service delivery protests” in Cape Town, South Africa. Scholarly literature has demonstrated that the mainstream media marginalises the voices of certain communities and that the alternative media can fill this gap. Often, marginalised communities use protests to attract media coverage, as a way of reaching both the public and elected officials. Ultimately, numerous protest groups find it difficult to get the attention they desire, while news coverage of the social conflict is framed within a protests paradigm. The study analyses differences in the two media outlets’ coverage of social conflict, including the use of delegitimising devices such as the prominent use of official sources for quotes, while using dramatic frames that tend to ridicule protest action and portray them as violent. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in a multimethod approach. The data was found in the SA Media news clippings database, supplemented by searches on Google and the *GroundUp* search engines. Coverage of the protest in *GroundUp* was in line with the literature, which states that the horizontal nature, bottom-up and fluid traditions of alternative media may be a more appropriate conduit for protest communications and social movement (Van De Donk et al, 2004; Dahlberg, 2007). The key finding of this study was that the mainstream *Cape Times* deviated from the protest paradigm, using the protesters as sources in preference to officials. This finding is a departure from the reviewed literature, which indicated that the mainstream media has a habit of following the protest paradigm when covering protests events, marginalising and dehumanising protesters and relying on official sources (Mcleod & Hertog, 1999). It also links to previous scholarship that has established a strong connection between the commercialisation of the media and the robust representation of official sources in the media.

### Keywords

“service delivery protests”; mainstream media; alternative media, framing, agenda setting, protest paradigm, Cape Town

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Choice of study

This comparative study analyses the media framing of what has been termed “service delivery protest” in South African media. The study compares the frames used in the mainstream *Cape Times* newspaper and the alternative *GroundUp* media outlet.

A media frame is a “central organising idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (Tankard, 2001:11). For the purpose of this analysis, framing research may be characterised as investigating either individual frames or media frames. The media frames may be considered as “rhetorical devices embedded in political discourse” (Johnson-Cartee, 2005:24), which are presented through communication channels. Individual frames are the “internal structures of the mind”, used to “organise and categorise values and beliefs” (Kinder & Sanders, 1990:74).

This topic is pertinent because numerous community protests took place in South Africa in 2017. There has been an 11% increase in such protest since 2004 and in 2017, 9% of these took place in the Western Cape Province (Municipal IQ, 2017), which is home to both the *Cape Times* and *GroundUp* news outlets in Cape Town. The “phenomenon has become an everyday reality in the South African political landscape” (Pointer, 2015:1).

The “alternative” *GroundUp* and the mainstream *Cape Times* were identified as the research priority, because they are among the leading media that covered the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”. The *Cape Times* is a well-known commercial daily newspaper in the Western Cape that targets an elite audience. In the scholarly literature, media institutions with commercial obligations have been shown to favour elites in their framing of South African stories (Chuma, 2016:202). In their study, “Print media coverage of service delivery protests in South Africa: A content analysis”, Wasserman, Chuma and Bosch (2018) examined four national South African newspapers’ coverage of community protests. They found that the newspapers under review “didn’t seem to have a lot of boots on the ground” (2018:154) and did not cover community protests much. Wasserman, Chuma and

Bosch (2018) said that this can be "... attributed to the fact that the protests might not appeal to its immediate readership, which is made up of higher LSMs (Living Standards Measure), such as corporate and political elites". They also found that the media paid more attention to the "dramatic aspect of the theatre of protests" (Wasserman, Chuma & Bosch, 2018:152).

The alternative media outlet *GroundUp* was selected because Wallace Chuma (2016:209) in his study of *GroundUp*, found that this news outlet "contains strong organic elements of the alternative media. It adopted a 'bottom up' strategy of making news, namely going into marginalised communities and giving the ordinary citizens a voice in its stories". Previous studies on the mainstream media have demonstrated that the mainstream media has a habit of following sets of common practices when covering social movements. This routine coverage is identified as the "protest paradigm" (Chan & Lee, 1984). Academics have expanded this tendency by looking at elements such as framing and source selection, which can delegitimise, demonise and marginalise, the protesters (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). This paradigm also tends to focus on scandalous aspects of protests, such as drama and violence (Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986).

Alternative media, on the other hand, often challenges existing power relations (Downing, 2001), supporting marginalised parties and creating horizontal linkages amongst the communities of interest. Reul et al (2016:902) argue that "comparing alternative and mainstream protest coverage may thus contribute to a greater understanding of the particular relation of the paradigm with mainstream reporting".

However, Papacharissi (2011:304) asserts that framing research studies have largely concentrated "on the mainstream media, but online media, including social media websites, are believed to serve as an alternative source for evaluation and interpretation of relevant issues that might be overlooked or omitted by the mainstream media". Borah (2011) indicates that since the beginning of the 1990s, framing has drawn an extensive attention in socio-political science, mass communication, and there are ample research findings in this area. However, alternative media is seldom involved in protest paradigm studies. According to Downing et al, (2001) and Boyle & Schmierbach (2009), this occurs despite the fact that a wealth of scholarship on social movements and the alternative media suggests that, due to their philosophical values, economic, organisational and criterion, the

alternative media is imminently suitable to represent the voices and groups and that are generally misrepresented, marginalised or omitted from mainstream dialogues. The alternative media has the competence to change “spectators into active participants of everyday dealings and events affecting their lives” (Tracy, 2007:272). Consequently, “the inclusion of alternative and online (news) media is significant to social movement and media research ... Comparing alternative and mainstream protest coverage may thus contribute to a greater understanding of the particular relation of the paradigm with mainstream reporting” (Reul et al, 2016:902). “Alternative media is both an under-researched topic and an under-represented topic in the social sciences” (Fuchs, 2010:173).

This study sought to establish how the mainstream and alternative media framed the 2017 “service delivery protests”, by comparing differences and similarities and then discussing the implications of the findings. Hamdy and Gomaa (2012) state that comparative analysis is the most appropriate and effective technique when examining how distinct media frame social actions, therefore, the cross-media comparison analysis is among the greatest regularly utilised frameworks.

## **1.2 Rationale**

This study builds on previous framing studies of mainstream media coverage of “service delivery protests” in South Africa, which found evidence that such coverage demonstrates a lack of respect for the value of the underlying causes of the protests (see Pointer, 2015; Duncan, 2016; Wasserman, Chuma & Bosch, 2018). These studies also found that the mainstream media’s framing of protests overlooked the voices and concerns of communities, giving prominence instead to privileged and influential voices. Previous research also found that coverage focused mainly on the drama of the protests and reflected perceptions about how the protest disadvantaged certain sectors of society, such as businesses, setting an agenda that was more favourable to these groups.

This research is also cognisant of a number of scholarships, such as Gans (1979), Hackett (1985), Hall et al (1978) and which argue that “while news sources form a substantive part of news content, not all sources enjoy the same degree of access to the media” (Cross, 2010:414). Cross (2010:414) further notes that these researchers found that news stories in the mainstream are biased towards the

“elites, giving disproportionate attention to those who are known public figures or who have political and/or economic power”.

This research also considered McLeod and Hertog (1999) and Reul et al (2016), who state that the features of the protest paradigm are very much prominent and evident in mainstream media’s coverage of the protests, nevertheless, certainly not as much in alternative media coverage. These scholars argue that alternative media tends to frame protests more positively than the mainstream media, and is more sympathetic to the protesters, providing a platform for an extensive range of alternative voices.

A content analysis was applied to examine correlations between media framing of the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests” in the mainstream *Cape Times* newspaper and the alternative *GroundUp* news agency. The content analysis enabled an exploration of various aspects of the framing of the protests, including the prominence these two media outlets assigned to stories, the selection of sources and how the media assigned responsibility for the protests.

Ultimately, this study attempted to determine whether the media fulfils its mandate in its reporting of the protests in a democratic South Africa. This mandate is guided by professional media codes, such as the South African Press Code, which declares that “the press shall take care to report news truthfully, accurately and fairly” (South Africa Press Council [SAPC], 2016: online). The rights of the South African media are protected by the South African Constitution, which states that “everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Considerations of the extent to which the media is fulfilling its mandate are important, when one considers that media outlets prioritise dramatic protests above the non-violent protests (Paret, 2015), and claims made by Duncan (2014), for example, who argues that South African journalists use terms like “violent service delivery protests”, even when this description is unwarranted. Radu et al (2012) urge the media to report beyond the outbreaks of drama and violence, and to rather contextualise the causes, while also providing other options to violence.

Considering the media’s responsibilities within society is also important in the context of Lee (2014:2726), who found that “media coverage of protests results from a dynamic interaction between journalists and the protesting group”. Though creating media interest through protests might assist protesters to widen the reach of their

messages to the broader public, research demonstrates that those who challenge the present circumstances are commonly portrayed deleteriously in news coverage (see Entman & Rojecki, 1993 and Baylor, 1996). The media's agenda-setting role has significant implications for society in general, as it has an impact on the scrutiny of the greater environment, the communication of culture, and the linkage and binding of the diverse sections of society (Eadie, 2009).

Media coverage of social protests is also important when considering the implications of research, that has determined that how the media covers protests performs a significant function in the failure and triumph of protests (Hertog & McLeod, 1995; McCarthy et al, 1996). Furthermore, Daniels (2016) found that protesters use violence to attract media attention, and hence, broader society. They also sometimes turn on the media, as "attacks on journalists during protests are increasing and getting more violent every year" (*Mail & Guardian Online*, 2016).

Some academics have argued that the mainstream media reproduces unfairness, blocking alternative actors from truly confronting the powers that persecute them (Roosvall & Tegelberg, 2015; Fraser, 2005). This hinders public expression and alternative media can step in to fill the gap (Downing et al, 2001).

The alternative media largely strive to criticize issues of consumerism, capitalism, nature of corporations, and patriarchy (Kenix, 2008). The social activist alternative media have developed rapidly in the era of Internet (Forde, 2011; Harcup, 2013), while the horizontal nature, bottom-up journalism and fluid traditions of online media could render them more appropriate conduit for protest communications and social movement (Dahlberg, 2007; Van de Donk et al, 2004).

Based on the literature, it may be reasonable to hypothesise that significant differences might exist in the mainstream and alternative media coverage of the 2017 "service delivery protests" in Cape Town. However, because no previous South African studies were found in the literature review comparing the mainstream with alternative media, research questions were used instead of hypotheses. This made it possible to unpack the different characteristics of the coverage between mainstream and alternative media, particularly news framing and source selection.

### 1.3 Research questions

The primary research question is: What does the comparison of the mainstream and alternative media coverage of the 2017 “service delivery protests” in Cape Town suggest about the role of the media in democracy?

Secondary questions:

1. What are the general characteristics of the two media outlets’ coverage of the 2017 Cape Town protests?
2. Are there any differences between the *Cape Times* and *GroundUp* in relation to the sources used?
3. Are there any considerable differences between the two media outlets with regard to the general protest frames?
4. Are there any identifiable frame-changing patterns and what do the frames tell us about the agenda-setting influence of the mainstream versus the alternative media?
5. Are there any differences between the two media outlets with regard to the prioritised interests, perspectives and attitudes towards protesters?
6. What do the differences and similarities in coverage between the two media outlets suggest for our understanding of the role of the media in a democratic country?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers the history of protest and the “service delivery protests”, including the past studies related to the topic. Although no previous comparative studies were found on the mainstream and alternative media in South Africa, this section will explore the notion of the framing of protests in South Africa. This study builds upon a body of literature in media studies on the examination of framing in the news coverage of protests and what is termed “service delivery protests”. This section will provide a historic context on “service delivery protests” within South Africa, and will investigate how the relevant existing literature on protests is understood in South Africa. The role of the media during protests and the differences between the mainstream and alternative media will be reviewed.

### **2.2 South Africa’s democracy and protest history**

Democracy is about equality among individuals and the right to vote in free and fair elections for people to represent us in government. The “system allows individual liberty to take centre stage. It means individuals or a group of citizens have the liberty to demand a redress of grievances in the form of a petition, or by protest” (Strongberg, 1996:207). Following South Africa’s dark days of the oppressive apartheid system:

“The dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 finally brought freedom and many accompanying expectations to the masses. Every citizen looked forward to ‘a better life for all’ as espoused in the 1994 election manifesto of the African National Congress” (Kuye, 2006:294).

The South African Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of its democracy and enshrines the rights of all people in the country to assembly, demonstration, picketing and presenting petitions (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The transition to democracy in the early 1990s in South Africa appeared to usher in a seismic shift from the rhetoric of revolutionary socialism to a new political

language of constitutionalism, rights, citizenship, and liberal democracy (Klandermans & Van Stralen, 2015).

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, “public protests, either in the form of ‘service delivery protest’ or protest against undemocratic laws or land distribution, has become an integral part of the society, particularly from 2004” (South African History Online, n.d.). As Duncan (2016: VII) points out that protest actions are essential forms of democratic expression which provide “opportunities for direct and relatively unmediated forms of expression” and “serve as vehicles for ordinary people to engage in practical politics” by way of drawing “public attention to grievances”.

Since the democratic dispensation in South Africa, a wealth of literature agrees that the earliest “service delivery protest” occurred in 2004. Rebecca Pointer (2015:8) drawing from Veriava (2014), the Freedom of Expression Institute (2004) and Booysen (2007) asserts that “the first ‘service delivery protests’ was reported in Harrismith on 31 August 2004 and resulted in the death of a teenager, Tebogo Mkhonza”.

The literature reviewed found no individual definition of protest (Nkuna, 2016). In fact, scholars argue that the term “service delivery protest” in South Africa represents challenges in South African society, as will later be demonstrated. Karl-Dieter Opp (2009:38) emphasises that “the present state of theory and research in the field of protest and social movements does not allow us to judge definitions by their theoretical fruitfulness”. He further asserts that scholars of the social movement should choose a wide definition that describes all the phenomena that researchers are interested in.

Runciman et al (2016: 28) defines protest as “a popular mobilisation in support of a collective grievance”. Opp (2009:38) echoes this definition: “protest is defined as joint (i.e. collective) action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target”. Tarrow (1989:259) defined the “protest event as a disruptive direct action of collective interest, in which claims were made against some other group, elites or authorities”. Alexander et al (2018:27), drawing from Bohler-Muller et al (2018), state that “early discussions about South Africa’s high level of popular unrest” focussed on “service delivery protest”. However, “in recent years the broader concept of ‘community protest’ has gained currency”. Alexander et al. (2018:28) describe community protests as “protests in which

collective demands are raised by geographically defined and identified 'community' that frames its demands in support/and or defence of that community."

However, the classification of "service delivery protests" in South Africa is the subject of ongoing debate. Modiba (2005, cited in Pointer, 2015:8) points out that the term "did not come into popular use immediately" after democracy, with "the first record of its use appearing in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* on 27 May 2005". Friedman (2007, n.d.) argues that "claims that citizens want 'service delivery' are anti-democratic because they deny citizens a voice: reporters and commentators do not have to listen to what protesters are saying, they can decide for them what they do not like". Duncan (2016: 143) agrees that "journalists are too quick to assume that protests are about service delivery, whereas in fact protests are often driven by a greater diversity of grievances". Grappling with the term, Harber (2009: n.p.) argues that:

"It is not a neutral phrase and contains a host of assumptions, policies, attitudes and promises, which are starting to haunt a government that has built promises on the notion of improving service delivery. By using the word 'delivery', we are telling people that they only need to act when there is a failure to deliver. And then the only form of action is a protest, and the only way to be heard is probably to make that protest violent. Democracy is a compact between citizens and their representatives, which relies on successful two-way communication, and what is happening is a breakdown of that communication."

The concept of "community protests" is much wider than "service delivery protests". The "service delivery protests" phrase that is "frequently used by journalists in South Africa, tends to conceal the complexity of issues that communities raise, which often include criticisms of South Africa's democracy" (Alexander et al, 2018:28).

### **2.3 Violence and protests**

The literature indicates that there are numerous justifications for the current aggressiveness nature of protests. Klandermans and van Stramans (2015), tracing the history of protest in South Africa, state that during the last quarter of the 20th century, South Africa was home to a great number of political and social movements articulating grievances of various sorts. Alexander (2010) and Seedat and Suffla

(2010) argue that the aggressive nature of protests in South Africa can be traced back to the era of apartheid, while, Ballard et al (2006:7) notes that “local level social contestation involving regular mass action by communities has been taking place in South Africa since at least the 1970s”.

Some authors blame the violent nature of protests on inequalities between the poor (McLennan & Munslow, 2009) and government officials who disregard the complaints of the protesters (Von Holdt et al, 2011).

However, Jeffrey S Juris (2005:414) explores media representations of what he calls “performative violence among anti-corporate globalization activists through an ethnographic account of anti-G8 protests in Genoa”. Juris describe the “performative violence” as a “form of meaningful interaction through which actors construct social reality based on available cultural templates”. Moreover, “performance violence is a specific mode of communication through which activists seek to produce social transformation by staging symbolic rituals of confrontation” (Juris, 2005:414).

Blok (2000:24) argues “rather than defining violence *a priori* as senseless and irrational, we should consider it as a changing form of interaction and communication, as a historically developed cultural form of meaningful action”. Riches (1986:11) states that “violence has practical-instrumental and symbolic-expressive aspects”. While Juris (2005:414) argues that militant activists practice what is called violence to attract the media to their cause: “I refer to it as ‘performative violence’, in part, to capture media attention. At the same time, dominant media frames reinterpret the resulting images as random acts of senseless violence”.

These sentiments are echoed by Bauman and Brings (1990), who state that militant activists perform the spectacular violent acts, to some degree to attract the media which is continuously in search of dramatic stories and visuals. Juris (2005) asserts that the media’s poor understanding and misrepresentation of protests in dramatic images has the effect of delegitimising the protesters:

“Everyday protest often goes unnoticed, while the iconic images of burning cars and pitched street battles between masked protesters and militarised riot cops are instantly broadcast through global communications networks. At the same time, police and government officials can manipulate violent images, decontextualising and

reinserting them within narratives that frame protesters as dangerous criminals or terrorists ... Indeed, social movement struggles are largely waged through media wars of symbolic interpretation. Protest violence thus forms a crucial terrain in the politics of signification over what constitutes legitimate dissent. In the context of political action, performative violence can be seen as a mode of communication through which activists seek to effect social transformation by staging symbolic confrontation based on the representation of antagonistic relationships and the enactment of prototypical images of violence” (Juris, 2005:414).

Thompson (1995) refers to “performance violence” as struggles for visibility, while Gitlin (1980) asserts that visuals of violent confrontations offers a critical source to social movements by attracting media attention. Thus, dramatic actions could be destrutinated and reintroduced into the dominant storylines that strives to marginalise protesters and portray them as criminals.

## **2.4 Media framing of protests**

News framing “is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993:51). It is further described as “part of the collective” attempt to create meaning through an array of “media and interpersonal communication” (Vliegenthart & Van Zoonen, 2011:6). David Snow notes that framing within the boundaries of protests and social movements represents:

“The signifying work or meaning construction engaged in by movement adherence (e.g. leaders, activist, and rank-and-file participants) and other actors (e.g. adversaries, institutional elites, media, and counter movements) relevant to the interest of movements and the challenges they mount in pursuit of those interests” (p.125).

The literature identifies a number of factors at play in the framing of protests. Gassert and Richter (1997) state that the international media system that developed towards the end of the 20th century gave rise to news coverage of protests that tended to marginalise groups pursuing radical reform. Todd Gitlin (1980), one of the

scholars to document the media's utilisation of several rhetorical devices, provided an analysis of the protests over the United States's participation in the Vietnam War, which proved the mainstream media's marginalisation of protesters and their motivations. Giltin stated that the media coverage of the protests was not impartial, but rather played a key ideological and fundamental role of legitimising and elevating the official actors as primarily sensible, while portraying protesters as dangerous.

The use of these rhetorical devices was observed in a plethora of subsequent studies, such as Tamara Lynn and Susan Williams (2018), who demonstrated in their study of the 2011 Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests and Tea Party that mainstream media sources framed the protests "in ways that, consciously or not, support the prevailing status quo – social, economic, and political elites" (p.733). Lynn and Williams further noted that the coverage framed the "participants as 'them', whose efforts were in conflict with 'us', or the elites" (p. 746). The protesters were also portrayed as "interfering" and inconveniencing the public's attempts "to travel to their workplaces", "live peacefully", or "conduct business as usual" (p.747). Through this narrative, as Lynn and Williams (2018) noted:

"The position of social, economic, and political elites was seldom questioned and thus veiled. Framing the approach advanced by members of OWS as disorderly had an additional effect: criminalization of behaviour. Media reports targeted the 'unruly' visible behaviour of certain participants, even when this behaviour did not represent the organisation as a whole, supporting the literature" (p.747).

Another event worth noting is the 2015 "Fees Must Fall" movement in South Africa, protests that were championed by tertiary students throughout the country. This was not a "service delivery protest" per se. However, the media operated from the same premise of media framing. In an analysis of international and the South African media which was published on the second month of the protests, Nadine Schlebusch (2015:11) pointed out "key aspects of the movement that did not receive media attention". Schlebusch asserts that two events were scheduled to take place in the country when protest was imminent; the National Higher Education Transformation Summit and the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS). Schlebusch argues that these events were at the core of the students' cries. "Both these occasions spoke to what the students" were "protesting about, financial shortcomings and questions about (the lack of) transformation" (p.11). Schlebusch

further notes that the students capitalised on the delivery of the budget statement and marched to Parliament. However, the analysed media focused on the dramatic actions. "South African students clash with police near Parliament", and "South African students, police clash over university fees" – and the portrayal of students as "militant" (p.7-9).

Wasserman (2015: online) echoes these sentiments on the failure of the South Africa's mainstream media to cover the "Fees Must Fall" movement. He states that the media became:

"Increasingly irrelevant to what's going on in the streets. Newspapers and even mainstream online news organisations struggled to keep up with what was happening. Some online news reports consisted exclusively of cut-and-pasted Twitter updates. If they did more, they often reverted to stereotypes of protesters as irrational, violent and disruptive" (online).

Assmann (1994) and Opel (2016) note that the tensions between the strategies that the protesters employ, social movements and media coverage are intimately related to the commercialisation of the media and the professional practices of news production.

Media ownership "has increased the connections between capitalism and the media system" (Opel, 2016:327), through reliance upon advertising and ownership, a role that is dominated by the largest corporations in the system (McChesney, 1999). Tichenor, Donahue and Olien (1980) argue that the coverage of protests is managed primarily to guard the interests of corporate owners and influential leaders. The media deems advertisers to be the most significant factor to consider when reporting on protests by marginalised groups challenging the status quo.

News values play a critical role in determining the stories covered by the media. Opel (2016) states that mainstream media habitually prioritises spectacle and conflict in the news, with a resultant pattern of "if it bleeds, it leads". Opel further argues that these enduring news values have played a focal role in shaping the media coverage of protests, emphasising a violent, spectacular imagery in lieu of analysis of the issues driving the protests:

"News media have consistently represented the protests through the use of violent images ... The drama of these images is consistent with commercial news values, but reduces protest coverage to popular,

irrational conflict, obscuring the detailed policy alternatives being proposed by the protesters” (Opel, 2016:328).

Media depictions of police versus protesters is a marginalising technique used in the news coverage of protests (Baylor, 1996). Gitlin (1980) states that journalists and editors prioritise stories that contain conflict and protests that are inherently about challenges to status quo power structures. Gitlin further argues that conflict frames or the protest paradigm are frequently supported by visual material, such as pictures and video accompanied by interviews with protest participants, rather than leaders. This has the effect of emphasising the protest event, rather than the issues, and draws attention to dress/style over message content.

The literature also suggests that when the conflict frame is reinforced with visual media, such as images of violence and riot police, viewers tend to perceive the protest organisation in a more negative light (Arpan et al, 2006). The framing of the conflict, therefore, becomes a string of news values that influence story selection, sources and duration of the issue attention cycle (Gans, 2004). The combination of these news media practices results in what is referred to as a “media spectacle”. Spectacle news is considered to be an important force in the continuous delegitimisation of protests and social movements at large (Kellner, 2003).

## **2.5 “Alternative” versus “mainstream” media**

According to Deane (2007:206), alternative media is “specially defined by being independent of and often explicitly established as an alternative to corporate oligopolies that control large sections of the mainstream, mass market media”. Moreover, Deane (2007:207) advances that “alternative media is normally taken to mean media that is rooted in, controlled by or in some way accountable to non-corporate, often community interests, and is explicitly focused on providing” perspective which is “distinct from – often discordant with – the mainstream media”.

As stated by Coyer and Dowmunt (2007:3), “alternative media is the most common label, but some literature prefers ‘radical’ or ‘independent’ media, and others ‘citizen’, ‘tactical’, ‘activist’, ‘autonomous’ media”. Coyer and Dowmunt (2007:1) further advance that “in the past decades or so, there has been a massive explosion of alternative media activity, facilitated by the spread of the internet and other digital technologies”. Atkinson (2006:255) describe alternative media “as any

media that is produced by non-commercial sources and attempts to transform existing social roles and routines by critiquing and challenging power structures". Couldry (2000) notes that the alternative media is disagreeing fundamentally with "the place of media power", which is occupied by the mainstream media. Mainstream media leans towards a top-down approach to news, while the alternative media is inclined more to a bottom-up approach, with regard to its content, context, and news production process (Downing, 2001; Atton, 2002; Harcup, 2014).

Looking more at the difference between the mainstream and alternative media, Peschanski (2007:3) argues that mainstream media is still far from establishing "neutral" positions. "Collective actors", including those who regularly stage confrontational postures, are frequently "tamed" or distorted by "mainstream media attitudes and practices". Those who demand their voices to be heard are portrayed "as objects of derision" or as "threats to democracy", any image that best suits the defence of the communication monopolies. Peschanski (2007) supports the view of many academics that the mainstream media content is mainly driven by media ownership, which in one way or another, determines what news to cover:

"Mass media ownership is highly concentrated. Media companies often have holdings in other business sectors or are themselves part of a diversified group. No more than 10 or so corporate entities are at the origin of all news destined for worldwide presentation. This high degree of concentration automatically makes every media outlet the mouthpiece of other comparably powerful economic interests. The agendas of social movements and organisations are given positive coverage only to the extent that they are in tune with these interests" (p.156).

Peschanski (2007:156) also argues that journalistic impartiality and fairness are surrendered "when protests begin to present a challenge to the domination of the rich. When the poor begin to demonstrate, the mainstream media quickly becomes an expression of propaganda while continuing to preach its credibility and impartiality". Coyer and Dowmunt (2007:1) share the sentiment that the principal object of commercial mainstream media "is to deliver audiences to the advertisers who fund them and make them profitable, and the most non-commercial or publicly funded mainstream media is competing in the same marketplace, and as a consequence, their social functions tend to be distorted by the same pressures".

On the alternative press, Phillips (2007:47) states that it provides “a voice to those on the social or political margins”, while Murdoch (1994) as cited by Coyer, Downumt and Fountain (2017:49), views the basic requirement to hear and be heard as “central to any definition of full citizenship in a complex democracy”.

Downing (2003:627) notes that alternative media faces four challenges which hinder its functionality. While the platform (alternative media) has little interest in profit-making, “sometimes its casual ideological dismissal creates problems. One result may be a cavalier attitude to basic financial realities, which can mean that the project goes bust for entirely avoidable reasons, or staggers along but without achieving its feasible goals.”

The next challenge entails a media that endeavours only to maintain “a distinctive orthodoxy and therefore not to engage with casual bystanders or opponents (for example, religious or political zealot newspapers, ethnic separatist publications). So long as the faithful stay loyal, the locked circuit continues” (p.627).

The third case occurs when the alternative media outlet is “effectively colonised” by the activists “and it has become their entire, sometimes quasi-messianic, *raison d’être*. While their worldview may be secular and pluralistic, they nonetheless represent a particular cultural niche, perhaps a generational one, which effectively closes off access to groups alternative to themselves” (p.62).

Downing (2003:628) states that the last challenge takes place on occasions where the support of the public is “unmistakably tangible during a period of acute political contention, but misleads the activists into seeing it as more widespread and durable than it is, so that they take it for granted beyond the point they should”. He asserts that a “methodological caution” is needed because the “language and aesthetics of alternative media can be more complex questions, than superficial comparisons with mainstream media aesthetics would suggest”(p.628).

## **2.6 Role of the media during protests**

The media plays a critical role in society by shaping and creating public opinion. Lang and Lang (1966:466) and Kim et al (2014) state “that earlier studies” disregarded “the role of the media” during protests. “The media provides information”, and often what people know is through the mass media, sometimes second- or third-hand.

The media performs a crucial function of influencing the public and modelling political realism, “readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position” (McCombs & Shaw, 1972:176). The media, as the source of information, is commonly the main vehicle which brings protests forward for the public’s attention (Cottle, 2008). What is more, “the press has become a crucial political institution, intimately connected to the concerns and preoccupations of its readers” (Schultz, 1998:1). As the protests are among the crucial democratic actions in a “repertoire of political participation” (Booyesen, 2007:24), protesters are dependent on the media for attention and to communicate their goals in order to heighten their chance of success (Baylor, 1996).

Lee (2014:2726) noted that “media coverage of protests results from a dynamic interaction between journalists and the protesting group”. However, as the literature points out, the generation of media interest through protests could possibly aid social movements in intensifying their messages towards reaching broader audiences. Literature has also found, in contrast, that movements and actions that challenge current circumstances are predominantly represented negatively throughout the news coverage (see Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Baylor, 1996). Protesters have constantly encountered impediments in communicating their positions through the mainstream media and have instead resorted to developing their own press (Atton, 2002).

Scholars are in agreement that the mainstream media is certainly not the only available medium for protesters to spread their messages to the broader public. The alternative media has developed dramatically in the age of internet (Forde, 2011; Harcup, 2013). Academics contend that the horizontal and bottom to top communication approach of the alternative media, can render them an appropriate conduit for protest messages (Van de Donk et al, 2004; Dahlberg, 2007) – while Roosvall and Tegelberg (2015) and Fraser (2005) argue that the mainstream media persists in perpetuating injustices and blocking other voices from confronting the powers that persecute them.

## 2.7 Conclusion

This research compares the framing of “service delivery protests” by the South African mainstream and alternative media. The literature reviewed revealed overwhelmingly the mainstream media’s marginalisation of protest voices and the lack of representing the underlying causes of protests. Scholars attribute this lack to media ownership and news values, which conflict with the fundamental mandate of the media, as it tends to predetermine the news agenda. “Big business finances the production and distribution of mass media. And, all intent aside, he who pays the piper generally calls the tune” (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1948, cited in Grunter, 2000:82).

The media has very meaningful role to play in a democratic society. Primarily, “it ensures that citizens make responsible, informed choices rather than act out of ignorance or misinformation”. Furthermore, its content provides a “checking function by ensuring that elected representatives uphold their oaths of office and carry out the wishes of those who elected them” (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 1999:5).

The South African Constitution is clear that South Africa’s media must be free. However, this freedom must be in line with democratic values, and the media must be accurate and objective in its coverage. Therefore, provisions of incorrect data and prejudiced reporting are unethical practices, and hence unconstitutional (Sebola, 2012). Sebola (2012:417) further argues that “the future of the role of the South African media in good governance and service delivery, will depend on its need to fight for objectivity in the presentation of its news to the South African nation”.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

This study compares media coverage of the “service delivery protests” that took place in Cape Town in 2017, grounded on the theoretical framework of framing. The earlier chapter alluded to the agenda-setting nature of the media and how the media is able to elevate and promote a particular problem definition in its coverage. Scholars argue that the importance of media framing cannot be underestimated, as it plays a significant role in influencing the public’s views. This chapter will unpack the framing theory and its effects and further explore the protest paradigm and the implications of media framing for democracy.

This study will comparatively analyse how the mainstream and alternative media framed the 2017 “service delivery protests” in Cape Town, as Entman (1993:52) argues that the frame analysis serves “four main purposes within the context of media research – to define problems, to diagnose a cause, to make value judgments, and to suggest remedies”.

#### 3.2. Framing theory

Framing is described as the “construction of an agenda with a restricted number of thematically related attributes, in order to create a coherent picture of a particular subject” (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001:70). Goffman (1974:21) states that frames offer sense and meaning leading readers “to locate, perceive, identify and label” events and circumstances. Echoing these sentiments, Jasperson et al (1998:206) noted that framing “provides a means of describing the power of communication to direct individual cognition towards a means of prescribing interpretation of a situation or subject”.

A frame organises ideas “to present a specific way of thinking about a topic and ... suggests what is at issue” (De Vreese, 2005:53), thus, affords the viewers and readers a way to organise and process information (Colin & Davie, 2015). Frames “activate knowledge, stimulate stocks of cultural morals and values, and

create context” and, as such, they “define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies” (De Vreese, 2005:53).

In relation to news, the literature defines framing as “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993:51). Media use frames such as “words, images, phrases, and presentation styles” to report news (Druckman, 2001:227).

Vliegthart & Zoonen (2011: 106) define framing “as part of the collective struggle over meaning that takes place through a multiplicity of media and interpersonal communication”. Framing may provide meaning to news stories and factual details that may go undetected. The general public makes utilises news frames for purposes of understanding, and making sense of the information received from various news channels daily. Familiar and repeated frames lead the public to ponder about an issue with less effort in terms of making their own conclusions (Bronstein, 2005).

### **3.4 Effects of framing**

Questions around the role of the mass media in influencing people’s opinions have long been part of public debate. Academics state that the framing theory is part of the “media effects, known as long-term or cognitive theories” (Linstrom & Marais, 2012:21). Cognition is “our faculty of knowing and understanding something in a specific way and how we base our behaviour and thinking about such knowledge” (Forrie, 2001:298). Framing can have an impact on perceptions and emotions in two distinct ways (De Vreese, 2005) on individuals and society in general (D’ Angelo, 2002).

Framing can affect how individuals assign meaning to an issue and can also have a bearing on transforming views within a society in general, that can lead to adjustments in the politics field and cultural ideals. To such an extent, framing may have greater impact over an individual’s views on a matter over their involvement and individual encounters, particularly where there is a limited knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990; De Vreese, 2005).

Delving deeper into the effects of framing, Appelman and Asmara (2018) argue that the media creates labels, particularly when covering crises, and that these labels may affect the way readers perceive the issue. For example, the media's use of particular labels for a company involved in a natural disaster may influence the audience's perceptions about that company. Harber (2009) concurs with these sentiments in relation to the term "service delivery protests". As Harber (2009: n.p.) says: "By using the word 'delivery', we are telling people that they only need to act when there is a failure to deliver. And then the only form of action is a protest, and the only way to be heard is probably to make that protest violent."

Research has revealed that even minor linguistic modifications, such as catchphrases or argument order, can have a serious influence on the audience's attribution of responsibility and reputation judgments (Appelman & Asmara, 2018).

### **3.5 The protest paradigm**

Social movements often use events such as protests to draw media coverage in order to reach both the general public and their elected representatives (Rucht et al, 1991). However, countless protest groups find that attracting media attention that actually helps their cause is extremely challenging. Instead, they become victims of a media phenomenon called "description bias", which is called "protest paradigm" in the literature (Gitlin, 1980; Duncan, 2016), and a theory of the news of social conflict (Joseph et al, 1984). The media coverage of protests is not fortuitous, "well-recognised journalistic practices and professional ideologies help shape how protests are reported on by the media and interpreted by their publics" (Duncan, 2016: 146). Roosvall and Tegelberg (2005) argue that the mainstream media continues to reproduce prejudice that prevents the alternative actors from rightly confronting the powers that tyrannise them. McLeod and Hertog (2007) note that the more the protest groups challenge and antagonise the status quo, the greater they will be abrasively handled by the mainstream media. Duncan (2016:147) echoes these sentiments and notes that "the more radical a group is considered to be, the more likely it is to be subjected to the protest paradigm by journalists".

The literature has reported overwhelmingly on the media's hostility towards protest actions, and scholars have recognised a series of repetitive elements that embody this antagonistic conduct. Chan and Lee (1984) state that these elements

represent the protest paradigm, which McLeod and Hertog (1993:310) define as a “routinised pattern or implicit template for the coverage of social protest”. Literature identified an extensive list of 14 typologies of marginalisation devices utilised in the media coverage of protests, and nine of these include general lawlessness, police confrontation, freak show, romper room or idiots at large, carnival, public opinion polls, generalisations, eyewitness accounts and official sources (see McLeod & Hertog, 1999; McFarlane & Hay, 2003; Dardis, 2006; Shahin et al, 2016).

In an analysis of the coverage of protests in South Africa, Jane Duncan (2016:150-162) observed various characteristics of the protest paradigm in the mainstream media’s coverage of protest action. She concluded that there is “little doubt” that the well-documented protest paradigm exists in the coverage of protests in South African journalism. However, she also noted some selected media that were an exception to this phenomenon.

Duncan’s (2016) analysis covered four protest areas in South Africa (Rustenburg, Mbombela, Blue Crane Route and the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro), and drew on media reports from metropolitan-based mainstream commercial and independently owned community news outlets. Duncan (2016:155) focused her analysis on online published news content and noted an overwhelming use of official sources, such as police and government officials, with the “most articles demonstrating a systematic under-representation of protesters’ voices”. She also noted a failure to include academic sources, who might have offered an expert view on the issues underlying the protests. On the use of frames, Duncan (2016:151) noted narratives such as “riotous”, “criminality” or “theatrical elements”, which made it clear that “journalists were highly selective about which protests were covered”. She asserted that journalists were biased:

“Towards protests that involved some level of disruption or violence ... and many stories were framed primarily by the actions of their most extreme elements ... rather than by their more peaceful elements, which led to them being constructed as largely unreasonable responses to grievances” (p.151).

In relation to the demonisation and the delegitimisation of protests, Duncan stated that not all articles demonstrated these features. “Journalists appeared to distinguish between deserving and undeserving protests in their coverage, with the latter more likely to exhibit features of the protest paradigm than the former” (p.159). She notes the Cookhouse protests in 2013 as an example where the de-legitimising device is

very evident. The protests barely received “main story” coverage, with little coverage of the underlying causes of protests, an absence that Duncan (2016:159) argued, “implied that the protests lacked rational reasons”.

The protesters continued to be “voiceless” (p.159) with no sympathy towards their cause. Duncan (2016:159) stated that the “majority of reports counterpoised the protests to the voter registration drive in the area, and framed the protests as a disruptive threat to the drive”. Generally, the reports framed the protest “in a negative light, and a violent threat to the most basic pillar of representative democracy: voting”, Duncan (2016:159) asserted.

Other articles reported the protests through the eyes of the “law and order frame”, with the voice of the police strongly represented and with no voices of the protesters. This meant that “delegitimation and demonisation of their actions could take place largely unchallenged”, Duncan (2016:159) stated. She also noted that few of the articles she analysed made an effort to frame the protests as “an attempt at dialogue, not just disruption” (p.159).

The reduction of the protesters’ struggles to “inter-party squabbles” or factionalism is another de-legitimising device that Duncan observed in her analysis of the South African media coverage of protests. Duncan (2016:160) argued that this kind of media coverage “portrayed protesters as being tools to be used or abused to gain or maintain powerful positions, with little or no reference to the deeper social forces that gave rise to these struggles”. Political differences in the ANC in the Eastern Cape and Nelson Mandela Bay Metro were “belittled” as “in-fightings”, instead of “being placed in a context that would have helped readers to understand the deeper socio-political forces at work in the conflict”, Duncan (2016:161) stated.

She argued that that this kind of “superficial” reporting “can make readers cynical about politics and political contest, which are portrayed as being driven by self-interest even when they are not” (p.161). It can further strengthen debates that the underlying reasons behind protests are not legitimate, but merely driven by “manipulators” driving their own selfish ambitions of hanging to “power” at all costs. This opinion “denies agency to those organising the collective action”, Duncan (2016:161) argued.

With regard to the community media, which might be expected to have a more sympathetic approach to grassroots protest action in comparison to the mainstream media, Duncan noted (2016:157) an article in one of the Mpumalanga-based

community newspapers, where a reporter “was at pains to quote the municipal spokesperson and the DA, with no apparent attempt to quote the residents themselves”, on protests regarding the uncertain future of an illegal settlement. However, two articles that appeared in *The Lowvelder* and *Mpumalanga News* made an effort to be more sensitive approach when reporting on the protests of unpaid municipal workers in Mbombela and water cut-offs in Tekwane. Duncan noted that these two community newspapers explored the underlying reasons behind the protests better. The coverage demonstrated:

“how it is possible to produce journalism on the issues that give rise to service delivery protests from the first-hand experience, lending the piece urgency and authenticity, and underlining the all-too-often unexplored potential of community media to counterbalance mainstream media offerings” (p.158).

### **3.6 Theoretical concepts of media and protest movements**

Cammaerts et al (2013:256) put the theoretical framework arguments into perspective in *Mediation and Protest Movements*, arguing that protesters are fully aware of what Smith et al (2001) call the selection and description prejudices of the mainstream media. These prejudices align with news values for media that contains elements of conflict, major damages, violence, spectacle and closeness of media consumers to the events (Staan, 1990).

“Social movement organisations seeking to influence public opinion and political agendas depend in part on the mass media to communicate their messages to a more general audience” (Smith et al, 2001:1398) with the main aim of reaching four target groups: “protest group constituents, communications media, reference publics and government or political targets” (Lipsky, 1968, cited in Smith et al, 2001:1398).

Drawing from Rucht (2004), Cammaerts et al (2013) state that protesters react in four common ways to the antagonistic treatment meted out by the mainstream media that hinders them from reaching their intended targets, namely: abstention, attack, adaptation and alternative, where abstention is a withdrawal from any further attempts to receive coverage. Attack is verbal or written critique through letters to editors pointing out alleged biases and factual errors, but also physical attacks on journalists, press officers or other infrastructure (Hilwig, 1998).

Adaptation speaks to how the protest groups go out of their way to understand how the mainstream media functions, in order to comply to its needs, routines and rules in their quest for favourable and positive coverage. This strategy involves applying formats that journalists are familiar with, particularly press communiqués and press conferences, and building relationships with journalists. “While these activities may be supportive, they are not effective per se in getting the desired media coverage” because “the crucial factor is to comply with journalistic news values” (Cammaerts et al, 2013:257).

Alternative strategies refer to the protesters’ reliance on their own media to convey their messages, such as the use of “flyers, posters, newsletters, brochures, video clips or setting up newspapers, independent radios and television channels” (Cammaerts et al, 2013:258). The alternative strategy is very advantageous to protesters, as it allows them to take full charge of the content, and the form of communication. However, its shortcoming cannot be overlooked, considering that it necessitates a substantial amount of inaccessible resources which are usually a walk in the park to the mainstream media, such as limited reach and “resonance beyond the like-minded”.

However, Cammaerts et al assert that “both limitations seem to be no longer a problem in the era of digital media, Web 2.0” with the growth and intensification of the internet and its connected instruments of communication, the “dependency of protest groups on established media seemed to be a matter of the past” (2012:262). Hence, Forde (2011) and Harcup (2013) noted the rapid development of the social activists’ alternative media in the era of internet, while Dahlberg (2007) and Van de Donk et al, (2004) somehow shares Commaerts et al’s (2013) sentiments that the traditions of online media could render them a more appropriate conduit for protest communications and social movements.

### **3.7 Media framing of protests: implications for democracy**

In the light of what has been discussed above about the media’s power to shape opinion and frame events in the minds of the public, the role of the media in supporting democratic systems takes on a particular significance. Sina Odugbemi and Pippa Norris (2009:3) point out that “democratic governance is important for” maximising “fundamental freedoms, human choices, self-determination and

development". The dawn of democracy for South Africa in 1994 finally brought freedom for all (Kuye, 2006), including "the right to assemble, demonstrate" and "picket" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Thus, the right to gather to protest against any issue is part of democratic life in South Africa. Oliver and Maney (2000:464) argue that "protests never arise in a vacuum; they are a response to events or problems".

Friedman (2011:108) states that "citizens exercise their rights by using the rights available in democratic systems to engage in collective action to force power holders to account and to respond to them". Citizens cannot exercise their rights when they are not informed about what those in power are embarking on, or what mechanisms and tools are available to hold them accountable.

"[The] crucial determinant for the depth and breadth of democracy is the information about the exercise of power available in any society, and the range of social groups which enjoy access to it. Since the media is the prime source [of information], it wields considerable power over the dissemination of information citizens need to exercise sovereignty," (Friedman, 2011:108).

The "news media in each country is a vital part of the institutional mix, provided that it is set up in a way that allows it to play the roles of watchdogs, agenda-setters and gatekeepers ... these roles strengthen the quality of democratic governance" (Norris & Odugbemi, 2009:3). Delegating these democratic functions to the media lies generally on the conviction and hopes that the media operates in the interest of the electorate, and is further answerable to the general public at large.

What is more, these roles can only be achieved by a free media. "The institutional arrangements of democracy provide the most hospitable environment for watchdog reporting. The constitutional and legal protections for a free press, as well as access to government-held information, give journalists not only the right, but also the tools with which to monitor government. The checks and balances inherent in the representative system also legitimise journalistic inquiry as part of a broader framework of government's accountability to citizens" (Coronel, 2009:139).

Kim et al (2014:1) assert that the "media should collectively keep government responsive and responsible to citizens". However, the literature demonstrates that the reality is that "in new democracies, adversarial or antagonistic media is occasionally seen to undermine the delicate trust put in a new government" (Voltmer, 2006:4).

The marginalisation framing used by the media in reporting protest action undermines the notion of the freedom of the media and the “watchdog” role that the media is expected to perform in a democratic society (ibid). Giddens (2002:78) states that the media should not be excluded from the equation of democracy, as the media “tends to destroy the very public space of dialogue it opens up, through relentless trivialising, and personalising, of political issues. Moreover, the growth of giant multinational media corporations means that unelected business tycoons can hold enormous power”. Friedman (2011:108) further argues that the media should be held accountable for the degree to which the content it distributes reveals the maximum series of the social experiences: “A media which tells only part of the story, or tells the story of only a part of society, is not only failing in its professional task, but is hindering the development of a deeper and broader democracy.”

Coronel states that:

“The media is also expected to provide a forum where a broad range of voices – opposition parties, civil society actors, independent experts, and ordinary citizens – can express alternative views ...

Moreover, the media is widely seen as the Fourth Estate, referring to the media as an institution alongside other branches of government, which together provide a system of checks and balances to control political officials and prevent the misuse of power ... The daily flow of news generates a running tally of government policies, political events, and the actions of political officials, on the basis of which citizens make their own choices” (Coronel, 2009:164).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In exploring the framing theory, it is clear that the role and the responsibility of the media in society cannot be undervalued, as it plays a critical role of influencing how the public thinks about the issues of the day. This reporting has the power to change perceptions and influence political and cultural values. The analysis that follows in the coming chapters will apply the framing theory, using the protest paradigm, to explore the way the two media outlets under review reported on the 2017 “service delivery protests” in Cape Town.

## 4. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyse the differences and similarities in the way the mainstream and alternative media reported and framed the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”. To explore the research questions, this study conducted a comparative framing analysis of the mainstream and the alternative, internet-based news discourse in Cape Town. Entman (1993) states that the framing theory is useful for researchers carrying out content analysis, as it allows researchers to measure clusters of messages, also known as frames, to see what is subsequently available for their audiences. Using framing as a method necessitates the “constructing and processing of discourse or characteristics of the discourse itself” (Reese et al., 2001:1).

Framing analysis is considered by scholars as an appropriate approach for understanding the role that the media plays in politics (Al Nahed, 2015). According to Pan and Kosicki (1993), as a methodology, framing analysis permits the researcher to meaningfully and critically scrutinise the structural and lexical features of a news text, with the purpose of deconstructing the newsmaker’s preferred or intended meaning, and the resultant impact on public perception of a matter. Al Nahed (2015) notes that the strength of the framing analysis lies in analysing the media’s effect on both individuals and society. “The framing approach bridges the competing tendencies of social analysis towards closure and openness, and may be regarded as one of its strengths” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993:57).

Scholars use different methodological approaches in framing analysis (Linstrom & Marais: 2012:25). According to Giles and Shaw (2009:23):

“The media framing analysis has been developed in order to better understand the influence of news media in contemporary culture ... to assess not so much the impact of loose elements in a text, but the impact of the implicitly present cultural phenomena conveyed by all these elements as a whole, and to relate them to the dynamic processes in which social reality is constructed.”

However, the literature demonstrates that the framing analysis differs from other approaches, such as content analysis, because of its use of systematic procedures

for collecting and understanding data in relation to the intended meaning behind news texts. It does not rely on the researchers' reading of the news text (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Nonetheless, "the methodological shortcomings of much of the framing literature are a concern", argues Giles and Shaw (2009:5). Several authors support this view that the framing research has not developed any well-defined methodological and approach principles (Reese, 2007; Scheufele, 1999), and the work of Entman (1991;1993, cited in Giles & Shaw, 2009), one the initial authors of the widely recognized systematic methodology for conducting framing research still regarded and remains the commonly used method.

His methodology integrated quantitative content analysis of attributions, for example, by considering whether the media categorised an event as deliberate or a mistake, as well as using qualitative analysis to consider the broader context of discourse (Entman, 1993, cited in Giles & Shaw, 2009:6).

The coding and interpretation processes in framing analysis methodologies have also been subject to criticism. Tankard (2001:89) states that "... coming up with the names for frames itself involves a kind of framing". The ambiguity of several scholarships, where frames merely emerge through analysis, or are just discovered is heavily criticised (Matthes and Kohring, 2008). Matthes & Kohring (2008:260) argues that frames that just emerged "without naming the criteria for the identification of frames, their assessment falls into a methodological black box". Hence, a "careful description may be the only way to convince readers of a frame's existence and validity" (Downs, 2002:48). As Van Gorp (2005:503) points out:

"A frame is a quite abstract variable that is hard to identify and hard to code in content analysis. It is extremely difficult to neutralize the impact of the researcher in framing research ... one runs the risk of extracting researcher frames, not media frames. This is because the perception and coding of frames strongly depend upon how the researcher perceives the issue".

Matthes (2008:359) argues that "translation of framing definitions to concrete, operational steps is not transparent in a huge part of the literature. Some definitions are general, giving little information about how to operationalise frames. Other definitions provide more precise operational steps but are not always explicitly followed". He emphasises that clear approaches of frame analysis and their trustworthiness are imperative, "as the method needs to be analytically distinguished

from frame type. Different types of frames can be extracted with varying methods” (Matthes, 2008:353). “There are several alternative ways of treating the news article” (Pan, 1993:65). Therefore, as Miller (1997:376) points out, “we need to find more objective and reliable methods”.

Reflecting on these concerns and after reviewing five common methods, namely the “hermeneutic approach, the linguistic approach, the manual-holistic approach, the computer-assisted approach and the deductive approach,” Matthes and Kohring (2008:258-263) conclude that “drawing on the widely accepted definition of frames by Entman (1993), we posit that single frame elements group together in a systematic way, thereby forming unique patterns. When these patterns occur in several articles, we interpret them as frames,” (Matthes & Kohring, 2008:274).

According to Entman, frames are made prominently:

“by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments. And as such, frame analysis serves the following purposes within the context of media research: to define problems, to diagnose courses, to make value judgments, and to suggest remedies” (Entman, 1993:52).

Thus, the essence of the framing studies is the “process of constructing meaning” (Gamson et al, 1992:385)

## **4.2 Research design**

This study used a comparative approach of two print news sources in Cape Town, the privately-owned, commercial *Cape Times* daily newspaper and also the non-profit *GroundUp* alternative online news agency. Both have a reputation as credible news sources in the Western Cape. This study adopted a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Campbell and Fiske (1979) state that “more than one method should be used in the validation process to ensure that the variance reflected is that of the trait and not of the method”. Campbell & Fiske, (1976, cited in Jick, 1979:268) assert that “the convergence or agreement between two methods enhances our belief that the results are valid and not a methodological artefact”.

Comparisons between the *Cape Times* and *GroundUp* are drawn from their respective coverage of service delivery protests in Cape Town from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017. These media outlets represent both the mainstream and the alternative media, and were identified based on their prominence in Cape Town and their content influencing other publications. The *GroundUp* news agency is one of the most respected in the country. University of the Witwatersrand's researcher, Finlay (2017), notes that "although the general state of South African journalism is on the decline, we also have very vibrant independent media sites and projects – *The Daily Vox*, the *Daily Maverick*, *GroundUp*, or projects like The Justice Project that 'write into the news'". *GroundUp* enjoys a growing audience, as "audiences for news continue to migrate online" (Guerrazzi et al, 2016:167), while audiences for South African newspapers continue to decline (The Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa, 2018).

### **The *Cape Times* newspaper**

The *Cape Times* is South Africa's first daily newspaper, produced by Independent Media, its website version is popularly known as IOL (Independent Online), one of the leading multi-platform content companies in South Africa, founded on 27 March 1876. Its website ([www.independentmedia.co.za](http://www.independentmedia.co.za)) states: "Our stable of fine, quality publications includes 20 of the country's most prominent newspapers" (Independent Media, online).

The *Cape Times* is read by an average of 215 000 people per day (Independent Newspapers, 2017) and offers breaking city and national news, and in-depth coverage of politics, business and sport. It targets the highest Living Standards Measure (LSM) level of 9 and 10 ([Independentmedia.co.za](http://Independentmedia.co.za)). LSMs are a widely used marketing research tool in Southern Africa, which divides the population into 10 LSM groups, with 10 being the highest and 1 the lowest (SAARF, 2018). Researchers assume that "elite" media such as the *Cape Times*, will have a less dramatised approach to "contentious political activities going on in the public sphere" (Beyeler & Kriesi, 2005:100). Furthermore, media researchers have pronounced on the value of newspapers in relation to the possible role as agenda setters, and champions and drivers of opinion in society (Carvalho, 2007).

### **The *GroundUp* online news agency**

The *GroundUp* online news agency was chosen because it is not part of any commercial group. It was founded in 2012 and distinguishes itself unequivocally from the traditional mainstream media. It does not depend on any market-related advertising for revenue, contributing news for free and solely dependent on funding from civil society. The news agency is a joint project of the Community Media Trust (CMT) and the University of Cape Town's Centre for Social Science Research.

According to the CMT website ([www.cmt.org.za](http://www.cmt.org.za)), the company is a not-for-profit organisation, specialising in communication in the fields of health, human rights and gender-based violence. "We produce media across all platforms and are skilled in interpersonal communication and training" (CMT, 2018). *GroundUp* "reports news that is in the public interest, with an emphasis on the human rights of vulnerable communities...We want our stories to make a difference ... we value high-quality, ethical journalism. We are independent and do not promote any political party" (*GroundUp*, 2018).

Based in Cape Town, *GroundUp*'s news "is funded by both South African and international philanthropic" organisations. A list of funders is available on its website. However, a question on whether the alternative media funders, particularly those funding *GroundUp*, might have an influence on its content, does boggle the mind, but the question is beyond the scope of this study. Chuma (2016:203) argues that *GroundUp* "occupies a space somewhere in the continuum between mainstream and alternative media. It has elements of mainstream, as some of its stories are picked up and published by the mainstream media, and also because its news production process is somewhat centralised and professionalised".

Phillips (2007:49) notes that the alternative media is "capable of pushing the wheel of social change and nibbling away at the complacency of the establishment. Some of its ideas (and its authors) are taken up by the media – ever thirsty for novelty – and become absorbed, but only to make way for new ideas emerging from the margins". Nancy Fraser (1997 cited in Coyer, Downmunt & Fountain, 2007:47) argues that the alternative media forms "part of a subaltern public sphere, which continually interacts with the mainstream" to build what she calls "emancipation potential".

Recognising that each of these media outlets has distinct publishing and distribution channels, the *Cape Times* and *GroundUp* are useful vehicles for a

comparison of news coverage of the service delivery protests that took place in Cape Town from January 2017 to December 2017. The mixed methods approach allows for “convergence or agreement between methods” and “enhances our belief that the results are valid and not a methodological artefact” (Bouchard, 1976:268).

The quantitative content analysis is utilised to quantify and code the occurrence of frames and kinds of sources used in news text in each article (Tankard, 2001). Qualitative analysis is utilised to consider the discourse by exploring the significance of the present frames (Pointer, 2015). “A qualitative content analysis allows us to examine its manifest mechanisms in news coverage and their consequences for the media definition, interpretation, and evaluation of the protest, as well as the practices and choices underlying news making” (Reul, et al, 2016:904). However, the framing value “... does not hinge on its potential as a unified research domain, but as a provocative model that bridges parts of the fields that need to be in touch with each other: quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional” (Reese, 2007:1).

### **4.3 Units of analysis**

The study draws comparisons from protest coverage from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017. Within this period, news items were selected covering the 2017 “service delivery protests” from established media outlets in Cape Town, the *Cape Times* newspaper and the *GroundUp* news website. The units of analysis consisted of published newspaper articles covering the period under examination. The study involved a comparative analysis of the articles from these two media outlets, as well as the representation of voices and salience of the coverage.

This time period was identified because 2017 is on record as witnessing the third-highest number of protests in South Africa since 2014, accounting for an 11% increase in service-delivery protests since 2004. The Western Cape recorded a 9% share of such protests in 2017, according to the Municipal IQ (2017). The Municipal IQ is regarded as the most reliable source for service delivery-related protest information in South Africa. It “tracks the number of service delivery protests in South Africa, using media reports” (BusinessTech, 2016: online).

The “South Africa’s police service does not keep records” of “service delivery protests” and “when the police are called out to monitor and control crowds, such incidents are logged as ‘crowd-related incidents’” (Africa Check, 2016: online). However, “crowd-related incidents” is a very broad term, covering a variety of situations from sports matches to electoral campaigns (BusinessTech, 2016), which clearly do not form part of this study. Therefore, “the number of crowd-related incidents that the police record” does not equal the number of protests, and while police incident reporting “can give some indication of the nature and number of protests, it is not a protest database” (Lancaster, 2016, cited in BusinessTech, 2016: online).

#### **4.3.1 Data collection and sampling**

The published news articles were gathered using the South African Media news clipping service, which archives South African daily newspapers, along with a few others. Additionally, the digital search engine Google, as well as *GroundUp*’s own digital search engine, were used to gather articles from *GroundUp*.

The electronic SA Media database contains complete full-text articles of newspapers. The *Cape Times* stories were retrieved from this database via the Sabinet Reference, available electronically at the University of Cape Town (UCT) Library. “SA Media is one of the most comprehensive press-cutting services offering you access to a database consisting of more than three million newspaper reports and periodical articles which have been indexed on computer since 1978” (UCT Library, 29 May 2018: online). However, *GroundUp* is not available on the SA News database, and a search using Google and the media outlet’s website ([www.GroundUp.org.za](http://www.GroundUp.org.za)) was conducted to retrieve archived stories.

The stories published by both media outlets were retrieved using a combination of keywords, including “service delivery protests in Cape Town”, “community protests in Cape Town”, “protests in Hout Bay”, “protests in Imizamo Yethu”, “protests in Khayelitsha”, “protests in Joe Slovo”, “protests in Kleinmond”, “protests in Strand” and “protests in Philippi”. The keywords were devised to capture all possible published stories relating to the 2017 protest actions in Cape Town. The selection of the keywords was guided by a preliminary scan of the media coverage, which demonstrated that many of the service delivery protests in 2017 were reported

in Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay, Khayelitsha, Joe Slovo in Milnerton, Kleinmond, Strand and Philippi, among other areas.

These initial news articles were found by scanning the 2017 Municipal IQ search page. Thus, no specific Cape Town area was targeted and the study focuses on “service delivery protests” in general, as indicated earlier. The main keywords used were “service delivery protests” and “protests”, with the addition of the above-mentioned areas of Cape Town for the purpose of narrowing the search. This method also ensured that only Cape Town protests were targeted, as the media outlets under examination also publish national and international stories. An example of the SA Media and *GroundUp* website search is presented below (see figures 1, 2 & 3 below). News articles on SA Media are available in PDF format and include the name of the publication, the date of publication, the newspaper page number on which the article was published, the author, any pictures and a replica of the newspaper layout for that page. The search was applied and articles on the research focus area from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017 were downloaded, collected and the dataset of 51 articles was saved.

Figure 1: Example of SA Media search of the Cape Times

The screenshot shows the Sabinet Reference website search interface. The header includes the Sabinet logo and navigation links like Home, Search, Search All, Index, List of Current Publications, Quick Search Guide, mySabinet, Help, and Logout. The main content area is titled 'SA Media' and shows search results for 'service delivery protests' and 'Cape Town'. The search criteria are displayed as follows:

- Keywords: service delivery protests (Exact Word/Phrase checkbox unchecked)
- AND Cape Town (Exact Word/Phrase checkbox unchecked)
- Article Title: (empty field)
- publication\_title: CAPE TIMES (dropdown menu)
- Date From (yyyy-mm-dd): 2017-01-01
- To Date (yyyy-mm-dd): 2017-12-31
- Latest Articles Loaded: All (dropdown menu)

Source: UCT Library website

Figure 2: Sample of results from SA Media search page



Source: UCT Library website

Figure 3: Example of search using GroundUp search engine



Source: www.groundup.org

### 4.3.2 Data analysis

Drawing from Bernard Cohen (1963), the “media not only may be successful in telling us what to think about, but it also may be successful in telling us how to think about it” (Cohen, 1963, cited in Eadie, 2009:8). The intention of this analysis is to obtain greater understanding into the discourse wherein the protest paradigm originates from. Since the literature demonstrated that the protests are characterised in the media using a marginalising story frame and a reliance on official voices, this study is designed to identify and analyse these aspects in the extracted data on the coverage of the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”.

Lacey and Luff (2009) state that data does not speak for itself; it must be scrutinised and analysed, while Marshall and Rossman (1999:150) define “data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data”. Schwandt (2007:6) states that generally, while data analysis:

“Does not proceed in a linear fashion, it is the activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorising data that signifies a search for general statements among categories of data. Gamson (2001) identifies three research domains of the framing approach: (1) the origins and use of frames in the construction of messages, (2) the examination of specific frames in messages, and (3) the interaction of audiences and these messages.”

The literature recognises two approaches for framing analysis for the coding of frames, inductive and deductive. Brooten (2013) explains the inductive form of analysis (which this study mostly employed) as “patterns of discourse and behaviour that are allowed to emerge from interviews and observation. This approach allows insights not enabled by more deductive forms of analysis” (Brooten, 2013:35). According to De Vreese (2005:53), the definition of both inductive and deductive approaches is “frames in the inductive approach emerge from the material in the course of analysis and the deductive approach investigates frames that are defined and operationalised prior to the investigation”.

Entman (1993:51) describes framing as “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation”. Reul et al, (2016:903) asserts that:

“Media frames can be deduced by looking for patterns in the use of framing devices, such as emotive language or metaphors – leading us to pay specific attention to descriptions of odd or deviant protester appearance and behaviour, descriptions of irrationality of protesters and their claims, and adverse descriptions of the protest’s nature”.

Referring to the inductive approach, Du Plooy stated:

“The selection of news frames is crucial to the success of frame analysis, each article is read several times, while the researcher makes thorough notes, and thereafter the news frames are decided on. Once a decision has been made on the process of selecting frames for the study, the researcher can decide to identify either only

a dominant frame in each of the news articles, or a dominant and secondary frame in each of the news articles. The dominant frame is the main theme of the news article, while the second frame is a supplementary idea that supports the main theme” (Du Plooy, 2009:55).

Equally, Alozie (2005:66) recommends that “phase one includes general multiple reading of the articles while taking descriptive notes about the content, while phase two encompasses a second reading to identify certain recurring frames and the third phase deals with the in-depth interpretation of the articles”.

In this study, the inductive approach was supplemented by the deductive approach, as Dogu (2015:636) states that “in the coding scheme, each defined frame possesses issue components that refer to certain meanings, along with keywords that help standardise the classification”. The frames were developed inductively to capture the range of perspectives on variables, such as reasons for the protests and visual subjects depicted in photographs, and the deductive approach was also utilised to guide the inductive analysis. A list of marginalising devices obtained from the reviewed literature in this study was compiled in order to guide the deductive and the inductive analyses (see McLeod & Hertog, 1999; McFarlane & Hay, 2003; Dardis, 2006; Shahin et al, 2016).

The collection of possible generic frames with keywords from literature (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Pointer, 2015) was also compiled, including the characteristics used for purposes of guiding the coding scheme. The list, included below, provided a clear interpretation of frames, deduced from the analysed articles:

1. Injustice frames: injustice being done or emphasising moral outrage
2. Legitimising frames: protests have legitimate reasons
3. Delegitimising frames: marginalising or radicalising protesters
4. Spectacle/spectacle frames: focusing on violence, emotion or drama in the protests, burning, bomb, shattered, smashed, attack, a war zone, battle, trashed, violent, sometimes protesters characterised as young men.
5. Contextual frames: focusing on the background of the protest or in-depth coverage of the protests.
6. Contest frames: several sources who appear to disagree with each other
7. Rights frames: rights, constitution, protesters characterised as citizens with rights

8. Collective action frames: community, we, our, protesters characterised as community members united in action
9. Inconvenience frames: nuisance, obstacle, delays, traffic, obstacles
10. Economic frames: economy, cost, business, monetary sums
11. Failed democracy frames: democratic, democracy, citizens (tone negative)
12. Law and order/criminality frames: crime, criminals, law and order, restoring peace, police viewpoints
13. Corruption frames: corruption, corrupt, lack of transparency, mispending, public officials
14. Moral frames: value judgments such as disgraceful, appalling, abhorrent
15. Sympathy frames: understandable, understanding, needs, protesters characterised as victims.
16. Accountability frames

Nonetheless, despite the care with which frames were devised, it is important to note that frames will continue to emerge as the research task continues (Linström & Marais, 2012:34). Pointer (2015:42) points out that “in English, words can have multiple meanings and contexts, so relying only on framing devices may result in false positive results for the presence of a frame. It is clear that a frame may be clear without all the devices being present. Therefore, it is necessary to read for meaning, not simply search texts for particular framing devices”.

Gamson and Lasch (1983:399) state that the: “process of identifying frames implies that the researcher analyses the text for symbolic devices” or “signature elements located within news stories. Rhetorical and technical devices are used to frame a specific event/story”. Rhetorical devices include word choice, metaphors and exemplars (Linström & Marais, 2012:31), including the “presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgment”. Pan (1993:70) notes that “choices of words and their organisation into news stories are not trivial matters. They hold great power in setting the context for debate, defining issues under consideration, summoning a variety of mental representations, and providing the basic tools to discuss the issues at hand”.

As the literature has demonstrated, spectacle/drama frames dominated the previous studies on protests. Based on this, frames in this study were coded in two ways. First, two indicators of emphasis on disruptions and violence were created to

measure the treatment of the frame within the identified stories, paying attention to headlines, subheads and lead paragraphs. As Entman (1991:9) notes, the essence of framing is sizing, meaning to what extent is any portrayal overblown or reduced, and therefore made more or less significant, “aside from the words and images used to depict the event, how much material on the event is available, and how prominently is it displayed”?

### 4.3.3 Coding scheme

According to Prasad (2008: 13), “a coding schedule resembles a survey questionnaire and contains different dimensions of the communication content to be coded”. For this study, the researcher conducted the coding, as Prasad (2008:13) states that “a coder may be the investigator himself or herself, or employed by the investigator”. One code schedule was applied to both media outlets. However, the outlets were coded independently in order to ensure that the differences and similarities on the coverage of the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests” were discernible. Each news article was the coding unit, and coding was done for publication date, media outlet, journalist, headline, photographs, salience, length of the article, sources quoted in each article (sources also divided according to direct source 1 to 3) and frames. Google Forms was used for capturing all the coding of collected data. The descriptive statistics of these variables are examined in the subsequent section.

#### **Salience**

According to Kiousis (2004), the prominence that the media gives to a story signals to the audience the story’s salience, and can be measured by the measurements of a news article, for example, the placement, size and pictures used. To determine the salience that the *Cape Times* and *GroundUp* assigned to the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”, two measuring indicators were employed: the placement and the length of the individual articles.

In the coding, the placement of individual articles and length of articles were coded. The placement was assigned: 1 = high (headline), 2 = medium (political/main session) and 3 = low (other sections of the paper). The second variable measured the length of the story (the total number of words used). Coding for length assigned 1

= short (400-word count), 2 = medium (401-800-word count), and 3 = long (800-word count).

The free online PDF word count tool, Monterey Language Services ([www.montereylanguages.com](http://www.montereylanguages.com)), was used to count the words in the PDF news articles obtained from the SA Media database. The word count of the articles, found using Google and *GroundUp* search engines, was done using Microsoft Word.

## Sources

“If we accept the existence of even the most benign form of agenda-setting on the part of the local press, then who is allowed to speak in the news is just as important as which stories are selected for inclusion. Who speaks matters because access to the media is access to influence” (Ross, 2007:456). Examining which voices are predominant or under-represented in news stories, presents an in-depth understanding of which powerful voices that drive media content, public views and policy (Greenberg & Hier, 2009). Media depends heavily on news sources to generate media frames (Reese et al, 1994), and as such, sources present clues as to which topical matter and problem definitions the media amplifies, as it frames the news stories (Watkins, 2001).

This study focuses on who was used as the primary sources by the *Cape Times* and *GroundUp*. In his analysis of representations of citizenship and public opinion in television, Lewis et al (2004) found that citizens were used mostly as inactive sources. Thomas et al (2004) describe the use of the citizens as secondary voices in the coverage of stories that concern them as “apathetic”, meaning it is a figment of journalist’s imagination, instead of engaging the citizens for an informed coverage of issues. The analysis for this research was interested to determine the extent of use of protesters as primary sources, as Miller (2004) argues that the secondary use of the public as sources in news articles results in the public being constructed as disinterested.

The articles were coded according to the extent of the use of the officials and protesters as sources. The coding also considered the gender and status of the source. Sources were coded as follows:

- *Protest sources vs official sources*

For comparison exclusively focusing on the total number of protest sources versus official sources used per media outlet, a variable was created in multiple-choice

format and reported as: 1 = protesters, 2 = official sources, 3 = no direct source, 4 = other. Officials included government/experts/police/administration, and protesters included organisers/participants.

- *Number of direct voices*

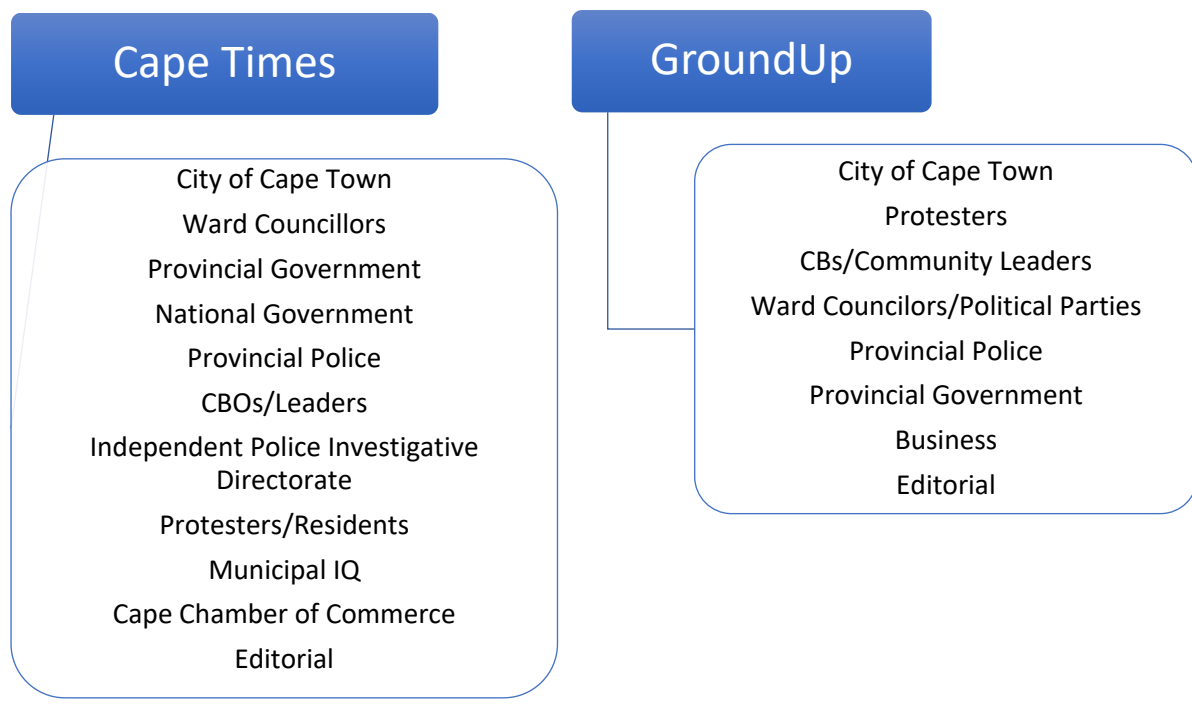
To determine the number of direct voices each media outlet used in each news story, a four-point scale was adopted: 0 = no direct source, 1 = one source, 2 = two sources, 3 = three sources, and 4 = four and above. The number of sources used also provided an indicator for length of the news stories, as it was noted that the more sources used, the longer the article.

- *List of main actors (names, titles and organisations)*

The details of all direct sources were captured. The coding included this information, as Giles (2002) states that the impact of central characters and other sources in news articles has higher chances to be vaster when eminent individuals are utilised as sources, such as well-known politicians or media celebrities. This is because the consumers of information generally develop solid reputable relations with well-known characters, thus they draw from what they already know about an individual or beliefs to assign intentions and psychological reactions to them. Furthermore, studies on the grasping of text demonstrate that readers frequently utilise their previous knowledge of a protagonist in a story as an interpretation and organisational technique (Zwaan, 1998). O'Neil, Shultis & Rapp (2007) and Klug & Taylor (2006) argue that a protagonist's spatial location and emotional knowledge of a reader, likewise, is included in the understanding of constructed texts, such as news articles.

This literature formed the basis for the decision to code for the main actors identified, per media outlet, to establish their preferred sources and the voices represented in stories of the protests. The status identity of the sources used in *GroundUp* was identified and is presented below (*Cape Times*, 12 identified, and *GroundUp* 8, figure 4 below). Sources' status identity was categorised according to the source's relation to the protests (Lee, 2014:2732). Categories included participant/protester, organiser/community leader (who spoke for or about the actions and were thus instrumental in highlighting the causes of the protests and circumstances), target (who is the protest directed at?), police/security and observer/bystander/eyewitness.

Figure 4: Status identity of sources



## Photographs

The study also included an analysis of any photographs included in the 51 news articles in this study. Images play a crucial role in influencing and shaping the content of stories by intensifying, clarifying and personalising the influence of the actual message (Zettl, 2010). German (2010), drawing from Hall (1972), states that visuals are responsible for framing the news stories, because they offer a primary idea of the news story and influence the reader's view of the printed words. Blackwood (1983) agrees that images are very significant, because they are conveyors of the content and influencers of opinions and attitudes. Verser and Wicks (2006) assert that photographs serve to direct the person who reads a story, arranging the messages of the story around the graphic limitations of the visuals. Graffin and Stevenson (1992) report that previous studies have demonstrated that reader knowledge almost doubles when both graphics and text are used to report the same stories.

This literature provided the basis for the decision to code for the visual material included in the *Cape Times's* and *GroundUp's* news stories about the protests in 2017. Visuals were coded as follows: 1 = photograph included, 2 =

photograph not included. The dramatic content of visual material was also coded: 1 = high drama (shooting, burning objects, blocked roads, public order police carrying guns/stun grenades/use of teargas, ad so on), 2 = medium drama, 3 = low, 4 = not dramatic. This information was determined from the analysis of the visual images and accompanying captions.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This study integrates multi-method approaches, using quantitative and qualitative analyses, as multiple methods ought to be utilised during the authentication process, in order to make sure that the discovered variance is not of a method but rather a trait (Campbell & Fiske, cited in Jick, 1979), The quantitative analysis was used to make statistical sense of the large amount of sampled data, while the qualitative analysis explored the comparable meaning of the content and the conceptual consequence of the framing patterns discovered in the sampled coverage of the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”.

## 5. FINDINGS

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings from the data coding and analyses from the 51 analysed news articles that were extracted from the mainstream *Cape Times* (30 articles) and alternative *GroundUp* (21 news articles). One of the questions that this research seeks to answer concerns the differences in the general characteristics of the reporting of the mainstream *Cape Times* and the alternative *GroundUp* in relation to the coverage of the 2017 Cape Town protests.

Part of this question can already be deduced from the total number of collected and analysed articles per media outlet. We can see that the *Cape Times* published more protest stories (30) than *GroundUp*, which published 21 articles. This difference in coverage can be attributed to a number of factors. One factor relates to Bailey et al's (2013:18) definition of mainstream and alternative media, which speaks to the scope of both mediums: "The present-day mainstream media is usually considered to be large-scale and geared towards large, homogeneous audiences ... and the alternative is small-scale and oriented towards specific communities, possibly disadvantaged groups, respecting their diversity".

Downmunt (2017) and Downing et al (2001:v) echo this, describing alternative media as largely on a smaller measure, expressing "an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities and perspectives", while Dogu (2015:631) says the alternative media is "limited in their capabilities". Bailey et al (2013:20) say "being small-scale, independent, and horizontally structured, organisations carrying non-dominant discourses and representations hardly guarantee financial and organisational stability". The lack of financial support could affect the alternative media's coverage, considering the travel required to reach the areas that experienced "service delivery protests" in and around Cape Town in 2017. The findings on salience, sources and frames are presented per media outlet below.

## 5.2 Alternative media findings: *GroundUp*

### 5.2.1 Length of articles

Of the 21 stories from *GroundUp* analysed in this study, 10 contained fewer than 800 words, seven were over 800 words, and four comprised fewer than 400 words. Some of the longer articles had as many as 1 300 words (see figure 5). Burke, Martin & Cooper (2011) noted that the issue of importance is also signalled by the size of the story.

Figure 5: Length of *GroundUp* articles on Cape Town 'service delivery protests'



### 5.2.2 Preferred sources

*GroundUp* relied on comparatively fewer sources than the *Cape Times*. This variance might be attributed to *GroundUp*'s smaller coverage overall (*GroundUp* 21 articles vs. *Cape Times* 30). The voices of protesters dominated *GroundUp*'s coverage (21 times), followed by the community-based organisations and community leaders (13 times). Local government authorities were quoted six times, provincial South African Police Service five times, provincial government four times, ward councillors twice and business once (figure 6).

Figure 6: *GroundUp's* source selection and share of voice

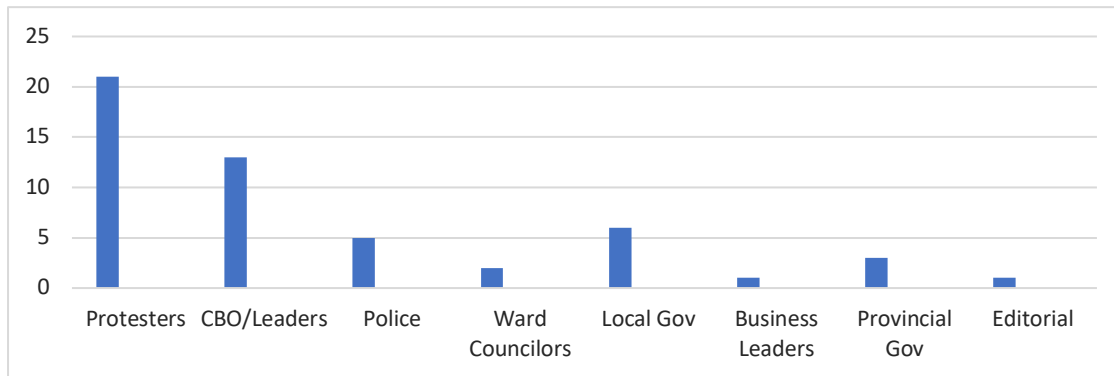
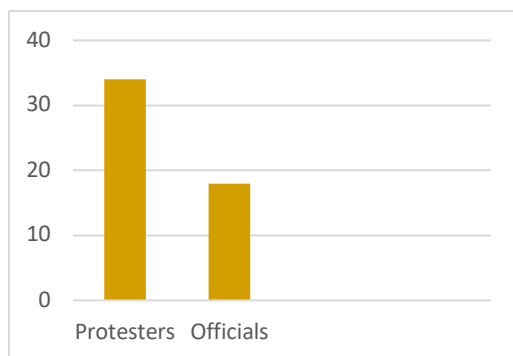


Figure 6 shows that protesters, affected residents and community organisations dominated the coverage of the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”, quoted 24 times. The overwhelming use protesters as sources by the alternative media is in line with the literature, which indicates that due to its alternative values and standards and their different economic, organisational and ideological arrangements, the alternative media is more likely to represent voices that may be misrepresented or marginalised in mainstream discourses (see Downing, 2001; Boyle & Schmierbach, 2009). See figure 7 below for the comparison of official and protester sources in *GroundUp*.

Figure 7: Comparison of source representation in *GroundUp*



Considering who *GroundUp* quoted first, second and third of the protesters and officials *GroundUp*, figures 8 and 9 illustrate that protesters took an authoritative lead at all levels, across all sources quoted, at first, second and third person quoted *GroundUp*.

Figure 8: Percentage of first, second and third person quoted by status

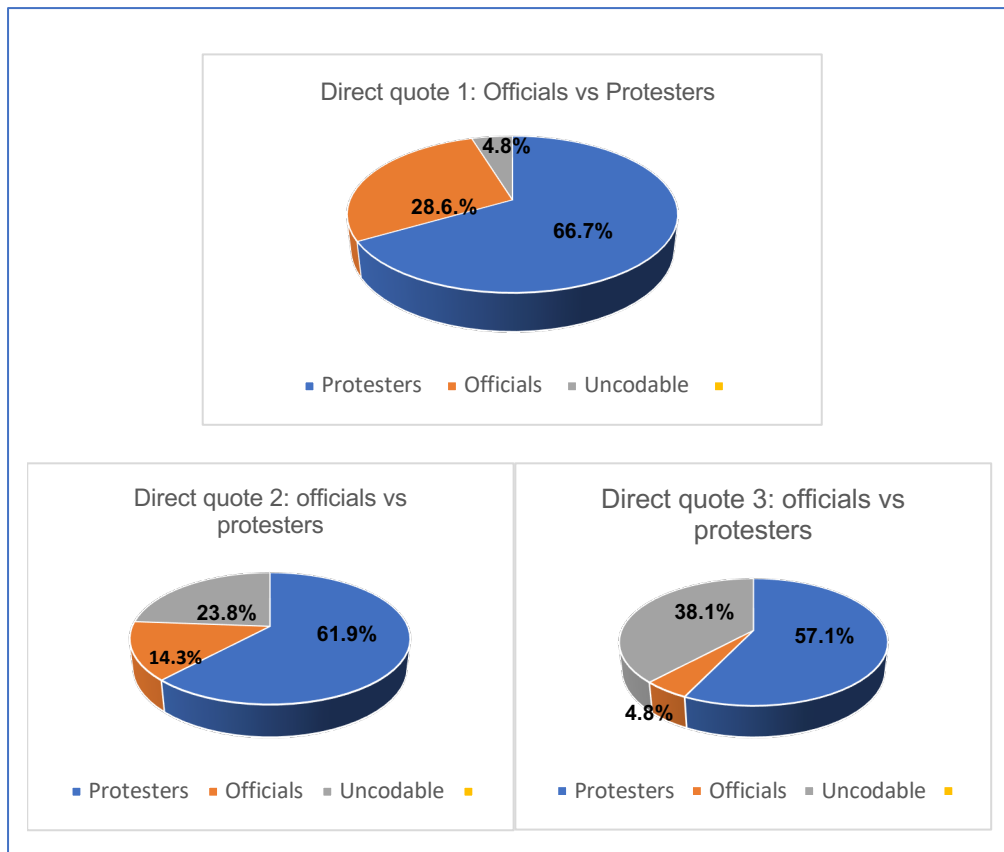
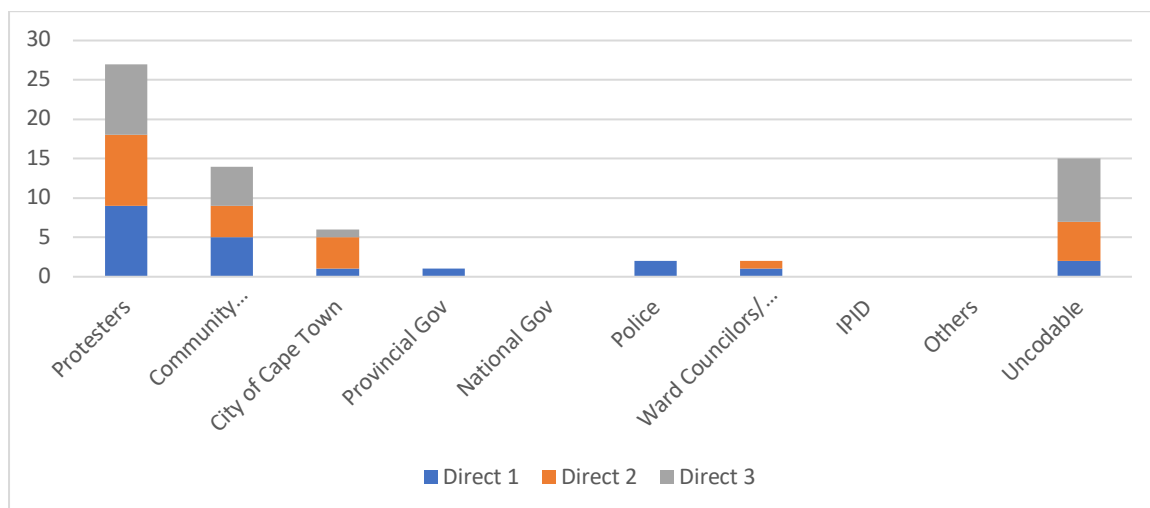


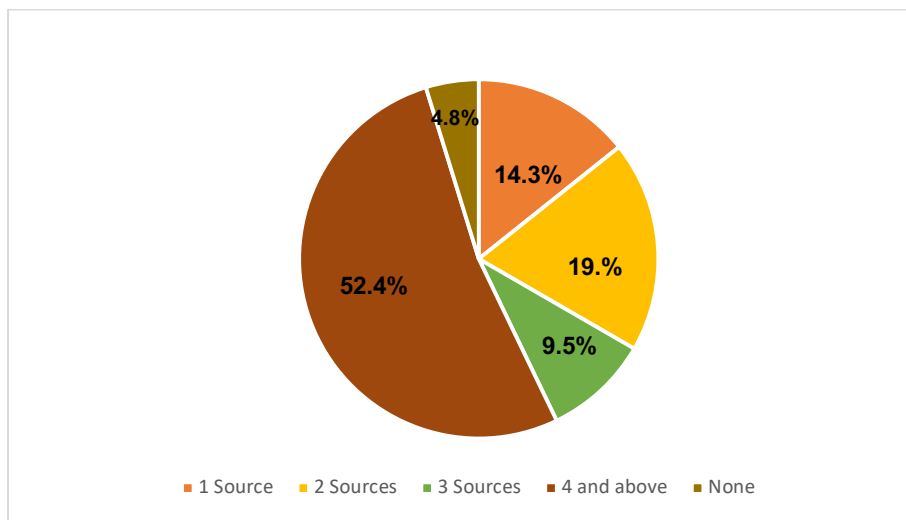
Figure 9: GroundUp preferred sources for direct quotes



In examining the number of sources used per article, 52.4% of the published news stories used between four sources and above (figure 10), and *GroundUp* mostly quoted up to six sources in this category, which perhaps explains the high

number of long articles (33.3%) published by the media outlet, as mentioned earlier. Some 19% of the published articles quoted two sources, 14.3% quoted one source, 9.5% used three sources and 4.8% of the articles were published without any directly quoted sources.

Figure 10: Number of direct quotes per GroundUp article



Lastly, as far as the gender representation of voices is concerned, females dominated as the first direct source quoted at 52.4%, with males at 42.9%. Both male and females shared the second voice at 40% and the third voice was heavily biased towards men, at 33%, with women at 28.6% (figure 11).

Figure 11: Gender representation in GroundUp quoted sources

	Female	Male	Uncodable
Direct quote Gender 1	11 (52.4%)	9 (42.9%)	1 (4.8%)
Direct quote Gender 2	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)
Direct quote Gender 3	6 (28.6%)	6 (33%)	8 (38.1%)

### 5.2.3 Frames used in *GroundUp* stories

The dominant frame used by *GroundUp* to report the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests” was “drama/spectacle”, which is consistent with previous framing

studies on the representation of protests, and which focused on the violence, emotion or drama in the protest (Harlow & Johnson, 2011). See figure 12 for all the frames found in the data analysed and figure 13 for examples of drama/spectacle frames used by *GroundUp*.

Figure 12: Frames used by *GroundUp* in reporting 2017 “service delivery protests” in Cape Town

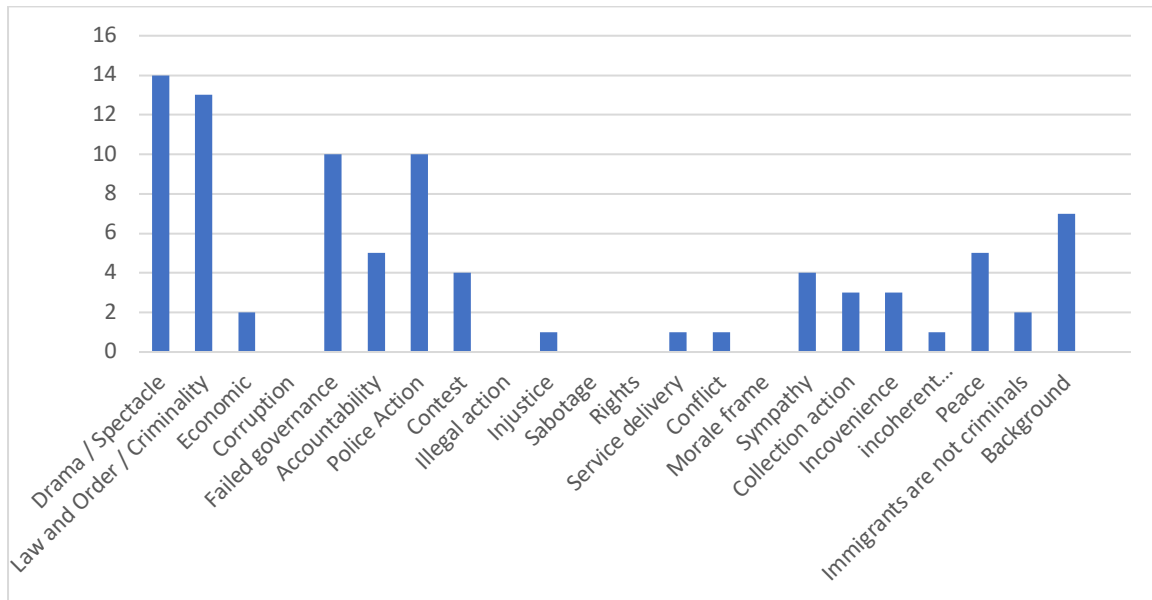


Figure 13: Examples of drama/spectacle frames used by *GroundUp*

**Newly repaired community hall torched** 27/06/2017

**Houses damaged in N2 Gateway dispute** 24/07/2017

**Violence erupts in Hout Bay as City attempts to reblock** 20/07/2017

**Joe Slovo Park residents torch MyCiTi bus after shacks demolished** 26/06/2017

**Pelican Park erupts after councillor goes AWOL**  
27 July 2017 - 19:29

**In photos: Ocean View residents and police clash over failure to reduce crime** 22/09/2017

*GroundUp* led with the drama/spectacle frame, as demonstrated in figure 12. Out of the 21 analysed news articles, 14 of the articles led with this frame. The prevalence of the drama/spectacle frame was coded to determine the prominence of

the frame within the individual news articles. Headlines cited the frame eight times, introductions or leads cited four times, sub-headlines, twice, the body of the articles, five times.

Next in frequency after the drama/spectacle frame was the law and order/criminality frame, cited 12 times, failed governance (11 times), police action (10 times), background frame (7) accountability (5), peace frame (5) contest (4), sympathy frame (4), inconvenience frame (4), immigrants are not criminals (twice). Aligning the frames found in *GroundUp*'s coverage with the literature's interpretation was challenging; examples of how the frames were narrated in the analysed news articles are presented below and the news articles (organised by writers and published dates) are in Appendix 1.

### **Spectacle frame and police action frame**

As much as *GroundUp* led with spectacle/dramatic frame, the frame was affected by *GroundUp*'s efforts to demonstrate the actions of the public order police (police action frame) towards the protesters. It was also difficult to separate the law and order/criminality frame from the spectacle and police action frames.

One clear correlation between these frames could be seen in the reporting on the protests that took place in July 2017 in the Imizamo Yethu township, in Hout Bay, Cape Town. *GroundUp* published several articles of more than 800 words on the protests. One long feature on the Imizamo Yethu protest was also published on the *Daily Maverick* news website, provided an expansive background into "Why did Hout Bay explode?" (*GroundUp*, 11/07/2017).

To understand the Imizamo Yethu protests a little better, a brief summary of the protest and the underlying reasons for it from *GroundUp*'s perspective follows. The feature of 11 July 2017 reported that the protests followed a fire that had devastated the township and left a number of people homeless:

In the first days of July, Hout Bay was at times cut off from Cape Town when hundreds of residents of Imizamo Yethu informal settlement cut down trees and barricaded roads leading into the suburb. Police and residents fought with each other. One man, Songezo Ndude, was shot dead. The protesters had been living in temporary accommodation on a sports field ... It was one of the worst shack fires in recent history in the Western Cape ... Fire is a constant risk in Imizamo Yethu. It spreads rapidly because homes are built close

together, often less than one meter apart ... it is often impossible for emergency vehicles to get to positions where they can douse fires”

(*GroundUp* staff, 11/07/2017)

*GroundUp* went on to report that as a measure to curb the fire risk, the City of Cape Town proposed “reblocking” the township, along with providing formal brick housing. The reblocking would create a formal layout from the informal settlement, with spaced plots, services, access roads and pathways. The article reported that the City has done this successfully before, but the process is difficult and each informal settlement presents unique challenges.

“After the fire, the city announced plans to ‘superblock’ Imizamo Yethu. It committed over R90 million to the project and an additional R44 million for electrification. The problem was that for reblocking to take place, people who had lost their homes would have to wait longer before they could rebuild their shacks. In April, Mayor Patricia de Lille announced that the community had agreed to the plans. She said at a press conference held with community leaders that reblocking would be done in three months. But even as she said it, some residents had already begun rebuilding their shacks, making it impossible to proceed with reblocking. From the outset, there were mixed reactions to the city’s plans. Many residents supported reblocking, but others faced difficulties while reblocking took place. Victims of the fire were moved to temporary relocation areas – accommodated in tents, two marquees, community halls, and other temporary structures. Some people refused to be moved to these places, which they found crowded and uncomfortable. They chose instead to find shelter on the mountain or rebuild their shacks. After the April press conference, people were moved out of the marquees and into temporary one-room, three-by-three-meter shacks on a sports field. Many of them were renting shacks, and they were now registered with the City to get shacks of their own. On top of this, many residents do not trust the City to reblock in an acceptable time frame. Community leaders say people who were moved to community halls after a fire in 2004 spent a year there before they gave up on being resettled, and rebuilt their shacks. *GroundUp* spoke to a resident who was moved to make way for roads in 2007. He says he and his family were moved to a temporary home and told it would be for only three

months, then later told six months. They have never been relocated,”  
(*GroundUp* staff, 11 July 2017).

### **Police action frame**

Considering how *GroundUp* represented the actions of the police, one of the analysed stories, published under the headline “Hout Bay residents agree to keep peace” (Ntongana, 24 July 2017) covered a meeting of about 40 community leaders from Imizamo Yethu. The houses of four community leaders supporting the City’s reblocking proposal had been burned and another home allegedly petrol bombed. The article made it clear that the actions of the community were as a result of police action, quoting police spokesperson, Captain Frederick van Wyk:

“On Friday night at 9.45 pm an operation was initiated by the SAPS [South African Police Service] in Hout Bay to assist with the arrest of protesters in public violence cases. Protesters were moving around between shacks and pelted police members and nyalas with stones and other objects. The protesters barricaded the roads at the Imizamo Yethu informal settlement to prevent the SAPS from entering the area. The spokesperson described the situation in the area as volatile. Various cases of public violence, arson and one murder were registered for further investigation. Five suspects were arrested for assaults, grievous bodily harm, arson malicious damage to property, intimidation and public violence” (Ntongana, 24/07/2017).

From this extract, it appears that the action initiated by the police triggered or provoked the residents to block the roads, preventing the police from entering the township. *GroundUp* also used the police action frame in its report on police actions in the story of a 14-year-old boy who was shot in the face by police, as he hid during Hout Bay protests (Furlong et al, 13/09/2017). Published under the headline “A history of violence: police action in Hout Bay”, the story claimed that this was just the latest in a series of incidents of police heavy-handedness in Hout Bay. The story is accompanied by a picture of a police officer pointing a gun at people crouching under a table (see figure 14 for the picture).

The first *GroundUp* report on this shooting “Police shoot child in the mouth” (De Greef, 12/09/2017) was followed by an editorial in *GroundUp* on 14 September, “Hout Bay shows how desperately we need good police leadership” (*GroundUp*

editors, 14/09/2017). The editorial was accentuated with a dramatic picture of public order police officers, with the caption “Events in Hout Bay this week showed yet again that the South African Police Service is inadequately trained to deal with protest action” and highlighted that the boy was not part of the protest when he was shot.

The editorial emphasised that the police’s silence on the shooting was shameful and called on police leadership to fly to Cape Town to offer their apologies to the boy and his family. It also called for improved police training, equipment and discipline in the police force, “so that there are no more victims like him”.

The death of a protester in Imizamo Yethu was also reported as being the result of police action (Ntongana, 6/07/2017). “Songezo Ndude was shot in the head on Monday during clashes between police and residents ... Ndude’s brother, Mkhululi Ndude, said ‘we only hope that we get justice and that the community gets what he died fighting for’.”

The article further stated that “community leaders of Imizamo Yethu also asked the South African Human Rights Commission to investigate the manner in which Metro police and public order police responded to the protests. Police fired stun grenades, rubber bullets, and tear gas. Protesters threw stones”.

Another example of police action covered in the analysis occurred during a protest that was covered in the local press on 27 July 2017, that took place at Pelican Park near Strandfontein, in which residents set tyres alight and barricaded the main road. *GroundUp* reported that “Community leader Sidwell Kweba said residents began protesting at 3 am, demanding that the City of Cape Town take notice of their living conditions. At about 9.45 am, protesters were given five minutes to disperse. They did not. Police then used stun grenades and rubber bullets. *GroundUp* saw two people being arrested. Walking into the neighbourhood, one could smell toilets that have stopped working, piles of rubbish and blocked drains” (Ntongana, 27/07/2017).

The units of analysis were also coded to determine who the media held responsible for the dramatic actions between protesters, officials and police. The analysed data cited police 13 times as responsible for the dramatic action, while the protesters were blamed nine times, and officials once.

The dramatic frame was amplified with visuals, as all the 21 *GroundUp* news articles analysed were accompanied by images. Out of the 21 analysed articles,

52.4% were not dramatic, and 47.6% were dramatic (see figure 14 for examples of dramatic images published).

Figure 14: Spectacle visuals in GroundUp' coverage of "service delivery protests"

### A history of violence: police action in Hout Bay

Fourteen-year-old boy has surgery to remove rubber bullet



A police officer points his rifle at people hiding behind a table in Hangberg on Tuesday. One of the people hiding was Ona Dubula. Photo: Justin Sullivan (copyright: Justin Sullivan - this photo is not available under GroundUp's usual licensing terms)

13/09/2017

### In photos: Ocean View residents and police clash over failure to reduce crime

"The people are suffering because crime has taken over. We're crying for help."



Onlookers watch as residents from Ocean View block Kommetjie Road during a protest on Thursday. All photos: Ashraf Hendricks

22/09/2017



Police use stun grenades to disperse protesters outside the SAPS office. Photo: Ashraf Hendricks

03/07/2017



12/09/2017

Source: GroundUp

*GroundUp*'s use of the spectacle, police action, law and order/criminality frames, as well as the use of dramatic images, demonstrates clearly how reporters created a dramatic narrative of the 2017 Cape Town "service delivery protests." However, it appears that some of the dramatic images were published with the aim of drawing public attention to the brutality of police action, as can be seen in the reporting and picture of the child shot by police while hiding behind a table, discussed above and as demonstrated in the following extract:

"Fourteen-year-old Ona Dubula, who was shot in the face at close range by police while he hid behind a table during a protest in Hout Bay on Tuesday, had surgery on Wednesday afternoon to remove a second rubber bullet that had been lodged under his tongue for more than 24 hours. This is the latest in a series of incidents in recent years of police heavy-handedness in Hout Bay. It is unclear whether the South African Police Service (SAPS) is investigating the shooting of Ona. An SAPS statement issued on Wednesday said only that "it is alleged" that a 14-year-old was injured during the protest and taken to the Hout Bay fire station for treatment" (Furlong et al, 13/09/2017).

A story published on 12 September 2017, published a picture of the bleeding boy. The editorial published on 14 September 2017 emphasised that "Ona was not taking part in any of this (protest) when he was shot. He was not attacking or threatening anyone" (*GroundUp* editors, 14/09/2017). The editorial that ran with the headline "Hout Bay shows how desperately we need good police leadership", and a picture showing public order police carrying a gun in front of a burning fire, said that "events in Hout Bay this week showed yet again that the South African Police Service is inadequately trained to deal with protest action" and further criticised the national police commissioner and the minister of police, claiming their "silence is shameful".

### **Law and order/criminality frame**

The literature interprets the law and order/criminality frame as referring to crime, criminals, police providing law and order, police restoring peace, and police points of view (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Pointer, 2015). However, the *GroundUp* reports pose a challenge in that the frame was used frequently to expose what *GroundUp* calls "police heavy-handedness" (Furlong et al, 13 September 2017) and police who are

“inadequately trained” to deal with the protest action (*GroundUp* Editors, 14 September 2017).

On the criminality element of the frame, *GroundUp* did report on the alleged criminal activity of protesters, for example: “A breakaway group of protesters had earlier attempted to rob two tourists outside their buses” (De Greef, 12/09/2017) during the Hangberg protests (also in Hout Bay) against shrinking lobster quotas. This report was swiftly followed by “Protest leaders quickly denounced the violence, calling for order. ‘We don’t hurt anybody. They are here to witness our struggle’.” In a statement attributed to the then mayor of Cape Town, Patricia de Lille, in an article published on 3 July 2017, De Lille “appealed to the police to arrest any criminal elements” (Ntongana, 3/07/2017). The media outlet subsequently published several articles in which community leaders distanced themselves from the violence and destruction of property taking place during the protests (Ntongana, 6/07/2017). It also published others calling on the City to stop calling immigrants criminals (Washinyira, 15/08/2017), as well as claims by the protesters that the City was communicating with corrupt community leaders.

It would seem from this that *GroundUp*’s reporting was relatively pro-protester. However, the literature reminds us that when the spectacle frame is reinforced with visual media of images of riot police and violence, viewers tend to perceive the protest organisation in a more negative light (Arpan et al, 2006). The conflict then becomes one in a series of news values that influence story and source selection, and duration of the issue attention cycle (Gans, 2004).

This finding in this study on the use of the law and order frame is in line with previous studies on the coverage of protests (Wasserman et al, 2018:8), which found a common thread across newspapers, which “placed emphasis on the ‘disruptive’ nature of the protests in their framing”. Wasserman (2018:8) goes on to say: “Noticeable in this line of framing is the absence of both manifest and latent articulation of the underlying structural issues, which render these ‘disruptions’ a new kind of norm”. The drama serves the function of providing news value and satisfying the commercial imperatives of news media houses. However, it also reduces the protests to irrational behaviour, driven by populism, while obscuring any policy alternatives being proposed by the protesters (Opel, 2016:328).

This research also coded to determine if *GroundUp*’s use of the dramatic frame overshadowed the coverage on the underlying causes of the protests. The

coding asked the question: are the causes of the protest mentioned and, if so, where is this information in the article? In this instance, 1 = high (headline), 2 = medium (subheadline or intro), 3 = low, 4 = not mentioned and 5 = uncodable.

The findings demonstrate that in the midst of the leading dramatic frame, *GroundUp* mentioned 66.7% of the underlying causes of the protests in prime headline position – and 76% of the causes were mentioned in the sub-headline and introduction and 85.7% of the causes were mentioned in the body of the article.

### **Failed governance frame**

The literature describes the failed governance frame as referring to mentions in news stories of democratic governance, democracy and citizens in a negative tone (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Pointer, 2015). The published articles quoted numerous protesters complaining about matters such as ward councillors who are not doing their jobs, lack of trust in the City of Cape Town's ability to deliver on its commitments, and its poor communication with the protesters. The research classified all such references under the failed governance frame.

The story about the Hangberg protests that arose due to shrinking lobster quotas shows a community that has lost faith in government. "Why do we have to do this to be heard?" asked Zaida Arendse, 38, who lost her job when a fishing factory closed down in the harbour in 2010. Her husband had been unsuccessful in a recent quota application that had cost him R400, Arendse said (De Greef, 12/09/2017). *GroundUp* reported that the protest was "sparked by an announcement by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) last week that rock lobster quotas would shrink further this season. The residents also vented their anger at the systematic service delivery problems and a breakdown in communication between their community and the City of Cape Town ... Several Hout Bay fisher representatives joined a delegation at DAFF offices in Cape Town. When their requests to meet with Minister Senzeni Zokwana were denied – Zokwana is currently in China – they returned to Hangberg and brewed plans for a demonstration, community leaders said".

Excerpts from the analysed news articles demonstrating the failed governance frame included:

“Hundreds of people from Marikana informal settlement in Philippi marched on Thursday to the Cape Town Civic Centre and provincial head office of the South African Police Service to hand over a memorandum. ‘We WANT ACTION. We don’t want verbal promises’ ” (Hendriks, 5/10/2017).

“Last week, angry residents in Langa damaged houses in the N2 Gateway housing project and barricaded roads with burning tyres. *GroundUp* recently reported that the Joe Slovo Women’s Forum had questions about the beneficiary list. They were also unhappy about the type of houses being built, as well as lack of a communication from the steering committee and the provincial Department of Human Settlements. One of the protesters said ‘in 2012 we were living where the development (N2 Gateway) is currently located. We were moved to this land and we are still here. Now, we find that people who were not even moved are being given houses,’ She continued, ‘Another thing ... they keep on telling us that we have not been approved for these houses. We are not told the reason why. You apply for a house. You are then told you have not been approved’ ” (Gontsana, 24//2017).

“More than 300 residents from Bhekela informal settlement and Phumlani village next to Pelican Park set tyres alight and barricaded Strandfontein Road on Thursday. Community leader, Sidwell Kweba, said residents began protesting at 3 am, demanding that the City of Cape Town take notice of their living conditions ... he said the last meeting they had with their ward councillor, Gerry Gordon (DA), was on 1 February. He said they had not received any feedback from Gordon since then on the issues they had raised. ‘I have tried calling her. She has blocked my calls and WhatsApp. She does not respond to my emails,’ Kweba said. ‘She is never here. The only time they come with food and cars playing music is when they want our votes. After that we are nothing,’ said Kweba. Sub-Council Chairperson, Shanen Rossouw (DA), came to address the crowd but many people refused to listen. ‘Why are you only coming now, where have you been? Did we have to block roads and burn tyres for you to come?’ shouted 60-year-old Nomzamo Matoti. ‘How long does one need to be on the database in order to get a house. Younger people are getting houses before us old people’ (Ntongana, 27/07/2017).

“From the outset, there were people who said they did not trust the City to complete the reblocking in the prescribed time. They referred to people who were moved in 2004 to make a way for roads for the community but who are still living in the Temporary Relocation Areas (TRAs) ... The Chairperson of the Imizamo Yethu Movement, Mkhululi Ndude, said: ‘We are tired of empty promises. We told them (the City) we want a Memorandum of Agreement. They still have not provided us with one’.” (Ntongana, 3/07/2017).

“The City has made mistakes in the reblocking (in Imizamo Yethu) process. Residents remember unfulfilled promises ... The City did not enforce the interdict while it was engaging with the community. Some residents did agree to stop rebuilding and kept to this ... Others, however, wanted the City to present clear plans on paper with time frames and a Memorandum of Agreement. These were not forthcoming and so they rebuilt. By the end of May, the area for reblocking was almost completely filled with shacks ... Frustration over delays in reblocking and anger over the absence of a Memorandum of Agreement with the City bubbled over in July.

Protesters said they were tired of having to live in temporary shelters with seemingly no end in sight. They had also had to endure an awful Cape Town storm while in the temporary shacks. They took to the streets in violent protests” (*GroundUp* Editors, 11/09/2017).

“A press statement read out by community leader, Ziyanda Phandle, listed the following complaints: the temporary relocation areas (TRAs) were meant to be for three months; the slow pace of the reblocking; decisions are made without consulting community leaders; the City’s failure to implement an interdict (to stop people rebuilding on the land which is to be reblocked); and the living conditions of people in the TRAs) ... Phandle said history has taught us that the Temporary Relocation Areas became permanent housing solutions for our community. The fear is that the current inhuman conditions will become permanent, seeing that residents are here for four months, when they were meant to be here for three months” (Ntongana, 6/07/2017).

“The Hangberg protest, which was sparked by an announcement by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry

and Fisheries (DAFF) that the rock lobster quotas would be shrink, is another example. The residents also vented their anger at the systematic service delivery problems and a breakdown in communication between

their community and the City of Cape Town” (De Greef, 12/09/2017).

### **Contest frame**

The contest frame is described in the literature as when news media report from several sources who appear to disagree with one another (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Pointer, 2015). This frame was present in reporting about the Imizamo Yethu protest. Disagreements amongst the community over the City’s “reblocking” were reported as: “the community has split over how this is to be carried out”, with other community members demanding a “Memorandum of Agreement” and “plans” as an assurance that the City would deliver within the stipulated time, after unfulfilled promises dating back to 2004. Excerpts from the analysed articles included:

“The community is split over the reblocking. Some see it as a step forward in the development of Imizamo Yethu, while others worry that it will mean months more living in temporary accommodation while waiting for the reblocking to be finished” (Washinyira, 15/08/2017).

“On Saturday, community leaders in Imizamo Yethu, Hout Bay, met for the first time in many months to resolve their differences ... Pamela Sofika, who represents those opposing reblocking, said the meeting was called to stop the violence. ‘We cannot continue to kill each other over a disagreement. It needs to stop. We do not want it.’ Sofika said it was also necessary to make it clear who the leaders were that they recognised. ‘We do not want someone who stays in a brick house [she was referring to Lungisa Bezile] (Ntongana, 24/07/2017) to make the decision for us. We know the pain, and the reason why we do not want reblocking. But they [those supporting reblocking] refuse to listen to us’ said Safika” (Ntongana, 24/07/2017).

The City’s liaison officer, Loyiso Nkohla, was mentioned in the same article as sowing divisions amongst the community, communicating contradicting messages. Clifford Nogwavu, a community leader opposed to reblocking, and who was

mentioned in the court interdict the City of Cape Town obtained against people rebuilding on the site to be reblocked, explained:

“The City said it did not have a budget to house everyone in the Temporary Relocation Areas (TRAs), and that people should start building, and that is the message that I told people with a loud hailer that they should start building” (Ntongana, 24/07/2017).

### **Accountability frame**

This frame was present in the reporting of several protests where protesters were demanding accountability from officials, such as in Imizamo Yethu and in Philippi. Philippi students wanted to give the city a memorandum about the many problems they were experiencing at Philippi High School, including the theft of school computers, demanding a new school building and a new school principal. *GroundUp* reported that the students’ protest about conditions at the school dates back to 2005 (Ntongana, 24/032017).

An article on the Imizamo Yethu protest reported: “De Lille arrived on Monday but police told her it was not safe. Ward Councillor Bheki Hadebe had difficulties containing the crowd. News that the mayor had come and gone did not go down well with the residents. Protesters demanded that before any further negotiations can take place, several people arrested earlier in the day must be released” (Ntongana, 3/07/2017).

Furthermore, numerous articles covered events as Imizamo Yethu protesters demanded a Memorandum of Agreement from the City. “On top of this, many residents do not trust the City to reblock in an acceptable timeframe” (*GroundUp* editors, 11/07/2017). Community leader Nosiselo Mtekatana said:

“In the meeting, De Lille told them that the City will again serve the interdict it obtained in March to people who have rebuilt their homes in the three areas. We are hoping that this time will see a difference, because we cannot continue to stay like that [Temporary Relocation Areas], and we also hope that people [who rebuild] will start moving today, so that rebuilding can begin.” She said a time frame had not been given, but the community planned to engage more with the City to make sure that there were results this time” (Hendricks, 5/07/2017).

#### 5.2.4 *GroundUp*: causes of the 2017 “service delivery protests”

From analysed *GroundUp* news articles, Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay, Joe Slovo in Milnerton, Philippi Township, Khayelitsha, Pelican Park, N2 Gateway in Langa, Steenvilla, Ocean View and Vrygrond near Muizenberg, were the areas covered in reporting on “service delivery protests” in 2017. Figure 15 below shows the findings of how *GroundUp* described the underlying causes of the 2017 Cape Town service delivery protests.

Out of the 21 news articles analysed, issues relating to housing were reported most, in 11 stories. The call for housing was reported at all the above-mentioned locations, but especially in Imizamo Yethu, but not in Philippi and Ocean View (figure 16). The housing-related protests were mostly dominated by reports of “land invasion”, with the City responding with court orders and by deploying the Anti-Land Invasion Unit to demolish “illegally” erected shacks. Such actions were witnessed in Khayelitsha (Ntongana, 21/08/2017); Imizamo Yethu (Ntongana, 5/07/2017) and Joe Slovo (Meregele, 27/07/2017).

The slow pace of reblocking in Imizamo Yethu was the second-highest of the causes of the protest, cited in four articles. Issues of safety were cited as the cause of the protests in four articles – in Philippi (Hendricks, 5/10/2017) and Ocean View, where protesters demanded police to take action to reduce high levels of crime in the township (Xolo, 22/09/2017). In areas like Vrygrond, protesters demanded a police station, as the nearest police stations is too far way (Washinyira, 28/06/2017). Other causes of protests as reported by *GroundUp* included problems with clinics, public transport, sanitation, refuse collection, water, electricity and roads.

Figure 15: Causes of the protests, as reported by GroundUp

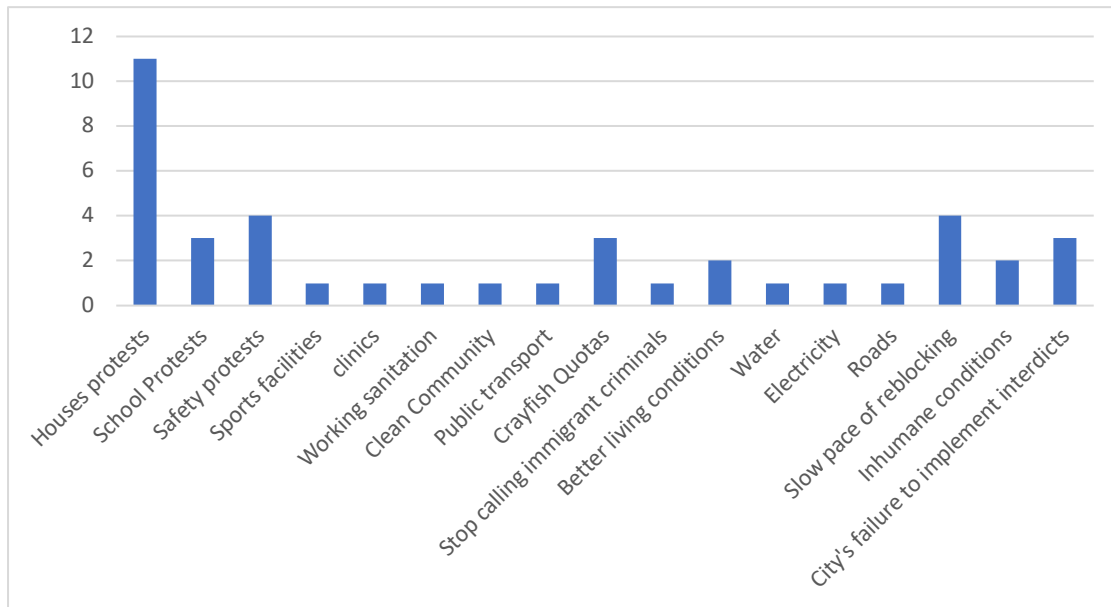
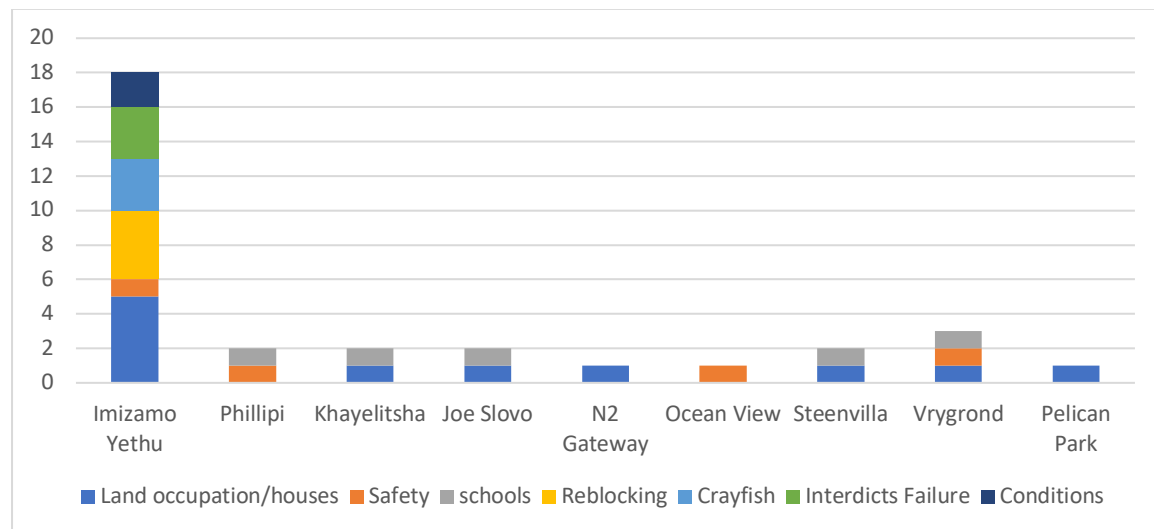


Figure 16: GroundUp reported causes of protests by area



### 5.2.5 Conclusion

The alternative *GroundUp* deviated from the protest paradigm found in previous research and used protesters as sources most of the time. Despite the use of dramatic frames, the media outlet did not appear to marginalise or delegitimise the protesters, as found in previous research. *GroundUp* displayed independency, as it appeared to employ the dramatic device for the purpose of exposing the brutality of the public order police towards the protesters. The media outlet gave prominence to the causes of the protests from the protesters' point of view and relied on them as

sources. These findings support the literature which has argued that alternative, online media enables horizontal, bottom-up and fluid practices, possibly making them the appropriate conduit for social movements and protest communications (Van de Donk et al, 2004; Dahlberg, 2007).

In summary, the *GroundUp* findings, as presented above, demonstrate that the media outlet prefers to use sources such as protesters, community leaders, police, local government, provincial government, political parties/ward councillors, business and editorial. Protester sources were quoted 43 times and official sources 18 times. Female sources dominated quoted voices one and two, and male voices were used mostly for third quoted source in the articles analysed.

The majority of the articles contained over 800 words and provided a clear background and context to stories. The top five frames used by the media outlet were drama/spectacle, service delivery, inconvenience, law and order/criminality, and failed governance. The dramatic frame was amplified by the use of pictures, headlines and captions that appeared to expose the brutality of the public order police towards the protesters.

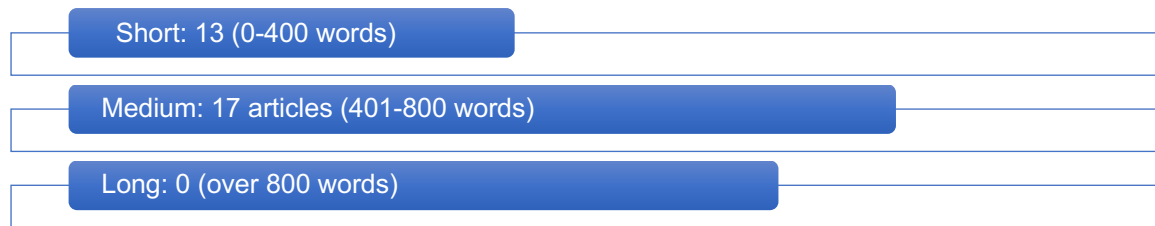
The top six causes of protests, according to *GroundUp*, were housing, electrification, fishing rights, delays in reblocking, ablution facilities, and recreational centres, causes that were repeated by the *Cape Times*. *GroundUp* reported on protests in Imizamo Yethu, Joe Slovo, Khayelitsha, Pelican Park, Vrygrond, Swellendam, Gugulethu Kleinmond, Crossroads, New Horizon, McGregor, Strand and Freedom Park.

### **5.3 Mainstream media findings: *Cape Times***

#### **5.3.1 Salience and length of articles**

Out of the 30 analysed news stories, 25 were found in the main section of the *Cape Times* newspaper, on pages 3 and 4, and five on the front page. The *Cape Times* newspaper mainly covers hard news stories. The *Cape Times* published 17 stories with words less than 800 words, and the rest of the articles were shorter than 400 words. The publication did not publish any articles longer than 800 words (figure 17).

Figure 17: Length of Cape Times articles on the Cape Town 2017 "service delivery protests"



### 5.3.2 Sources

Twelve preferred sources were identified (see figure 18). The *Cape Times* used slightly more sources compared to *GroundUp*. The *Cape Times* used many more community leaders and community-based organisations as sources, quoting them 19 times, followed by protesters and officials quoted 15 times each. This pattern showed vividly and astonishingly that community voices dominated the *Cape Times*' coverage of the 2017 Cape Town "service delivery protests", with protesters cited 37 times overall, with official sources trailing behind, cited 32 times (figure 19). This finding is in contrast with previous research, which found that official or elite voices are the dominant sources for reports on protest actions. The mainstream *Cape Times* used more protesters than officials in its coverage of the 2017 Cape Town "service delivery protests".

Figure 18: Cape Times's quoted sources and share of voice

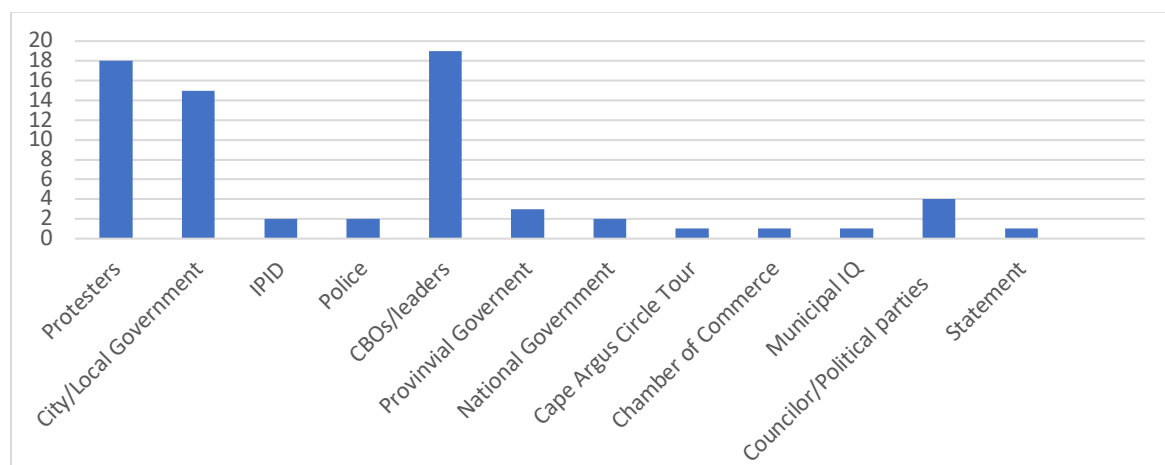
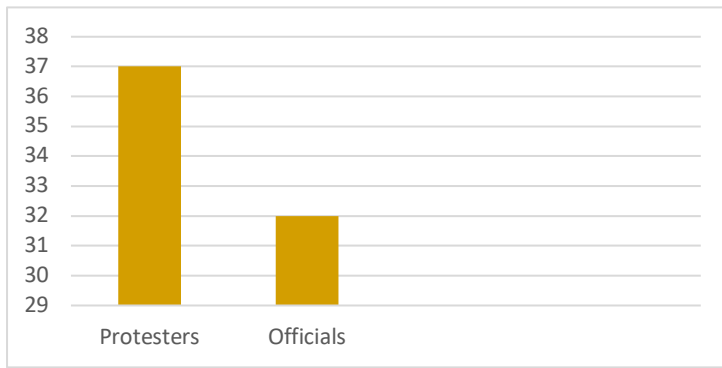
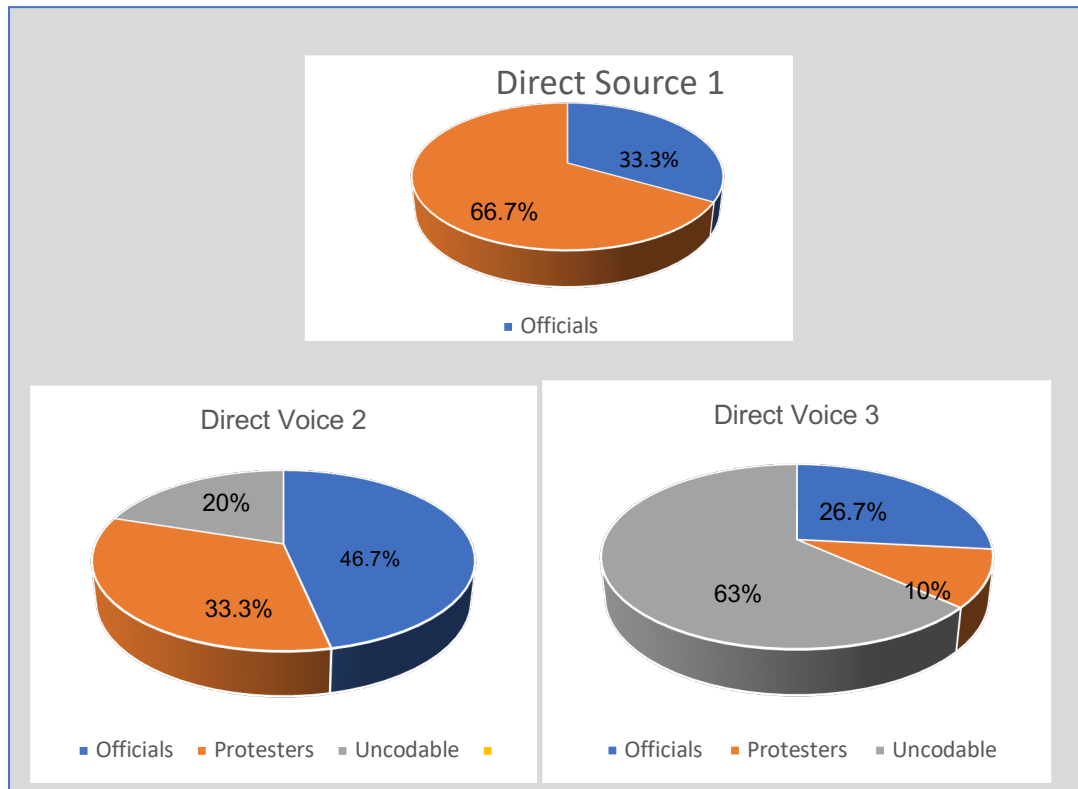


Figure 19: Cape Times' representation of protesters versus officials



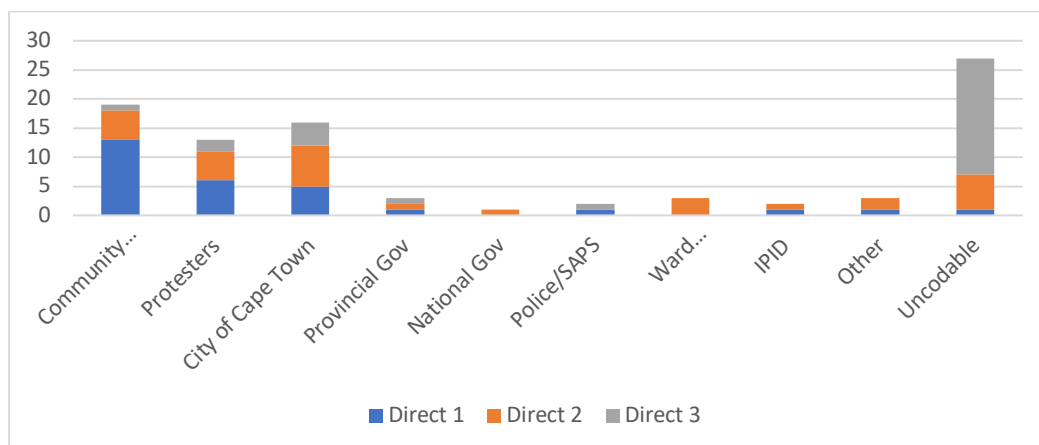
As far as who is quoted first, second and third out of the protesters and the official sources, figure 20 (below) shows that protesters took an authoritative lead (66.7%) as the first directly quoted sources. Official sources dominated both the second directly quoted sources at 46.7% and the third directly quoted sources at 26.7%.

Figure 20: Sources representation in quotes in Cape Times



On the share of voices between the 12 identified preferred sources in the *Cape Times*, community leaders took the lead as the first quoted source and the City of Cape Town dominated the second and the third directly quoted voices (figure 21).

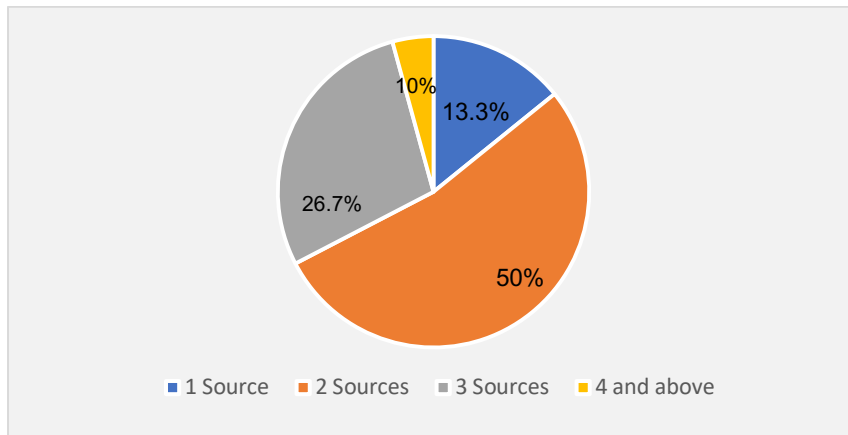
Figure 21: Sources represented with a direct quote in Cape Times



Looking at the number of sources used per article, 50% of the *Cape Times* articles with two quoted sources (see figure 22 below). Twenty-six percent of the

articles quoted three sources, 13.3% quoted one source and 10% of the published articles quoted four or more sources.

Figure 22: Percentage of quoted sources per article in Cape Times



As for the Cape Times’s representation of voices according to gender, men dominated in all categories (figure 23).

Figure 23: Representation of gender in Cape Times sources

	Male	Female	Uncodable
Directly quoted Gender 1	20 (71.4%)	7 (25%)	
Directly quoted Gender 2	16 (55.2%)	9 (31%)	4 (13%)
Directly quoted Gender 3	7 (25%)	3 (10.7%)	18 (64.3%)

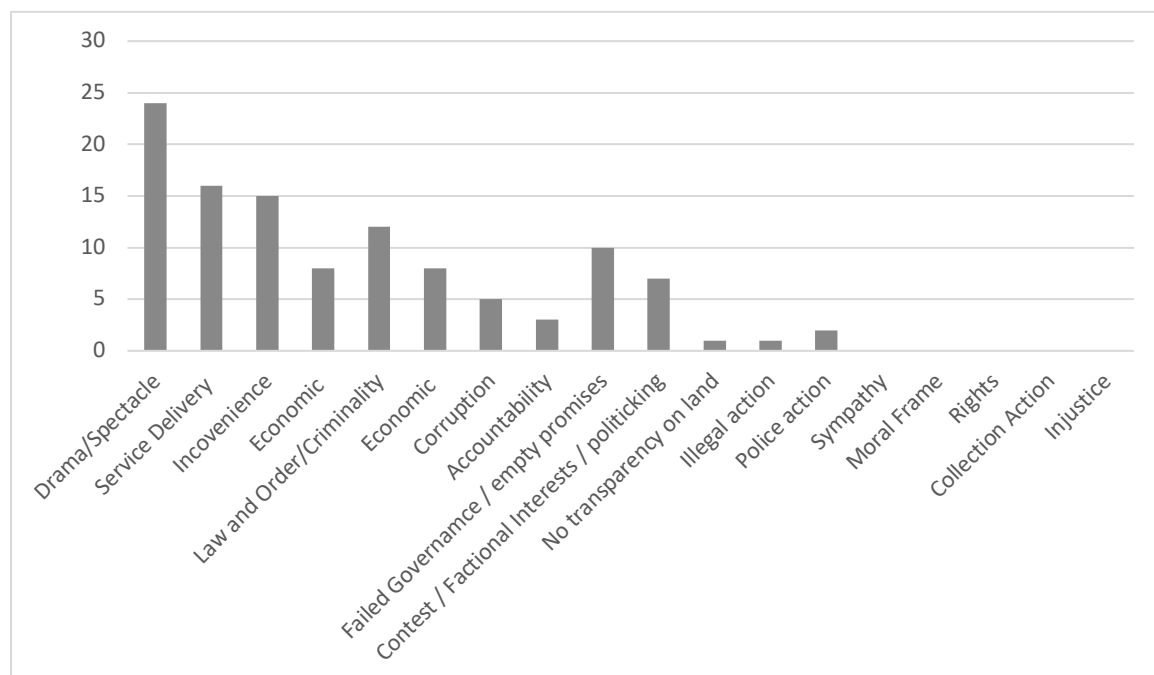
### 5.3.3 Cape Times’s use of frames in protest stories

The dominant frame used by the mainstream *Cape Times* in its coverage of the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests” is consistent with previous framing studies on the representation of protests. The dramatic/spectacle frame was very prevalent and dominated the coverage.

## Drama/spectacle frame

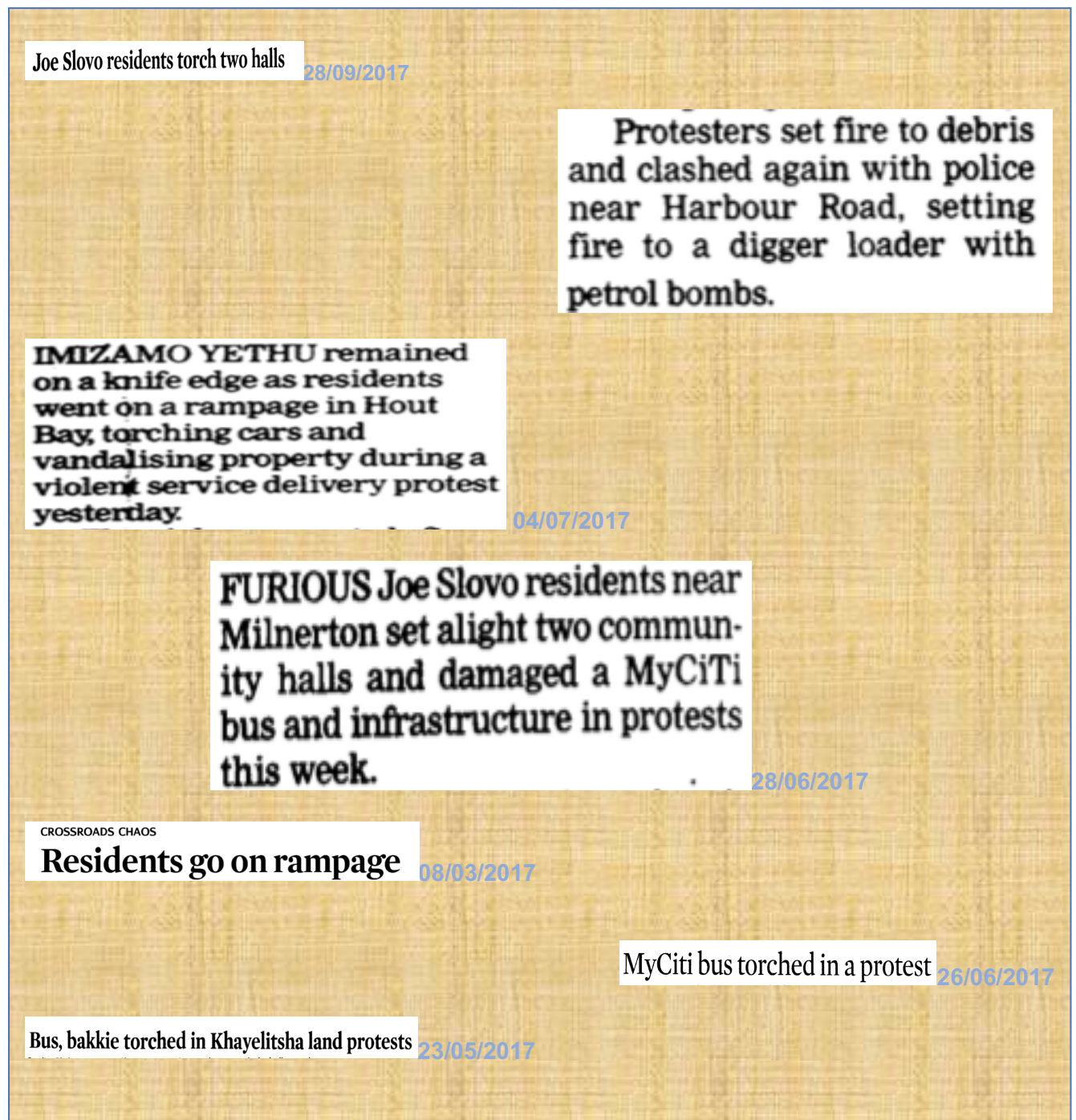
Out of the 30 analysed news articles, the dramatic frame was used 24 times (figure 24, below). Harlow and Johnson (2011) state that the spectacle frame focusses on drama, violence or emotion in the protests. The spectacle words used by the *Cape Times* included rampage, damaging, attack, smashing, throwing mobile toilets, overturning vehicles, setting rubble alight, food trucks destroyed, threw stones, burning tyres and petrol bombs, among others.

Figure 24: Frames used by the Cape Times during the 2017 Cape Town "service delivery protests"



The salience and prevalence of the dramatic/spectacle frame was coded to determine its prominence in the individual news articles. It was present in headlines 13 times, 17 times in the introduction or lead, twice in the sub-headline, 21 times in the body of the article and 10 times in the conclusion. See figure 25 (below) for examples of how it was narrated in some of the analysed news articles.

Figure 25: Examples of Spectacle/Drama frames in Cape Times 2017 "service delivery protests"



### Police action frame

The police action frame was only used twice in the *Cape Times*, much less than in *GroundUp* (10 times in fewer articles). Stories using the police action frame focused on the actions of the public order police and the stabilisation unit, including their use of rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas to disperse the protesters.

Some stories about the consequences of police action included one with the headline “Police charged after boy, 14, shot” (Adriaanse, 15/09/2017) and another saying “a 19-year-old man, Siyamthanda Betana, was shot dead in the violence” (Mtyala, 25/072017). The report stated that the boy was “reportedly shot in the mouth when residents and fishers took to the streets and blocked the roads with burning tyres and rubble. He was injured as police moved in to disperse the protesters” (Adriaanse, 13/09/2017).

The drama/spectacle frame and police action frame were also coded as a means of interpreting how the *Cape Times* assigned blame for the protest events. In the *Cape Times*, protesters were held responsible in 20 of the 24 articles using dramatic frames, while two put the blame on the police. The coding deduced responsibility by examining the data for indicators in the *Cape Times* stating who started the “dramatic” action. For example, in the previously mentioned story of the teenage boy allegedly shot by the police, further details were provided in the news article that “residents joined the fishermen, aligning their struggle with ongoing housing and service delivery issues. They set benches on fire and used flares and petrol bombs, resulting in public order police being deployed” (Adriaanse, 13/09/2017). The underlined words show clearly that the protesters set benches alight and the public order police were called (perhaps to calm the situation). In this case, the news story puts the blame solely on the protesters. All articles of this nature were coded as blaming the protesters.

The police and City sources were also used by the *Cape Times* to make it clear who initiated dramatic action. “City law enforcement spokesperson Wayne Dyson said flares were fired at the police and the road to Hangberg was blocked off, but no injuries were reported” (Adriaanse, 13/09/2017); “Protesters set fire to debris and clashed with the police near Harbour Road, setting fire to a digger loader with petrol bombs” (Adriaanse, 15/09/2017); “MyCiti bus commuters fled for their lives when the bus they were traveling in was set alight by a group of protesting Joe Slovo residents near Milnerton ...” (Phaliso, 26/06/2016); “Mayoral committee member for safety, security, and social services, JP Smith, said the Metro police, tactical response unit, and other law-enforcement agencies were deployed to assist the police in Hout Bay. ‘Rioters fired flares at the police and at a police helicopter and set fire to a police Nyala. The extent of the damage is unknown’ law-enforcement officers will extend their presence if necessary, he said” (Adriaanse, 15/09/2017).

Responsibility was also assigned to protesters in the Gugulethu protests: “Yesterday, most roads leading to the informal settlement remained closed, as protesting residents used burnt tyres, rubbish and rubble to barricade entrances and exits” (Phaliso, 11/05/2017). And again in the Strandfontein protests, where the blame was assigned as follows:

“Hundreds of residents from Phumlani Village, Jim se Bos and Riemvasmaak informal settlements near Strandfontein brought the area to a standstill when they barricaded both ends of Old Strandfontein Road with burning tyres and stones. They were protesting for housing and other basic services. Cars were also attacked. Two people were arrested ... before police intervened” (Adriaanse, 28/07/2017).

As with *GroundUp*, the use of visuals amplified the dramatic frame. 51.7% of the 30 *Cape Times* news articles were accompanied by images and 30% of these pictures were dramatic in nature (see figure 26 and 27 below for examples).

Figure 26: Spectacle visuals used in the Cape Times coverage of the 2017 "service delivery protests"



**DISSATISFACTION:** Several people were arrested after a protest caused the N2 to be closed near Strand and Somerset West.  
Picture: David Ritchie/ANA Cape Times, 27/09/2017



**TAKING AIM:** A violent protest at the Imizamo Yethu informal settlement brought Hout Bay to a standstill on Saturday morning. Police lobbed stun grenades and tear gas to disperse the angry crowd.  
Picture: JASON BOUD Cape Times, 08/07/2017



**CHAOS:** Traffic lights, road signs and Disaster Risk Management satellite station was overturned during protest action in Hout Bay yesterday. A group of Imizamo Yethu residents went on the rampage by burning tyres and stoning property.  
Picture: HENK KRUGER

Cape Times, 04/07/2017.

Figure 27: Spectacle visuals in Cape Times' coverage of the Cape Town 2017 "service delivery protests"



**MOB:** Angry protesters from Joe Slovo in Milnerton burnt a MyCiti bus after the anti-land invasion unit demolished their shacks yesterday.

Cape Times, 26/07/2017



**UNDER CONTROL:** Phumlani Village residents went on the rampage, blockading roads and attacking shops in the area. Residents of a neighbouring area clashed with protesters as they attempted to protect their area from them. Two people were arrested after police took action to disperse the protesters. Picture: DAVID RITCHIE

Cape Times, 28/07/2017

By using the spectacle and police action frames, along with dramatic images to strengthen the impact of the story's message, the *Cape Times* was able to construct a dramatic narrative on the 2017 Cape Town "service delivery protests". As discussed earlier in the findings for *GroundUp*, the literature suggests that when the spectacle frame is reinforced with visual media, such as images of riot police and

violence, the audience tends to perceive the protest movement in a more negative light (Arpan et al, 2006).

The reporting of the conflict conforms to news values that influence story selection, sources and duration of the issue attention cycle (Gans, 2004). This finding is in line with the previous studies on the coverage of protests (Wasserman et al, 2018:8) which found that a common thread in newspapers “placed emphasis on the ‘disruptive’ nature of the protests in their framing ... noticeable in this line of framing is the absence of both manifest and latent articulation of the underlying structural issues, which render these ‘disruptions’ a new kind of norm ...” Opel (2016:328) states that the drama of the “images is consistent with commercial news values”, but this reduces protest coverage in the eyes of the audience to populism and irrationality, obscuring the policy alternatives that may be proposed by the protesters.

This research also measured how the *Cape Times* described the causes of the protests. To do this, the research asked the question: Are the causes of the protests mentioned, and if so, where is the mention in the data? 1 = high (headline), 2 = medium (sub-headline or intro), 3 = low (body and conclusion), 4 = not mentioned, 5 = uncodeable. The *Cape Times* included causes of the protests in the body or conclusion of articles 71% of the time. This supports the argument that the spectacle frame was the main focus of its coverage. The combination of these media practices results in a product referred to in the literature as media spectacle. Media spectacle has a significant tendency to delegitimise social movements in the eyes of audiences (Kellner, 2003).

### **Service delivery frame**

The next prominent frame used by the *Cape Times* found in the research was the “service delivery”. There has been some debate in South African academic literature about the use of this frame in media reporting. Nkuna (2016) states that the term “service delivery protest” has entered mainstream terminology, with the result that in the minds of audiences, all protest is about service delivery in the face of uncaring, self-serving and corrupt government officials. Pointer (2015), citing Modiba (2005), emphasises that since the first reports of “service delivery protests” in South Africa in 2004, the classification has been the subject of constant debate and is regarded as a frame itself.

Harber (2009) argues that “service delivery” is not a neutral phrase, but rather contains a host of assumptions, policies, attitudes and promises. By using the word “delivery”, Harber says we are telling people that they only need to act when there is a failure to deliver. Service delivery issues are often mentioned in media reports as part of a range of issues that have caused various communities to protest. However, the role of “service delivery” in the generation of these protests has so far not been investigated directly (Nleya, 2011).

Nonetheless, the “service delivery” frame was the second most common frame used by the *Cape Times* in reporting on the 2017 Cape Town protests, used 16 times. A report published on 27 September 2017 about a protest in Strand near Somerset West, described the “service delivery protest” as a “blend of issues”. The actual reason of the protest, which was described in the fourth paragraph, was electricity. The story began as follows: “Residents of Lwandle and Nomzamo informal settlements in Strand yesterday continued their service delivery protests when they marched on the municipality, demanding a solution” (Booyesen, 27/09/2017). Why did the article not use the community’s actual demand for electricity, as from the *Cape Times* article, it seems this was the protesters’ only concern? Other headlines and leads/introductions using the “service delivery frame” included:

Headline: “Strand service delivery protests flare up” (Booyesen, 27/09/2017)

Bay after holding talks with community leaders in the wake of the recent service delivery protests” (Adriaanse, 5/07/2017)

Intro: “Imizamo yethu remained on a knife edge as residents went on a rampage in Hout Bay, torching cars and vandalising property during a violent service delivery protest yesterday” (Adriaanse, 4/07/2017)

Intro “Nine Suurbraak community members were released on R1 000 bail each yesterday following their arrest for public violence related to a service delivery protest against the Swellendam municipality” (Adriaanse, 27/07/2017)

Intro: “Mayor Patricia de Lille has committed to speed up the reblocking process for Imizamo Yethu in Hout

“Intro: Insufficient public participation and consultation and unemployment are fuelling service delivery protests this winter ...” (Mtyala, 4/07/2017)

Intro: “More than 200 residents from Suurbraak and neighbouring towns joined land activists during a service delivery protest” (Adriaanse, 26/06/2017)

### **Inconvenience frame**

The *Cape Times*'s third most frequently used frame was the inconvenience frame, which was used 15 times. The literature defines this frame as the troubles and nuisance that arise due to protest action, from delays in traffic caused by the destruction of property and obstacles on the road (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; Pointer, 2015). This frame was very prevalent in the *Cape Times* coverage of the 2017 “service delivery protests” with excerpts such as:

“... On Monday, their protests in Broadlands and Hazeldene caused traffic congestion and the N2 was only reopened about 6 pm. This came after roads had to be closed at the same location last week due to protests action ...” (Booyesen, 27/09/2017)

“The violent protest in Hout Bay has forced the Community Day Centre (CDC) to shut its doors after workers could not access the area due to running battles between residents and police yesterday” (Adriaanse, 14/09/2017)

“... Residents blocked the Main and Victoria roads by chopping down trees, burning tyres and using house-building starter kits from the City to bring traffic to a halt, which hampered bus services in the area ...” (Adriaanse, 5/07/2017)

“Provincial Traffic Chief Kenny Africa said the R44 was still closed as the road had debris from burnt tyres. He said law enforcement members would monitor the area until it was calm” 13/09/2017

“... As cyclists prepared to set off, it was announced that the 109 km race route would be shortened to 78 km due to a protest on Kommetjie Road. About 300 protesters burnt tyres and threw rubble on the road from as early as 3 am ...” (Phalise, 13/03/2017)

“... Yesterday, most roads leading to the informal settlement remained closed, as protesting residents used burnt tyres, rubbish and rubble to

barricade entrances and exits ...”  
(Phaliso, 11/05/2017)

battles between residents and the  
police ...” (Adriannse, 4/07/2017)

“...Emergency services were unable to  
enter the area owing to the running

“Shack dwellers’ protest brings traffic  
to a halt” (Phaliso, 26/05/2017)

### **Law and order/criminality frame**

The law and order/criminality frame was the fourth most used frame in the *Cape Times*, used 12 times. The use of this frame casts protesters as lawbreakers and criminals, leading inevitably to the deployment of public order police officers.

“Police remained on high alert  
yesterday following violent protests  
which saw businesses looted, roads  
blocked with burning tyres and rubble  
in Kleinmond” (Phaliso, 13/09/2017)

arrested for public violence, and a  
number of arson and, malicious to  
property cases had been opened and  
detectives were investigating”  
(Adriaanse, 4/09/2017)

“De Lille said the disruption in the  
community was reaching dangerous  
levels, but remained willing to engage  
so that she could understand the  
issues and work with the people of  
Imizamo Yethu. Police spokesperson  
Novela Potelwa said the SAPS, along  
with law-enforcement agencies, had  
committed additional resources and  
activated a provincial joint and  
intelligence structure. She said that  
law-enforcement and disaster  
management caravans, a garage, an  
old-age home and vehicles were  
damaged during the protest. Potelwa  
said four male suspects had been

“... Myburgh [Swellendam Mayor  
Nicholas Myburgh] did not approach  
the crowds, and public order police  
were deployed to ensure a peaceful  
demonstration” (Adriaanse,  
26/06/2017)

“... As a result of the protest, a set of  
traffic signals was damaged. Some of  
the poles and road signs were set  
alight and vandalized...” (Wolf,  
3/07/2017)

“Police spokesperson Noloyiso  
Rwexana said police were monitoring  
the situation and arrested two men

aged 22 and 42” (Adriaanse, 28/07/2017)

“Imizamo Yethu remained on a knife edge as residents went on a rampage in Hout Bay, torching cars and vandalizing ...” (Adriaanse, 4/07/2017)

“Nine Suurbraak community members were released on R1 000 bail each yesterday following their arrest for public violence related to the service delivery protests the Swellendam municipality” (Adriaanse, 27/07/2017)

“Police spokesperson FC van Wyk said two cases of public violence had been opened and police would monitor the area” (Adriaanse, 14/09/2017)

““Our rail system is crippled by ongoing sabotage. It is high time our police and justice system did their jobs by finding the culprits, prosecuting and convicting them. We need to put an end to this soon” (Phaliso, 26/06/2017)

### **Failed government frame**

The failed government frame is described in the literature as referring to issues of democracy and citizens in a negative tone. This frame was also prevalent and used 10 times by the *Cape Times*. Protesters were reported complaining about government’s failure and being tired of “empty promises”. They were also unhappy about ward councillors who are only visible during the election period. Some of examples of the failed government frame used by the *Cape Times* are presented below.

“City’s broken promises spark Imizamo Yethu protest ... The protest broke out on Saturday morning after residents accused the City of not fulfilling its promises of service delivery in the area.” (Wolf, 3/07/2017)

“... residents, who refused to provide their names for fear of reprisals, said they decided to protest because their demands had fallen on deaf ears and violent protesting was the only

language the government understood. They said they had been waiting for houses for years but were provided with empty promises. We are doing this (burning tyres) because we want to be heard and attended to by the government ...” (Phaliso, 26/05/2017)

“... Residents had taken their frustration to the streets because of the City’s and provincial government’s

Human Settlements Department's 'empty promises and failure to accommodate the 15 000 displaced after the fires, according to community leaders ..." (Adriaanse, 4/07/2017)

"... Protesting was our only way to draw attention to our housing and service delivery needs because we feel abandoned by our ward councillor and this city ..." (Adriaanse, 1/08/2017)

"... Broken promises anger residents ... promised jobs by their ward councillor, a group of residents protested when the jobs did not materialize..." (Sikiwe, 10/-3/2017)

"... Residents of the town's informal settlement claimed the ward councillor, Wilma Strauss, had manipulated the housing allocations after making promises to farm workers for votes during the local elections last year..." (Adriaanse, 10/11/2017)

"...The people are tired of unfulfilled promises and the lack of services for our communities ... there was an arrogance from the officials in dealing with the gripes of the communities ..." (Phaliso, 26/06/2017)

"The protest broke out on Saturday morning after residents accused the City of not fulfilling its promises of service delivery in the area" (Wolf, 3/07/2017)

"Imizamo Yethu Movement chairperson Markus Nduda said 'we were engaged with the officials over what they called super-blocking, but still nothing has been done. Now we demand they deliver on their promise to us if six-by-six pieces of land with basic services'" (Adriaanse, 4/07/2017)

"Community members said the protest was sparked by delay in the City's reblocking project meant to have begun more than three month ago" (Adriaanse, 5/07/2017)

### **Contest frame**

Other frames found in the data included the contest frame, used seven times. The frame refers to text in which several sources appear to disagree with each other. This became apparent on the coverage of the Imizamo Yethu protests, which began in July 2017. The first article on the protests found during the research was published by the *Cape Times* on 3 July 2017 with the headline "City's broken

promises spark Imizamo Yethu protest” (Wolf, 3/09/2017). “... Imizamo Yethu Movement spokesperson Debrah Mkhaphuza said their leadership would discuss the way forward, but there remained concerns over the continued conflict between the community leaders due to alleged politicking of the real issues” (Adriaanse, 5/07/2017).

The initial coverage of this protest reported on the failure of the city to honour its promises during the engagement with the community. However, subsequent coverage ran with “...violence erupted after talks between the city and community leaders broke down...” (Adriaanse, 4/09/2017). The coverage further touched on claims that the City’s “controversial” official Loyiso Nkohla was “dividing” the community by holding workshops without involving them (Adriaanse, 16/08/2017) and reported further on the reasons for the violent protests as “disagreement” (Mzantsi & Mtyala, 24/07/2017) over the process of re-blocking the Imizamo Yethu informal settlement.

Subsequent coverage included “Calm has returned to Hout Bay after a tense few days as rival groups clashed over plans by the City to re-block Imizamo Yethu’s informal settlement where a fire earlier this year razed 5 000 shacks” (ibid). The then minister of Police, Fikile Mbalula, who visited the area was quoted as saying:

“the main problem in Hout Bay is the challenge of human settlement. I’ve listened to community leaders: the in-fighting here rises out of a difference in relation to the approach that has been agreed to by the majority of the people who serve on the steering committee ... There is a dissenting view, and the view is the one we listened to in the meeting. We’ve advised community leaders to go back and continue to listen to each other” (Mtyala, 25/07/2017).

The contest frame also came to the fore in the *Cape Times*’ coverage of protests that occurred near Strandfontein, where it was reported that “residents of the New Horizon development near Pelican Park clashed with their neighbours from Phumlani Village informal settlement during a violent protest which saw a petrol station torched” (Adriaanse, 28/07/2017). The headline and subhead of the story said “Informal settlement rivalry...Residents clash over housing” (ibid).

### **Economic frame**

Another prevalent frame used by the *Cape Times* was the economic frame, used eight times. Examples of the economic frame included:

“Financial resources are limited and destroying what has already been achieved deprives all of us of a better access and mobility, but it particularly hurts communities who are dependent on public transport for mobility and access...” (Phaliso, 26/07/2017)

“...The cost of the torched bus amounted to over R4 million, said mayoral committee members for transports and urban development Brett Herron. He said the total cost of the damage was still being assessed by insurers” (Phaliso & Wolf, 28/06/2017)

### **Corruption frame**

The corruption frame was used five times in connection with the allocation of houses in Pelican Park, where protests began when:

“more than 200 residents clashed with those from New Horizon development over houses the residents believed were allocated irregularly ... Phumlani Civic Association chairperson Peter Mgutyana said community members were tired of waiting for officials to address the matter and demanded action. He said the association brought up the matter of questionable allocations back in 2014 with the City and then the ward councillor in 2016 ... ‘Protesting was our only way to draw attention to our housing and service delivery needs because we feel abandoned by our ward councillor and this City. We have been asking why people on the waiting list for less than six years could receive housing, while within our community there were people waiting for almost 20 years,’ said Phumlani community leader Sidwell Kweba” (Adriaanse, 1/08/2018).

The news story reported that residents of Phumlani Village informal settlement have called for an independent investigation into corruption allegations in the allocation of houses in the New Horizon development in Pelican Park. Community leaders from the area met with delegates from the City and officials from various departments at

Lotus River Sub-Council officers on Friday and tabled a list of demands following last weeks' service delivery protest.

### **Accountability frame**

The accountability frame was used three times. Examples from the news stories include one about protests reported on 27 September 2017, where residents of Lwandle and Nomzamo informal settlements in Strand “continued their service delivery protests when they marched on the municipality, demanding a solution ... demanding to speak to the mayor, Anda Ntsodo” (Booyesen, 27/09/2017).

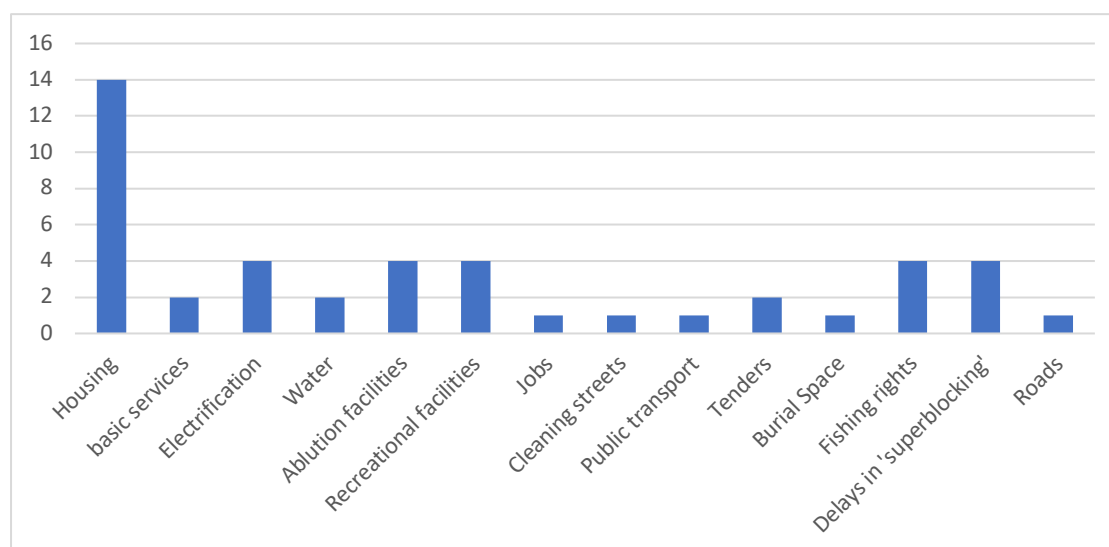
A protest in New Crossroads township reported by Siyavuya Mzantsi on 8 March 2017 is another example of use of the accountability frame. Reports indicated that a group of New Crossroads residents went on the rampage, allegedly attacking paramedics and robbing a food delivery truck during a protest against what they described as police brutality. The news story went on to say the protest had been prompted by the killing of mother-of-three Phumza Pita, allegedly by a police officer. According to the report, the protesters demanded to talk a senior government official. New Crossroads ward councillor Luvuyo Zondani said Sotyus' visit would have calmed things down as residents wanted to be addressed by a senior person from the police. “The Deputy Minister was misled by people who said it was not safe for her to visit the family” (Mzantsi, 8/03/2017).

#### **5.3.4 Cape Times: causes of the 2017 “service delivery protests”**

From the 30 analysed *Cape Times* news articles, the *Cape Times* covered “service delivery protests” in Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay, Joe Slovo in Milnerton, Khayelitsha, Pelican Park, Vrygrond, Swellendam, Gugulethu, Kleinmond, Crossroads, New Horizon, McGregor, Strand and Freedom Park.

The most frequently reported underlying cause of the protests in 2017 in Cape Town related to housing (figure 28). Out of the 30 news articles analysed, housing issues were reported in 15 stories.

Figure 28: Causes of the Protests, as reported by Cape Times



Housing issues were the subject of reporting in the stories at all the above-reported areas except Crossroads (figure 29, below). Swellendam experienced three protests related to houses, followed by Imizamo Yethu and Joe Slovo. Protests about delays in “reblocking” were reported four times in Imizamo Yethu.

Figure 29: Causes of protest by area, as reported by Cape Times

Area	Houses	Fishing rights	Delays in blocking	Electricity	Toilets	Tender fights	Basic services
Imizamo yethu	2	4	4	2	1		
Joe Slovo	2						
Swellendam	3						
Gugulethu	1			1	2		
Khayelitsha	1						
Kleinmond	1						
Crossroads							
Pelican park	1						
New horizon	1						
Vrygrond	1					2	
Mcgregor	1						
Strand				1			
Freedom park	1						

Protests related to fishing rights were reported four times in the Hout Bay area, where Imizamo Yethu protesters also joined the protest to voice their issues. The Kleinmond area protested against the municipality for awarding two cleaning tenders to the same Hermanus contractor, “despite the fact that a community member from Kleinmond had applied for it” (Daniels, 29/08/2017; Phaliso, 13/09/2017). Protests about toilets were reported twice in Gugulethu. Other reported protests were about water (Gugulethu and Imizamo Yethu), street cleaning services (Joe Slovo), transportation and taxis (Vrygrond), electricity (Gugulethu and Strand). As indicated earlier, reports of the causes of the protests were buried deeply in several of the *Cape Times* stories, as the publication led with the dramatic frame and mostly called most protests “service delivery protests”.

### **5.3.5 Conclusion**

Surprisingly, the above findings on the mainstream *Cape Times* newspaper revealed a very different pattern in the use of the protesters as sources, and is a complete departure from the norm for mainstream media representation of the voices of communities. Previous research has found that the underrepresentation of the voices of community protesters in stories has the effect of delegitimising them and their concerns (Chan & Lee, 1984; Dardis, 2006).

In summary, the *Cape Times* reflected the voices of protesters as sources 37 times, while official sources were used 32 times. The publication gave a platform to the voices of community leaders, community-based organisations, protesters, local government officials and ward councillors, political parties, provincial government, national government, the police services, business interests and *Cape Times*'s editorial team. However, the *Cape Times*'s progressive support of community voices was not carried through to its representation of gender, as men dominated the sources used for quotes.

As for salience, the majority of articles were published in the main body of the newspaper (as part of hard news) and five articles were leading front-page stories. Stories were much shorter than those published by *GroundUp*. *Cape Times* published 17 stories shorter than 800 (medium) words, with the remainder being shorter than 400 (shorter) words.

The *Cape Times* used most frequently the drama/spectacle, service delivery, inconvenience, law and order/criminality and failed governance frames. While the top five causes of protests, as published by the *Cape Times*, were housing, lack of electricity, fishing rights and lack of infrastructure, including housing, sanitation and recreational centres. The *Cape Times* reported on protests in Imizamo Yethu, Joe Slovo, Khayelitsha, Pelican Park, Vrygrond, Gugulethu, Kleinmond, Crossroads, New Horizon, McGregor, Strand and Freedom Park.

## 6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This study intended to examine how the Cape Town 2017 “service delivery protests” were framed by the “mainstream” *Cape Times* and the “alternative” *GroundUp* news agency and to establish the differences in reporting between these media outlets on the issue. It focussed on the period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017, a period the Municipal IQ (2017) recorded as having the third-highest number of protests since democracy arrived in South Africa in 1994, accounting for a 11% increase in service-delivery protests since 2004, with 9% of the protests in 2017 taking place in the Western Cape.

Certain crucial features of the reporting used by both media outlets, including the use of the protest paradigm disparities in source selection, use of frames, the media’s apportioning of blame and cause for violence, were analysed and compared to establish differences in how these devices were used by the two media outlets to cover the protests. The results led to several significant findings and conclusions, as outlined below.

With regard to quantitative analysis, out of the 51 stories, the high number of articles (30 stories) on “service delivery protests” were found in mainstream *Cape Times* and the alternative *GroundUp* carried the lowest (21 news articles). The prominence of news articles is important, as it serves as a signal to readers of the importance of the content (Schaefer, 2003). News prominence is one of the methods where the media is capable of setting the agenda for the public.

Eadie (2009) emphasised that the media is the principal source of information for the public and, therefore, issues that the media deems salient will influence what the public, in its turn, will deem salient. Eadie further states that this transfer of salience from the agenda of the media to the public agenda, is what is known in communication theory as agenda setting. As agenda setting is one of the theoretical foundations of this research, attention was given to which methods the mainstream *Cape Times* and alternative *GroundUp* used to indicate the value they assigned to the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”. Cox (2014:2) notes that many “studies have suggested that news items that garner the greatest attention from readers, are frequently granted more space in print and online”, amplified through “larger headlines and additional features, such as graphics and photos, signal to readers that those stories should be considered the most important”.

The *Cape Times* daily newspaper granted much more prominence to the protest news stories. However, *GroundUp*, as an online news agency, published lengthier stories, which the literature described as among the determinants of salience and attention, suggesting more extensiveness and contextual news coverage. “Media awareness of an object, usually gauged by the sheer volume of stories or space dedicated to topics in newspapers, television news and so on ... the positioning of a story within the media text to communicate its importance” (Kiouisis, 2004:74). Issue importance is also signalled by the size of the story, its placement and the usage of visuals (Burke, Martin & Cooper, 2011). With regards to the placement of stories, the prominence the *Cape Times* gave to the stories is remarkable, considering the fact that the publication is known for targeting the highest LSMs.

The “service delivery protests” occupied a prominent space in the *Cape Times* newspaper and, therefore, must have gone through a vigorous selection process in the newsroom to be selected for publication, as Utt and Pasternack (2003) state that newspapers serve an important function by presenting a list of selected events of the day to its audiences. The selected day’s events project the standpoints of the greatest significant affairs and events to their readers. Designing and selecting the front page of a newspaper is a complex and critical process, as the “newsworthy” and “most important stories should be featured prominently to entice impulsive buyers” (Reisner, 1992, cited in Kim & Chung, 2017:949). Singer (2001) argues that perhaps the greatest and most significant space to find representations of society’s events is newspapers’ front pages. This page is what grabs a reader’s attention, and, hence, editors dedicate considerable energy to determining which stories should be placed on the most important, prominent sections of their publications. It can therefore be concluded that the *Cape Times* newspaper considered the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests” as an important and prominent subject for its highest LSM readers in terms of the salience of the coverage.

The second significant conclusion is about the media under review’s source selection patterns. The mainstream *Cape Times* differed significantly from previous studies, which found that the media tends to favour official sources within the protest paradigm when reporting on community protests. The finding that the alternative *GroundUp* gave a platform to the voices of community members as sources, was in line with the literature.

Academic literature suggests that sources have a great impact on the framing of news stories (Reese et al., 1994; Watkins, 2001; Ross, 2007; Greenberg & Hier, 2009), as protester sources are most likely to highlight the perspective and standpoint of the cause, circuitously suggesting the political alignment of the editorial stance of the publication. The *Cape Times* did not conform to the protest paradigm and did not make heavy use of official sources. This means that an uncommon amount of attention was given to the voices of the protesters in the media under review.

Dardis (2006) points out that the reliance on official sources for information and opinion rather than the protesters themselves, is one of the ways to delegitimise protesters. Other scholars have argued that the mainstream media uses framing and the representation of official sources to marginalise, delegitimise or demonise protesters (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). However, the reporting of the mainstream *Cape Times* news outlet contradicted previous studies. The *Cape Times* reporting also did not conform to what other scholars, such as McLeod (2007:9), have found about the use of bystanders as sources to delegitimise protesters.

“Journalists often try to add colour to their stories by approaching bystanders not particularly well-informed on the issue, and because they are not participating in the protest, are likely to criticise the protesters as well as misunderstand what the protesters are trying to do” (McLeod, 2007:9).

*GroundUp*'s use of sources is in line with the literature, which states that the alternative media tends to represent voices that are misrepresented or marginalised and not included on mainstream discourses (see Downing, 2001; Boyle & Schmierbach, 2009).

On the gender representation of sources, the mainstream *Cape Times* relied heavily on male sources. The importance of appreciating the role of sources in influencing the news has long been observed by scholars. Harley (1982:146) noted that news is not just about men but “it is overwhelmingly seen through the eyes of men”. Ross and Carter (2011:1148) argued that by doing so, “men’s views and voices are privileged over women’s, thereby contributing to the ongoing secondary status of women’s participation as citizens”. Ross and Carter further argued that whereas some progress in women’s representation as news actors, sources and

journalists is observed ... “women’s voices, experiences and expertise continue to be regarded by news industries as less important than those of men”.

A heavy domination of female sources as the first direct voices was observed in the alternative *GroundUp*. However, a sharing of second voice was observed and males dominated the third voice.

In their 2011 study *Women and News: A long and winding road*, with data drawn from the 2010 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), Ross and Carter (2011:1161) found that “the visibility of women as producers and subjects of news has seen a steady improvement, but the relative visibility of women to men seems stuck at 1:3, suggesting that men’s lives continue to be regarded by the world’s news media as three times as important than those of women”.

The 2015 GMMP Report (2015:31) discovered in 2015 that “women still constitute only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in the news, exactly as they did in 2010”. It observed a steady increase in the presence of women in the news. However, the overall regional breakdown of the presence of women in print, radio and television news shows no improvement in Africa from 1995 to 2015. The region recorded 22% representation in 2015, the same figure as in 1995. A deep decrease to 11% was recorded in 2000, with an increase to 19% in 2005 and 2010.

With respect to the qualitative analysis, Entman (1993) reminds us that the media’s use of frames in news stories aids it in defining problems and calling attention to some issues, while concealing others. This enables the media to tell us what to think about (Cohen, 1963). This is the second level of agenda setting, which directs people’s attention to certain problems and issues in preference to others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Thirteen generic frames emerged from the *Cape Times* and 17 from *GroundUp*. Among these news frames, the most commonly used by both was the dramatic frame, with the *Cape Times* reporting conforming most faithfully to the protest paradigm. The alternative *GroundUp*, despite also leading with the marginalising dramatic frame, was overwhelming supportive of the protesters and went a long way to portray their concerns as legitimate. *GroundUp* stories about the protests were largely aimed at exposing police brutality towards the protesters and mentioned protesters’ causes prominently with in-depth coverage, reporting the historic reasons behind their actions.

*GroundUp* seldom resorted to marginalising or ridiculing devices when describing protesters, except in its use of dramatic headlines and visuals, which were mostly mitigated or supplemented by positive sub-headlines and captions. This use of the dramatic frame was used less in comparison to the *Cape Times*. For these reasons, it can be argued that *GroundUp* exhibited independency from the protest paradigm. The media outlet set its own agenda for the Cape Town 2017 “service delivery protests”. These findings are very much in line with literature, which state that the horizontal and bottom-up practices of alternative media, possibly make them the appropriate conduit for protests and social movements communications (Van De Donk et al, 2004; Dahlberg, 2007; Chuma, 2016).

In contrast, the *Cape Times* led with the dramatic frame predominately, blamed the protesters for the action. However, the voices of the protesters still came out very strongly in terms of voicing their concerns, even though the reasons for the protests were mentioned a bit low down in the articles – with the journalists mainly providing a background themselves, amplifying the dramatic actions. The *Cape Times* sample offered a more dramatised depiction of the protests, which McLeod and Hertog (1998) describe as a social control device that can weaken the influence of protests in public opinion. Supadhiloke (2014) argues that because of this, most violent anti-government protests and their opponent groups fail to meet their goals and subsequently resort to violent tactics.

The comparative analysis suggests that the use of the dramatic frame is consistent with previous studies (Pointer, 2015; Wasserman, Chuma & Bosch, 2018) and literature on the media’s representation of protests with the use of “marginalisation” devices (Dardis, 2006). Perhaps future studies could consider exploring the protest paradigm further to reflect how the alternative *GroundUp* used the dramatic frame, and to examine the extent that dramatic frames can benefit protesters.

The literature review demonstrated that mainstream media habitually follows the protest paradigm while covering protest events, marginalising and dehumanising protesters and regularly relying on official sources (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). Even though the sample analysed offered a dramatised depiction of the 2017 Cape Town “service delivery protests”, the *Cape Times* and *GroundUp* drew on voices from the wider community as sources. This meant that protesters’ voices were widely represented in the media under review, and they dominated over other views

represented. What does this mean for previous scholarship summarised in the literature review, which established a strong connection between the commercialisation of the media and the strong representation of official sources in the media? The findings of greater representation of the voices of the marginalised in this study suggest a structural shift in newsroom habits. There may be a greater awareness of the need to give voice to marginalised communities, not just officials, perhaps linked to a steady decline in advertising in the mainstream media.

The literature also indicated that the media has a vital function to play in strengthening the quality of democratic governance, provided that it takes its rightful position as the “Fourth Estate” and assumes the responsibility of being watchdogs, agenda-setters and gatekeepers. The media must be conduits and prime sources of information, so that citizens are informed about what their elected representatives are doing on their behalf. This is a critical factor for the depth and breadth of democracy (Coronel, 2009; Norris & Odugbemi, 2009; Friedman, 2011).

There are many factors that could explain the *Cape Times* findings. One of these is that the mainstream media is slowly becoming aware of its marginalising tendencies and heeding the call to listen to the voices of the local communities. Another factor could be what Mastafa Oz (2016:189) describes as a “polarised media environment”, where “it is possible to see partisan tendencies”. In the study of how different sets of media covered the Gezi protests in Turkey, Oz demonstrates how political pressures and partisan tendencies can play a role in shaping the news coverage by the mainstream media. Oz concluded that “because of the mainstream media’s partisan tendencies, social media’s coverage became an alternative way for citizens and for international media outlets to gain information” (Oz, 2016:189). Oz further concluded that “as we dug into the data, we came to recognise that newspaper coverage of protests is shaped by institutional politics and political cycles, as well as by news value and news routine factors”.

Oliver and Maney (2000:464) argue that a detailed examination is lacking of the “multiple ways in which movements and political elites could be linked and how the news media are ‘intertwined’ with these links”. The literature further demonstrates that issues of “ownership” and “economic interest” are of paramount importance in mainstream media. The “agendas of social movements and organisations are given positive coverage only to the extent that they are in tune with these interests” (Coyer, Downmunt & Fountain, 2007:156).

Perhaps the mainstream *Cape Times* could be explored further to determine the factors that might have led to its overwhelming use of protester sources over elite and official ones, particularly considering that the newspaper has experienced a change of ownership and had a public fallout with the governing Democratic Alliance (DA) in the Western Cape in the recent past. Olive and Maney's (2000:464) research into political influence over newspaper coverage of protests found that the "newspaper coverage of protests is shaped by institutional politics and political cycles, as well as news value and news routines factors", which points to the significance of discovering new methods of "theorising the interplay of protest, politics, and the media in creating and communicating issues and in affecting public policy".

An exploration of the complex factors at play in interactions between the media and politics is beyond the scope of this study. However, news reports about the relationship between the Independent Media, which owns the *Cape Times* newspaper and the Democratic Alliance (DA) are worth noting. It was reported in 2015 that the DA cabinet in the Western Cape instructed "all departments to cancel their subscriptions to the *Cape Times*, citing an ongoing decline in the quality of reporting" and considered the subscription to the publication as wasteful and fruitless expenditure (Makhanya, 2015: online).

"[It is] no secret that the relationship between the DA and Cape Town's major English titles has deteriorated since Iqbal Survé's Sekunjalo took over Independent Newspapers. The DA, among others, is convinced that the proximity of Survé and Sekunjalo to the ANC, means that the group has a pro-governing party slant and anti-opposition bias. They believe that Survé's membership of the ANC and Sekunjalo's donor status has affected the newspaper group's editorial independence ... The fact that the provincial cabinet sat down to discuss the quality of a specific newspaper tells you that the decision is political" (Makhanya, 2015).

The ownership of Independent Newspapers changed following the Ireland-based:

"parent company Independent News & Media (INM) confirmation in June 2013 that its shareholders had voted in favour of selling its South African stake to the Sekunjalo Group. The Sekunjalo Independent Media Consortium (SIM), a prominent South African firm, purchased the Cape Town-based Independent

News & Media SA (INMSA). The two INMSA shareholders are SIM (75 percent) and the Government Employees' Pension Fund, acting through the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), with 25 percent (South African Press Association" [SAPA], 2013: online).

Controversy over the link between the ANC and the Independent Group's deal surfaced in the media prior to the change of ownership, but Survé "dismissed concerns that he could be creating a powerful pro-government mouthpiece" (De Wet, 2013: online)

## **7. Limitations of the study and recommendations**

The findings of this study are limited in that only published news articles were analysed. Future studies could conduct in-depth interviews with journalists to further understand their perceptions of reporting on "service delivery protests". This would contribute further insight into patterns of reporting and the factors that influence the coverage and the context of "service delivery protests" reporting in South Africa. The role and influence exerted by national and international funders over the alternative media sector in driving their own agenda in reports of "service delivery protests" could also be investigated for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

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## 9. Appendix 1

### LIST OF NEWS ARTICLES ANALYSED

#### *Cape Times:*

1. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Residents are against city's super-blocking. 16 August
2. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Call for probe into housing allocation. 01 August
3. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Residents clashed over housing. 28 July
4. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Reblocking to be sped up. 05 July
5. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Cars torched in Hout Bay protest. 04 July
6. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Swellendam warns low-cost housing activist. 15 May
7. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Teen hit by rubber bullet. 13 September
8. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Hout Bay protests continue. 14 September
9. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Fisher slams Ndungane. 19 September
10. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Suurbraak residents join protest. 26 July
11. Adriaanse, D. (2017) "Police charged after boy, 14, shot" 15 September
12. Adriaanse, D. (2017). Suurbraak protesters out on bail. 27 July
13. Adriaanse, D. (2017). McGregor housing protest. 10 November
14. Booyesen, C. (2007) "Strand service delivery protests flare up" 27 September
15. Booyesen, C. (2007). Still not clear if protester was shot. 13 July
16. Daniels, N. (2017). Overhills residents irate over cleaning tender. 29 August
17. Mtyala, Q (2017). Calm restored after Hout Bay violence. 25 July
18. Mtyala, Q (2017). Winter leads to high discontent over service delivery. 4 July
19. Mzantsi, S. & Mtyala, Q. (2017). Teacher posts reward to catch pupils' killer.  
24 July
20. Mzantsi, S. (2017). Residents go on a rampage. 8 March
21. Phaliso, S. (2017). Joe Slovo residents torch two halls. 28 June
22. Phaliso, S. (2017). Shack dwellers' protest bring traffic to a halt. 26 May
23. Phaliso, S. (2017). Bus, bakkie torched in Khayelitsha land protests. 23 May
24. Phaliso, S. (2017). Residents protest against service for shack dwellers. 11  
May
25. Phaliso, S. (2017). Wind, fire bring race to a halt. 13 March

26. Phaliso, S. (2017). R44 closed as protesters run amok in Kleinmond. 13 September
27. Phaliso, S. (2017). 100 fed-up Masiphumelele residents march to highlight grievances. 15 February
28. Phaliso, S. (2017). Shack dwellers want access. 15 August
29. Phaliso, S. (2017). MyCiti bus torched in a protest. 26 June
30. Sikiwe, B. (2017). 'Broken' promises anger residents. 10 March

### **GroundUp:**

1. De Greef, K. (2017). Police shoot child in mouth during Hout Bay protest. 12 September
2. De Greef, K. (2017) "Ona Dubula returns home. 19 September
3. Furlong, A., De Greef, K., Gontsana, MA & Hendricks, A. (2017). A history of violence: police action in Hout Bay. 13 September
4. Gontsana, MA (2017). Houses damaged in N2 Gateway dispute. 24 July
5. *GroundUp* Editors, (2017). Hout Bay shows how desperately we need good police leadership. 14 September
6. *GroundUp* staff (2017). Why did Hout Bay explode? 11 July
7. Hendricks, A. (2017). Philippi High students demand promised new school. 6 March
8. Hendricks, A. (2017). Philippi High students march to Provincial Legislature. 24 March
9. Lali, V., Gontsana, M.A. & Ntongana, T. (2017). Clashes in Khayelitsha following land occupation. 21 August
10. Maregege, B. (2017). Joe Slovo Park residents torch MyCiti after shacks demolished. 26 June
11. Maregege, B. (2017). Newly repaired community hall torched. 27 June
12. Ntongana, T. (2017). Months after fire Hout Bay explores. 3 July
13. Ntongana, T. (2017). City interdicts Imizamo Yethu rebuilders. 5 July
14. Ntongana, T. (2017). Imizamo Yethu community welcomes police probe into death of protester" 6 July
15. Ntongana, T. (2017). Hout Bay residents agree to keep peace. 24 July

16. Ntongana, T. (2017). Protests start again at troubled Khayelitsha school. 4 March
17. Ntongana, T. (2017). Pelican Park erupts after councillor goes AWOL. 27 July
18. Postman, Z. (2017). Violence erupts in Hout Bay as City attempts to reblock. 20 July
19. Washinyira, T. (2017). Hout Bay residents protest against reblocking. 15
20. Washinyira, T. (2017). Vrygrond residents accuse taxi association of inciting violence. 28 June
21. Xolo, N. & Hendricks, A. (2017). In Photos: Ocean View residents and police clash over failure to reduce crime. 22 September