

ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN INFLUENCING CONFIDENCE LEVELS WITHIN STATE INSTITUTIONS

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the degree of Masters (MSOcSc) in Political Communication**

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Signature

Date

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Dedication

First and foremost I would like to thank the Almighty God for seeing me throughout this journey and affording me the opportunity to attain a Master's degree.

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Dr Mxolisi Landu, my mother, Mrs Vuyelwa Hardy, and my late father, Mr Charles Hardy.

To my two children, Sibabalwe and Buhlebenkosi, I hope this achievement will encourage and motivate you to work hard in life.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the role played by the media in creating a level of awareness in the public mind, and an associated level of trust and confidence within the legislative arm of government. This is achieved through a qualitative research methodology that includes in-depth interviews with experts in the field of political communication, particularly journalists and politicians who are members of parliament. Detailed in-depth questionnaires were also used to ascertain the views of these respondents on the same topic. The research also does a comparative content analysis of two newspapers the Cape Argus and the New Age.

The key finding of this thesis is that the state is responsible for its own confidence levels without the role or impact of the media – a view not shared by some members of parliament and communications experts. Indeed, members of parliament feel strongly that the media does not portray a true understanding of the work of parliament and that they should do more than what is currently presented by the media houses across the spectrum in the field of communication.

Keywords: Political Communication, role, media, confidence, state institutions, assessing, journalists, members of parliament, media experts, framing, agenda setting.

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Chapter One: Research Background

1.1 Introduction

This master's thesis attempts to understand and deal with the level of confidence of the parliament by trying to understand what role an elite working in parliament thinks the media should play in influencing levels of confidence within state institutions such as parliament. In this instance, the elite is politicians in parliament and the role played by the media to influence confidence within the institution (parliament) in times of key government operations or incidents that may be surrounded by controversy at times. One such incident that the South African government was faced with was the landing of an aeroplane at the Waterkloof air force military base in Pretoria, the capital city of South Africa. The private aeroplane was reported by various media houses to be transporting guests from India to attend a wedding hosted by the Gupta family, which has its roots in India. The wedding was held at a private resort in the North West Province. Media reports indicated that the plane landed at a military air force base without approval from government and was in South African airspace illegally.

Using the case of the plane landing at the military base, the study tries to ascertain the role of the media in influencing confidence levels of state institutions by investigating how two newspapers reported on parliament's handling of the matter of the Gupta family. The rationale for selecting this incident is firstly the association and relationship that the family has with prominent politicians from the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC). Secondly, media reports revealed that the Waterkloof air force base where the plane landed and parked is a National Key Point and is governed by an Act of parliament falling under the ambit of the South African Police Services. However, investigations by government later revealed that the air force base did not fall within the National Key Point Act, but the air force base is a strategic military base.

The researcher will investigate how the media covered parliament during the period of the incident. The first phase of the research will do a comparative study of two newspapers, the Cape Argus (CA) and the New Age (NA). The second phase of the study is achieved by conducting interviews with the journalists, people who are experts in the field of media and political communication; in addition the researcher interviews politicians who are members of parliament from the various political parties. The comparative study of two South African newspapers, the Cape Argus and the New Age, will assist in shedding light on how the media covered parliament during the period, which was called by all media outlets "Guptagate". The research topic for the thesis investigates,

“assessing the role of media in influencing confidence levels within state institutions”. The researcher will accomplish this by selecting one state institution, the South African parliament, by analysing how media covered parliament during the events surrounding the Gupta incident.

The study of confidence in state institutions has been developed extensively by researchers. Research on democracy conducted by Kotze looking at a global and African context has revealed that a decline in confidence in state and non-state institutions poses a threat to democracy in general and representative democracies more specifically (Kotze, 2011:29). In his research, Kotze looks into levels of confidence in state and non-state institutions by investigating and making comparisons from countries including Chile, Germany, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and Turkey (2011:25). The paper broadly examines the levels of state confidence in a global context by mainly focusing on developed countries and developing representative democracies.

Studies in political science alone have provided evidence that there is an apparent decline in confidence levels of state institutions. The results published by Kotze (2011) presented in the previous paragraph uncover this phenomenon. According to Maier (2010) the decline of political support presents serious challenges for democracies. In describing the challenges presented by the decline of political support Maier (2010,1) writes that the relationship between citizens and the state has become weaker, not only in terms of specific but also of diffuse political support. Maier (2010) further argues that specific support describes citizen satisfaction with the output of a political system as well as with the politicians responsible for the output. Furthermore in an investigation by Maier (2010) the scholar examined possible hypotheses that are discussed by (Dalton, 2004), Maier (2010) findings on the level of confidence in state institutions, there has been a cross national erosion of political support. A first set proposes that the increase in political dissatisfaction results from long-term changes in social structure and political conditions. According to this perspective, citizens' increasingly negative evaluations of politics are, first, a response to the personal risks inherent in the processes of industrialisation and modernisation. This is especially true for those living on the fringes of the social and economic system, those that are unemployed. Those marginalised citizens are seen as a potential source of unrest and political discontent. A second set of hypothesis [as above – one hypothesis, two hypotheses] presented suggests that unsatisfactory economic performance of advanced industrial democracies is responsible for the erosion of political support (Maier, 2010: 2).

Another argument deliberated upon by Maier (2010) states that the mass media tends to cover political issues differently from how these were reported in the past (with a strong emphasis on, for

instance, persons over issues, shortcomings over solutions or simplification over complexity). In addition (Maier, 2010) alludes that the decline of political support or confidence in state institutions can be attributed to the increase in political scandals.

In presenting the focal point of the paper as outlined in the preceding paragraphs, the researcher will further elaborate in subsequent chapters by specifying some of the influences that have contributed to the decline in confidence of state institutions. In the main, this thesis is not only the study of political science but comprises the field of media and communications. Hence the interest in investigating the role played by the media in state institutions and confidence levels. The case study of the military air force base and the landing of the plane is one such that scrutinises the actions of government, including parliament, and levels of trust.

News institutions, according to (Schudson, 2000), have long been closely connected with politics. This confirms the reciprocal relationship between media and politics. On one hand, the question asked by many political commentators and analysts is what kind of organisations are media and how do they work as political institutions within the political environment of representative democracies, such as South Africa (Schudson, 2000). On the other hand, studies on public opinion by Lippmann (1998) argue that the media often influences the trajectory and substance of debates in both civil and political society. Newspapers, in particular, are not merely in the business of disseminating news. On the contrary, they are perhaps first and foremost in the business of manufacturing the consent for particular notions of truth, justice and peace (Williams, 2006:431).

Studies in the field of media and politics often state that the mass media should secure citizens' civil, political and social rights. The print and electronic media's ability to disseminate critical information quickly and widely across society is crucial (Wheeler, 1997:238). The independence of the media is of paramount importance, the criticism within democracies of how media companies are run is always prevalent. Despite constitutional and financial guarantees of independence, many observers are critical of a media system orchestrated by the market. Market allocations often distribute wealth unequally, allowing for a concentration of ownership through closed entry (Wheeler, 1997:241).

Furthermore, according to Schroder and Phillips (2007), discussions about media and political power in the political domain as well as among academic researchers often revolve around the question of whether the politicians steer the representation of social and political reality in the media or whether the media imposes its own definitions of political events, actors and institutions

on the public. Whoever succeeds in overruling the definitional efforts of the other media or politicians will control public opinion (Schroder and Phillips, 2007).

The governance of public opinion as stated by Schroeder and Phillips (2007) is heavily reliant on the functions of the mass media's objectives with the information disseminated. Hence media scholars and many bodies analyse how the media reports on issues in the public sphere. In one of the papers published by the Media Monitoring Project it argues that the role of the media is to be a watchdog, to inform and educate citizens. The media's coverage of issues must be balanced, equitable, fair, accurate and informative in all areas. The role of the media should be clearly defined and followed for the betterment of democracies so that journalists play the role of watchdog over political institutions while providing information to citizens that are true and reliable without any form of bias. The media is expected to critically assess state action and provide such information to the public. The vitality of a representative democracy rests in large part on a voting public that is sufficiently informed about public issues that are credibly reported by the various institutions of mass media. Where citizens get their information and how they view their sources is thus a crucial element in understanding the health of any country's democracy (Jones, 2004:60).

The institution selected by the researcher for the thesis is premised upon the notion that legislatures make an interesting choice of study because of the work that parliament conducts and the various political organisations of which it is comprised of. Besides being a law-making body of the country, the legislative power in South Africa lies in parliament. The main functions of parliament are as follows: to pass laws, scrutinise and oversee legislation, facilitate public participation, oversee cooperative governance and to engage in international participation (www.parliament.gov.za). Parliament advocates itself as the parliament of the people and represents ordinary citizens; hence it is important to examine the role played by the media in portraying such an essential institution.

The thesis aims to test some of the theories and findings by scholars in the field of political communication. Schudson (2000) states that the method in which stories are selected by editors to be broadcast or published happens in ways that do not mirror the whole array of stories before them but according to individual prejudice. If this argument is proven to be true, questions emanate on the kind of institutions that bring influence to the general public which adds debate to political domain when questioning, assessing criticising the agenda of the media that is driven by an individual or to the interests of the institution itself.

The primary data to investigate the research aims is from interviews conducted in seeking to understand what informs media practitioners or journalists in the manner of how the media frames news. The research presents answers from journalists, a politician's view of the South African media, and lastly the opinions of experts in the area based on what they read and work conducted in their area of research in political communication and media studies, some of whom have a legal background. The first data to be included in the study is a qualitative content analysis from a comparative study of the two newspapers selected by the researcher, for instance the Cape Argus and New Age.

1.2 Research problem

Researchers have offered a number of rival explanations for low confidence levels. One explanation is that dissatisfaction with those who occupy institutions leads to increased cynicism. Such dissatisfaction may stem from institutional shortcomings in character and competence. A second explanation concerns dissatisfaction with policy, for instance citizens' unhappiness about the economy (Moy, Pfau, Kahlor, 2009: 138). According to studies by Orren (1997), Dalton (1999) and Kotze (2011) there has been a decline in confidence in the major state institutions in a democratic government, these include the executive branch, parliament and political parties (Kotze, 2011:29).

Cross-national analyses have highlighted three broad sets of factors crucial to democratic consolidation and associated confidence: a growing economy that steadily reduces inequality, stable and predictable political institutions and a supportive political culture (Mattes, 2002:22). The absence of any one, or multiple, of these factors may explain declining confidence levels in government. Moy et al (2009) further notes that another explanation for the decline in confidence is the negativity found in the news media. According to Jamieson, media coverage undermines confidence by focusing on attack and counterattack including dismissal of the status quo. Such statements have led the researcher to investigate the research topic so as to understand and clarify the role of the media in state institutions.

Research completed describes some of the factors that have contributed to decreased confidence in representative democracy. The question which then arises is what role or responsibility does the media have in the manner in which individuals judge state institutions? This question is approached by examining the techniques and manner of framing news content, and the agenda-setting function media houses are said to utilise.

Areas to be investigated by the researcher through the in-depth interviews are as follows: the significance and the role of the media in creating levels of confidence in state institutions.

1.3 Significance of the study

The thesis will present some studies conducted in the field of media and confidence levels. Some of the preliminary studies show the relation between the two. This becomes clearly evident in the section where the researcher focuses on media effects in human nature. Therefore the relevance and importance of the paper is to ascertain the role of the media in addressing the level of confidence in shaping the views of people.

Another element that is significant to the study is that the researcher and the results investigated will further add to academic literature in the field of political communication that look at the legislative arm of government in South Africa and the role of the media.

The researcher seeks to understand and aid in an understanding among media practitioners of the impact they (as journalists) have on the content of information widely disseminated through news reports in print, broadcast or over the internet, and how this information has a direct bearing on individuals.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

What the researcher aims to achieve is to learn more about the media and the impact it has on society, especially in shaping political views of people according to the way it reports on particular political subjects, especially about politicians who are the ones that are constructed and presented to the audience for scrutiny. It is also imperative to acquire from politicians themselves their thoughts on media and how they relate to one another in forging trust and working relations.

The research aim of the thesis will test the following research sub-questions through a battery of interviews as indicated in the introduction. The researcher will investigate the following: do the media have a responsibility of ensuring sufficient coverage to create confidence in state institutions and investigating the framing of state institutions by the media.

Chapter Two: Rational theories and theoretical framework of the study

2.1 Introduction

In this section, the researcher attempts to conceptualise the theoretical framework through which the media's role in current low confidence levels in parliament is to be assessed. In the first part of the chapter, the researcher presents theories of public confidence, including the social psychological model, social and cultural model, the institutional performance model and public choice model. The theoretical framework for assessing the media's role in public confidence in parliament is described according to the rationale theories of the media, namely framing, priming and agenda setting theories. Included in the section is the presentation and explanation of the theories of the press. In the second part of the chapter, the researcher draws some critical comparisons between the theories and models mentioned. In the third part of the chapter, the researcher reflects on lessons learnt from the theories that could help answer the main research question on the role of the media in influencing levels confidence in state institutions, looking at the case study of the South African parliament and doing a qualitative content analysis by performing a comparative content analysis study of two South African newspapers. Lastly, the researcher distinguishes the relevance of the theoretical frameworks as identified or outlined by the research question. It is important that the researcher is able to state why the theories have been selected for the study.

Before moving forward with the chapter, it is imperative that the researcher provides clarity that some of the findings and work presented in the preceding subsections will be drawn from previous work that the researcher has completed whilst doing her honours postgraduate degree with the University of Cape Town. The research paper completed in 2010 investigated "*Framing of the South African Parliament by the print media in South Africa, A case study of the Cape Times and Cape Argus newspapers*". The current study by the researcher continues and improves earlier research by taking the research a step further.

2.2 Models of Confidence levels in public institutions

What can explain the loss of public confidence in the central institutions of representative¹ democracy? There are at least three schools of thought on how to explain the erosion of citizen

¹ Representative definition: consisting of people chosen to act and speak on behalf of a wider group i.e. government or political system, democracy definition: a form of government in which the people have voice in the exercise of power, typically through elected representatives (Oxford dictionary: 1999).

confidence in public institutions, namely social psychological explanations, social cultural model and the institutional performance model (Newton and Norris, 1999).

2.2.1 Social Psychological Model

Early and seminal work by the social psychologist Morris Rosenberg as stated by Newton and Norris (1999) argues that alienation, trust in people and beliefs that people are fundamentally cooperative and inclined to help others combine to form a single trust in people scale. Because of their psychological history and make up, some individuals have an optimistic view of life and are willing to help others, cooperate, and trust. Because of their own life experiences, others are more pessimistic and misanthropic. Some are thus inclined to be guarded or alienated, more distrustful and cautious of others, and pessimistic about social and political affairs and about people and politicians in general. Trust is an affective orientation that forms part of our basic personality and is largely independent of our experience of the external political world. For Easton (1965:447), trust would mean members will feel their own interests would be attended to even if the authorities were exposed to little supervision or scrutiny, and Gamson (1968:54) suggests that trusting people expect the political system to work even if left unattended.

The social psychological approach has the obvious limitation that it is hard-pressed to explain changes in trust among large segments of a country's population, but it must be taken seriously because of its importance in shaping the literature on trust. The current approach to trust and confidence is based less on specific tenets of the social-psychological school than on an assumption growing out of it about how to interpret standard survey research questions on the topic. Responses to such questions tell us something about the individuals who express attitudes rather than about the worlds in which they live. Hence studies of trust and confidence concentrate heavily on the individual characteristics of trustees and cynics, and rarely on the social and political circumstances that are associated with levels or trends in trust (Newton and Norris, 199:5-6).

If the social psychology view is right about trust as a character trait, then one would expect a fairly close association at the individual level between social trust and confidence in public institutions.

2.2.3 The Social and Cultural Model

In offering a different view to the social-psychological model, some social theorists hold that the ability to trust others and sustain cooperative relations is the product of social experiences and socialisations, especially those found in the sorts of voluntary associations of modern society that bring different social types together to achieve a common goal. The social and cultural model

essentially argues that individual life situations and experiences – especially higher education - contribute to a community with a cooperative culture and involvement in voluntary activities creating social trust, cooperation and civic-mindedness.

Newton and Norris (1999) reference the theories of Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill, both of who emphasised the importance of voluntary associations and social engagement as training grounds for democracy. Newton and Norris also say many contemporary writers pursue the same theme, discussing society's ability to inculcate habits of the heart such as trust, reciprocity and peaceful democracy-cooperation, emphasising the importance of civil society in generating cooperative social relations or focusing on trust or civic culture as a basis for stable and peaceful democracy. Newton and Norris (1999) further reveal that this in turn helps to create strong effective and successful social organisations and institutions, including political groups and governmental organisations in which people can invest their confidence. Such institutions and organisations in turn help to build trust, cooperation and reciprocity as well as confidence in other institutions.

2.2.3 The Institutional Performance Model

The third model as described by Newton and Norris (1999) focuses on the actual performance of government as the key to understanding citizens' confidence in government. Trust and confidence are regarded neither as personality traits nor as the direct products of social conditions that are associated with a democratic culture or well-developed social capital. Instead, because all citizens are exposed to government actions, confidence in political institutions is likely to be randomly distributed among various personality types and different cultural and social types. If governments perform well it will elicit the confidence of all its citizens, while those that perform badly or ineffectively generate feelings of distrust and low confidence. The general public, the model assumes, recognises whether government or political institutions are performing well or poorly and reacts accordingly.

The theory as explained by political scientists and research scholars has three implications, given the accurate sampling techniques, reliable research procedures, and sensible survey questions, responses to questionnaire items about institutional confidence are likely to be a good gauge of how well the political system is actually performing. In other words, confidence questions are likely to provide an accurate thermometer of public life. Second, there are significant implications for public policy. The theory suggests that if public institutions earn little public esteem, the remedy for political leaders lies in either lowering public expectations of performance (politicians can promise

less) or in improving institutional effectiveness so that politicians are able to deliver more to citizens.

There may be a significant indirect relationship between social trust and confidence in political institutions. If social trust helps build social capital, this in turn helps strengthen political institutions, then governmental performance may improve, inspiring citizen's confidence. Conversely if social trust declines and stores of social capital diminish, then political institutions will not perform well, governmental performance will suffer, and confidence in governmental performance will decline (Newton and Norris, 1999:8).

In testing the models that Newton and Norris describe so as to see evidence of effectiveness, if the social psychological model is correct and trust is a personality trait the people do or do not display, then we would expect to find strong associations at the individual level between social trust and confidence in public institutions. Social trust is indeed positively related to confidence in public and private institutions (except the education system), people who trust each other tend to have more confidence in public and private institutions. According to the social and cultural model, trust in people and confidence in institutions is associated with characteristics related to an individual's social position, cultural identity and personal life experiences. Much of the work that has focussed on social trust implies the existence of a significant relationship among levels of social trust, voluntary activism, and confidence in government (Newton and Norris, 1999:8–10).

2.3 Rationale Theories: Framing, Agenda Setting and Priming

The theoretical premise of agenda setting and priming can be traced back to psychological concepts of priming in work on cognitive processing of semantic information (Collins et al,1975). By receiving and processing information, individuals develop memory traces or activation tags that its concepts or issues are primed and more accessible in an individual memory (Collins and Loftus: 1975). According to Salancik (1974), activation tags are memory traces and therefore influence subsequent information processing.

According to Weaver, McCombs and Shaw (1998) priming and framing should be viewed as natural extensions of agenda setting. Priming is the impact that agenda setting can have on the way individuals evaluate public officials by influencing the thematic areas or issues that individuals use to form these evaluations. Framing can be considered an extension of agenda setting as it is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed (McCombs, 1996:6). In other words, whereas agenda setting is

concerned with the salience of issues, frame setting or second level agenda setting is concerned with the salience of issue attributes (McCombs et al, 1997).

2.4 Framing theory

Media framing has become a prominent area of mass media research in the past decade. Entman, one of the leading scholars in this research, says framing makes a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences (1991:51). Although connected to agenda setting research, framing analysis examines how people talk and think about issues in the news (Graber, 2007:67). Media framing is selecting aspects of perceived reality to highlight or promote particular definitions and interpretations of situations (Graber, 2007:67). Framing consequently influences people's understanding of that issue or event (Willnat & Awe, 2009; 168). For example, studies done in Japan using the theory of framing examined the dominant frames used by Japanese newspapers to cover the regime change in Japan after World War II and Japan's nuclear policy (Willnat & Awe, 2009:168). The framing theory purports that the media focuses the attention of the audience on particular news events and then places them within specific fields of meaning (Entman, 1993 & Scheuffle, 1999). Cramer (2008) summarises framing as a way that the media organises and presents events and issues to the audience and the way that the audience in turn interprets what they receive from the media in the form of social meaning. Frames influence the perception of news in the way that, as a form of agenda setting, it does not only tell one what to think about, but also how to think about it. Therefore framing leads to a situation whereby the audience accepts one meaning over another. Furthermore, Entman states that framing is a way in which the media resorts to particular interpretive structures to set events within their broader contexts. The essence of framing is a selection to prioritise some fact, image or development over others, thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events (1991:53).

Studies by sociologists in the fields of media argue that framing of a given issue is influenced by, among other factors, social norms and values, organisational pressures and constraints, pressures of interest groups, journalistic routines and ideological or political orientation (Entman, 1993).

Tuchman defines a frame as, "The news frame organises everyday reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality. It is an essential feature of news." (1978: 193) According to Tuchman, much of what happens and what is said in the world will remain mere talk and incomprehensible sounds (1978:192). Gitlin explains a frame is an element of organisation, frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion by which symbol handlers routinely organise discourse (1980:7).

Framing effects can be powerful, how reporters frame an article may have a significant effect on the sense readers make it. This does not mean that the reader will adopt the writer's points of view, only that it will be considered. As a theoretical approach, media framing can be considered a vehicle of social construction and is crucial to understanding the media's role in the portrayal of social issues and events (Smith, 1997:26).

2.5 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting theory, as described by McCombs and Shaw, says the media are not always successful at telling us what to think, but they are quite successful at telling us what to think about (1972: 176-187). The power of the news media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well-documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. The core proposition of the theory is the transfer of salience from one agenda to another. The salience of objects – issues candidates, public figures, organisations or whatever is the first level of agenda setting, and the salience of attributes is the second level of agenda setting (McCombs, 2003:1).

Newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news. In a study that McCombs and Shaw conducted in 1972 of the agenda setting of the US presidential campaign of 1968, they hypothesised that the mass media set the agenda for each political campaign, thereby influencing the salience of attitudes toward the political issues. The findings supported the agenda setting effect.

McCombs (1972) argues that newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news-lead story on page one, other front-page display and large headlines. Television news offers numerous cues about salience – the opening story on the newscast and length of time devoted to the story. These cues repeated day after day effectively communicate the importance of each topic. In other words, the news media can set the agendas for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms.

2.6 Priming

According to Iyengar (2008) the priming effect refers to media-induced changes in voters' reliance on particular issues. It is worth noting that this study is not about voter confidence or related studies, but the theory is vital to allude to as it refers to the field of political communication and how it is applied to media studies.

The more prominent any given issue in the news, the greater the impact of voter's opinions about that issue on their evaluations of government. The priming effect creates volatility in public opinion, especially during any kind of election (Iyengar, 2008:3883). As casual observers of the political scene, ordinary citizens only notice events and issues that are on the news; those not covered by the media might as well not exist. What is noticed becomes the principal basis for the public's beliefs about the state of the country. Thus the relative prominence of issues in the news is the major determinant of the public perception of the problems facing the nation.

Priming can also be described as an extension of agenda setting. Beyond merely affecting the salience of issues, news coverage influences the criteria the public uses to evaluate political candidates and institutions. Priming describes a process by which individuals assign weights to their opinions of particular issues when they make a summary of political evaluations. The priming hypothesis states that mass media, by making some issues more salient than others, influence the standards by which governments, presidents, policies and candidates for public office are judged (Iyengar and Kinder: 1988:63).

In a series of experiments conducted by Iyengar and Kinder (1997), the two examined the impact of network newscasts on viewers' perceptions of issue salience on the criteria they use to make judgements about political candidates. They hypothesised that the salience of certain issues as portrayed in mass media influences individuals' perception of the president because respondents will use issues that they perceive as more salient as the standard for evaluating the president. Even though they considered priming a robust effect, they found mixed statistical support for their hypothesis. Strong priming effects emerged for only some issues and weak effects for others, such as unemployment. In the final study, they looked at Iyengar and Simons (1993) examined the combinations of survey data and content analyses of network television news, which supported the basic priming hypothesis: Foreign policy issues that had been made more salient for individuals by intensive war coverage tended to override other issues as influences on assessments of presidential performance.

The ability of the news media to prime political evaluations depends on both media content and the predispositions of the audience. Priming effects peak when the news reports explicitly suggest that politicians are responsible for the state of national affairs, or when they clearly link politicians' actions with national problems.

2.7 Studying the relationship between the three theoretical frameworks (Framing, Agenda Setting and Priming)

The understanding that framing is accepting one meaning over another and influencing the public about understanding of issues. Whereas agenda setting theory expresses to people what to think about issues and how people can try and perceive issues based on what has been covered and reported by the various mass media. Priming is about the importance of an issue in the news medium. People who watch, listen and read information disseminated by mass media notice things that are on the news.

Agenda setting and framing are inherently different concepts. On the one hand, agenda setting deals with issues that are on the agenda which can be seen as an inter-issue contest between various actors promoting different issues. On the other hand, framing deals with different ways in which issues are presented, which may be called an intra-issue contest. However, in both instances, actors try to influence agendas and make them as favourable as possible, either in terms of the problem salience or in problem definition (Vliegenthart & Roggeband, 2007:297). According to McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997), not only is agenda setting and framing effects related, framing is in fact an extension of agenda setting. They use the term second-level agenda setting to describe the impact of the salience of characteristics of media coverage on audience's interpretation of these news stories. The two theories are interrelated and assist one another this through framing presents theory presents its news reports to the audience. It is up to the journalist to decide which angle of the story will be presented to the audience. Whereas with agenda setting the media or journalist through reporting enables the audience to plant or shape the images, themes and topics on their minds. It is upon the audience then to decide how they view the stories that are being presented by the journalists.

2.8 Theories of the Press

In the following subsection the researcher presents and describes the four theories of the press that were developed by the founding fathers. In 1956 three professors of communication - Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm - presented their four theories of the press. Since then their theories have been applied as a focal point of discussion by numerous academic scholars in the field of media and political communication.

2.8.1 Libertarian Theory

According to Siebert the libertarian theory states that the government in a democracy is the servant of the people. As such it occupies a different relationship to its adherents than does the authoritarian government. The authoritarian theory holds the view that the role of the media is to serve people through its chosen government and to disseminate the information the rulers want to pass on (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963). Yet even though the government is subservient to and responsible to the public at large, it is not thoroughly trusted to identify its ends with the ends of its citizens. Innumerable devices have been invented in democratic countries to keep governments from reverting to authoritarian practices and from subverting the unalienable rights of its individual citizens (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963:50).

The basis for a libertarian press system was developed in the 17th century; the details were worked out and put into practice in the 18th century and the system spread throughout the world when liberalism was at its pinnacle in the 19th century. Practically all democratic countries in the world adopted libertarian theories and embodied them in their constitutions or fundamental laws (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963:51).

Under the libertarian concept, the functions of the mass media are to inform, educate and entertain. The third function was developed as a necessary correlate to the others on a basis of economic support and thus to ensure financial independence. This was the sales or advertising function. Basically, the underlying purpose of the media was to help discover the truth, to assist in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting all manner of evidence and opinion as the basis for decisions (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963:51).

The libertarian doctrine is a development of the philosophical principles which provide the basis for the social and political structure within which media operate. Liberalism as a social and political system has a set framework for the institutions which function within its orbit, and the press, like other institutions, is conditioned by the principles underlying the society of which it is a part (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963:39).

Oosthuizen (1996), states that according to the libertarian theory, people are rational beings capable of distinguishing between truth and falsehood and between good and evil. Furthermore, Oosthuizen says a free press is an essential component of a free and rational society. The closest one can get to truth, according, to this viewpoint, is through exposure to alternative views (1996:52).

2.8.2 Authoritarian Theory

The state, as the highest expression of institutionalised structure, overtakes the individual and makes it possible for the individual to acquire and develop a stable and harmonious life.

Communication, then, supports the state and the government in power so that total society may advance and the state may be viable and attain its objectives. The authoritarian system sees those that are in power government inform citizens of what the leaders think the subjects should know (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963).

The mass media, under authoritarianism, are educators and propagandists by which the power elite exercise social control. Generally the media are privately owned, although the leader or his elite group may own units in the total communication system. A basic assumption is that a person engaged in journalism is so engaged as a special privilege granted by the national leadership. Therefore journalists and the media owe an obligation to the leadership (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963).

2.8.3 The Soviet Communist Theory

The communist theory of the press arose, along with the theory of communism itself, in the first quarter of the present century. The mass media in a communist society, functions basically to perpetuate and expand the socialist system. Transmission of social policy, not searching for the truth, was to be the main rationale for the existence of a communist media system.

Mass media, under this theory, are instruments of government and integral parts of the state. This theory assigns the press the role of conveying the state ideology (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963). Criticism is permitted in the media (i.e. criticism of failure to achieve goals), but criticism of basic ideology is forbidden. Communist theory, which is the derivative of authoritarianism, is based on the premise that the masses are too fickle, ignorant, and unconcerned with government to be entrusted with governmental responsibilities.

According to the founding scholars of the four theories of Siebert, Peterson, Schramm (1963) the media have no real concern with giving citizens much information about governmental activities or of its leaders. Mass media are to do what is best for the state and party; and what is best determined by the elite leadership of State and Party.

2.8.4 Social Responsibility Theory

This concept, a product of mid-20th century America, is said by its proponents to have its roots in libertarian theory. But it goes beyond the libertarian theory, in that it places more emphasis on the press's responsibility to society than on the press's freedom. It is seen as a higher level, theoretically, than libertarianism, a kind of moral and intellectual evolutionary trip from discredited old, libertarianism to a new or perfected libertarianism where things are forced to work as they really should have worked under libertarian theory.

The explainers and defenders of this theory maintain that they are libertarians, but socially responsible libertarians, contrasted presumably with other libertarians who (if their views and actions do not agree with those of the new libertarians) are not socially responsible.

This fourth theory of the press has been drawn largely from a report published in 1947 by the Hutchins Commission. Emerging from the Commission's publications and solidified in the literature of journalism by *Four Theories of the Press*, this new theory maintains that the importance of the press in modern society makes it absolutely necessary that an obligation of social responsibility be imposed on the media of mass communication (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1963). Siebert, Peterson, Schramm proposes that the libertarian theory reverses the relationship between people and the government that is in power.

2.9 Why study theoretical frameworks

The importance of examining the theoretical frameworks and rationale theories of the press first and foremost is to present findings and results that have been conducted about media studies in relation to society and politics. It is critical as a researcher to have an understanding of why mass media crafts news stories in the manner that journalists and media houses do. The theories assist the researcher during the period of the research when studying the various media houses and the content that has been published by media practitioners. In learning the theoretical frameworks developed by various media and political communication scholars the researcher has an understanding of the important function and role that the media has in society through crafting its message, whether it is by words, pictures or sounds.

As a researcher, what is of critical importance is the relevance of the theories and frameworks to the thesis? What values do the theories provide to the paper? In dealing with the theories of the press it is important to mention them all but one or two will seem to be more relevant to the thesis. What must be taken into consideration is the political situation of the country. SA is a democracy with a

constitution that guarantees freedom of the press and speech. In analysing the theories of the press, what is clearly evident is that the libertarian and progressive theory are the ones closest and more applicable to the thesis.

2.10 Lessons Learnt

Chapter two provided an overview of the various theoretical frameworks in media and political communication studies including theories that are relevant in confidence levels of state institutions.

The following chapter will provide in-depth studies applicable to the topic of the thesis. To highlight a few of the topics to be covered below, the thesis will consider studies on the media and parliament and the media and confidence levels in state institutions in Africa and Western democracies.

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Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided arguments about the theories of public confidence, mass media and democracy and the rationale theories that the researcher will utilise for the paper. Chapter three looks at academic literature that has been conducted by scholars in the field of mass political communication and media studies.

Firstly, the researcher presents a brief overview of the history of mass media in South Africa with a main focus on print media. Secondly, the paper will focus on academic literature that has been published on media and its effects in society on the behavioural outcomes to exposure of mass media. The researcher also explores academic writing about public institutions and their legitimacy in democratic countries. The paper presents studies of parliaments and how the media report about them and other public institutions. The last section of chapter three will present a summary and reflect on lessons learnt and how the academic research is appropriate to the research questions and topic.

3.2 Overview of Print Media: Cape Argus and New Age

The TNA Media is a company newly established that became operational in June 2010 and saw the release of its first publication which is now known as The New Age, on December 2010. The paper is a new player in the South African media landscape. It is a daily newspaper covering news in nine provinces in the country. Not much information regarding the paper is available but TNA has strategic business relationship with Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd., which publishes the world's largest English daily newspaper, and The Times of India (TOI). TOI is an important investor and strategic partner with TNA. The TOI advises and provide supports to the TNA Media in all areas of its operations (www.tnamedia.co.za).

In contrast, the Cape Argus is affiliated to Independent Newspaper, one of the biggest print media houses in South Africa with a history dating back to the years when the country was still ravaged by apartheid.

The Cape Argus dates back from the 1880s, the access to and participation in the South African public spheres was limited to the white hegemonic interest. This hegemony derived from colonialism, which, in conjunction with mining capital, later evolved into apartheid. Nineteenth century English-language South African publishers advocated libertarian values generally and press

freedom in particular. This philosophy originated in British and European politico-economic developments around legislation of a political public sphere, which released the press as a forum of rational critical debate from the pressure to take sides ideologically (Hyden, Leslie & Ogundimu, 2003:1).

Under the apartheid regime when the National Party came to power in 1948, a broader and fundamentally political categorisation became entrenched in South African journalism. The relative plurality of newspapers was further reduced and all newspapers were classified as either pro-government or opposition. The main reason for this change was that the government moved to the centre stage in all aspects of South African life, and its actions thus also dominated the press and its history for the next 42 years (Oosthuizen, 1996:85).

The concentrated ownership of the South African English press up to the late 1980s resulted from its association with the century-old mining industry. This investment sustained the ascendancy of a new class closely associated with British imperial interests. During the early part of the 20th century, an Afrikaans language press emerged from the propaganda organs of the National Party which had introduced apartheid after 1948 (Hyden, Leslie & Ogundimu, 2003:1-2). This press opposed English dominated capital and supported Afrikaner capital accumulation. Nevertheless, English capital still constituted the dominant economic fraction after 1948 while the National Party entrenched itself as the ruling political fraction (Hyden, Leslie & Ogundimu, 2003:1- 2).

The manoeuvring necessary for maintaining this uneasy relationship between English and Afrikaner capital inevitably suppressed black interests. The emergence of portable video and personal computers in the 1980s led to a progressive alternate community-based media that arose out of popular political movements which served the racially oppressed (Tomaselli & Louw 1991). South Africa today boasts of the freedom of expression entailed in the Constitution.

3.3 Mass media: its effects and power

The intention of this segment is to present the consequences or influences of the mass media in society, individuals, culture and public institutions. Denis McQuail (1967) writes that mass media does have an important consequence for individuals, institutions, culture and society. The question of the power of the mass media is a different one. In essence, it involves asking how effectively the mass media can and does achieve objectives over others at the will of those who direct, own or control them or who use them as channels for messages.

A number of studies can be cited showing that mass media has certain inbuilt tendencies to present a limited and recurring range of images and ideas which form a rather specific version of reality (McQuail 1976). Roshier (1973) found public views about crime to be closer to the true statistical picture than the somewhat distorted version one might extract from the content of local newspapers. Similarly Halloran, Chaney and Brown's (1970) study on audience reaction to television reports of the 1968 demonstrations illustrated that the one-sided version presented by news broadcasters had little effect.

One topic that has been studied in the past and the present is the question of media effects on violence. Many scholars such as Halloran (1970) outline in their findings that what is broadcast contributes strongly to the rate of lawlessness in society.

Alexander and Jacobs (1998) in a book published by Curran, Liebes and Kahn (1998) argue the notion that the media text has a monolithic meaning for an atomised, passive audience. Early research concerned itself with the measurement of the media's power to change individual opinions. The findings in Alexander and Jacobs directly contradict the assumptions of mass society theorists, suggesting that the media has a very limited influence and effect, and that the latter typically were filtered through the personal influence of opinion leaders (Curran, Liebes & Katz, 1998:26). This view proposes the ineffectiveness and impotency of mass media and the subservience to other more fundamental components in any potential situations of influence. At that time it also emerged that radio, film or print were unlikely to be the major contributors to direct and change individual opinion, attitudes and behaviour to be the direct cause of crime and aggressive behaviour

The theory has refined the ability to predict the impact of media messages on audience views, and it can explain why certain media campaigns may have failed to alter audience attitudes and behaviour. Klapper (1960) believed that media consumption and the way that media messages are consumed depend upon a wide range of phenomena, which he labelled mediating factors. These mediating factors include individual inclinations, group membership, and interpersonal dissemination of media content, opinion leadership and the role of media in society.

The power of the mass media can determine the fate of politicians and political causes. Street (2001) writes about power in relation to media noting that the study of power is driven by the desire to know who is responsible for the things that affect our lives, who is to blame for the current state of affairs, and how it can be changed for the better. One consequence of the mass media or news coverage researched by academic scholars is the determination of which issues were most important

in public opinion. News media thus shapes the topics of the discourse in public affairs, which has been earlier mentioned in chapter two under agenda setting theory.

3.4 Media and Democracy

Pitts (2000) writes that a democratic system of government, according to political science, includes three conditions: competition among individuals and groups for positions in government, political participation through regular and fair elections, and civil liberties including freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of association. Many academic scholars note that democracy has three dimensions: competition, participation and civil political liberties. Emerson (2002) states that freedom of expression in democratic society advances knowledge, discovers truth and permits individual involvement in decision-making. Some social scientists conclude that democratisation comes from economic growth and modernisation. Emerson (2002) furthermore notes that the amount of press independence and vigour is a measure of the extent to which any society is open and democratic. According to Bogart (1998) representativeness is inconceivable without forms of mass communication because the press brings issues before the public for discussion and links members of society not in close proximity. Berger (2002) states that democracy should not be reduced to a means to development, as that would be to devalue its worth. But democracy is not a political system just for the sake of it; it is about the distribution of decision-making power about key resources in society, and about checks, balances and limits on how such power is used in various instances (Berger, 2002).

In Africa, colonial rule was often followed by one-party rule, which resulted in the creation of authoritarian press systems. The political climate usually required journalists to align themselves with government propagandists. Conventional wisdom has held that the media is an important element in a democracy (Chole, 1995:17). Part of the struggle to get the state to do its democratic duty is to publicise repression and to push for constitutional and legislative reform. Media workers have been in the forefront of doing exactly this in many African cases. Furthermore, Berger (2002) says Africa's media in the southern hemisphere should continue to play the role indicated by public sphere orientation. The media have an important role in the positive impact of democracy and democratisation of the African continent. Media has been the conduit for political education, watchdogs of political accountability and forums for civic engagement (Tettey, 2006).

When studying what democracy is, academics repeat that it refers to governance in accordance with the will of the people (Mukhongo, 2010:342). The will of the people is observed through a representative system of government in which individual participation is achieved by extending the

franchise to all eligible adults. What is important to note in the democratisation of African countries in a democracy is that it requires that an individual is not hindered from speaking his or her mind and that an individual can freely express him/herself without fear of arbitrary arrest, torture and detention for his or her political convictions (Mukhongo, 2010:342). The media is regarded as an important instrument in a functional democracy. The media is seen as a nation-building force and in any country the mass media acts as a potent political force complimentary to a body of activities entrusted to the government (Mukhongo, 2010:343).

The importance of media in a democracy is fundamentally significant as Africa has experienced amongst the worst infringements of press freedom. Some of these recorded cases have occurred in Zimbabwe, the independent media in Zimbabwe has been silenced through vigorous application of legislation such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Public Order and Security Act, both passed in 1992 (Mukhongo, 2010:343). The continued escalation in the promulgation of media bills across Africa suggests that governments have yet to relinquish their attempts to restrict media freedom (Habberson & Rothchild, 2009). In recent history, the South African government has also come under scrutiny and the media has loudly voiced its displeasure about the introduction of the Protection of the State Information Bill. Opposition to the Bill has seen civil organisations rally together and the media has been vocal because of the implications the Bill has on its work (Bill explained in chapter five).

It would be deceptive to argue that the press is virtually free in African countries. A number of setbacks abound. For instance, a number of governments have left intact laws that barred freedom of the press in previous authoritarian regimes. A look at Nigeria reveals that the press took sides with political parties and tribal groups that sponsored the media houses. In Zambia, president Chiluba's government frequently banned issues of newspapers considered to contain classified state secrets. Examples from the African continent show that the democratisation and liberalisation have not always guaranteed freedom for the media. The struggles over media autonomy and freedom of the press have placed media workers at the forefront of the civil society struggles for autonomy from government control (Mukhongo, 2010:344).

Media workers in South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Chad, Gambia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Uganda have debated existing or proposed bills regulating the media over the past years (Mukhongo, 2010:344). The bills are said to seek to regulate and discipline journalists and media workers and oversee their registration. The bills have been widely rejected on the grounds that they restrict freedom of speech and the press (Mukhongo, 2010:344).

3.5 Explaining Public Confidence in Institutions and legitimacy or the lack of it.

Kelleher and Wolak (2007) pose a question in the introductory chapter of their published article, what do people think about their government? Most of what we know about how people evaluate government concerns politicians and institutions at the national level from approval of the president to legitimacy of the Constitutional or Supreme Court to public dissatisfaction with members of parliament (MPs). Studying satisfaction or the lack of it with state government institutions informs the sources of confidence in governmental institutions generally. While essentially a constant in studying the national case, factors such as institutional structure vary significantly across countries.

Some analysts are concerned about loss of confidence in the mainstream institutions of a democratic government: parliament, the executive branch and others. The decline of public confidence in a wide range of central institutions indicates a problem extending beyond political life. Another group of analysts focus more on a loss of social trust among citizens as significant indicators of social and political malaise (Newton and Norris, 1999). The erosion of confidence in the major institutions of society, especially those of representative democracy, is a far more serious threat to democracy than a loss of trust in other citizens or politicians (Newton and Norris, 1999). A wealth of evidence suggests that trust in leaders or particular administrations are subject to greater short-term fluctuation than confidence in institutions. However, institutions are large, impersonal and broadly based and the public's estimation of them is less immediately affected by particular news or item or specific events. Thus, loss of confidence in institutions may well be a better indicator of public dissatisfaction with the modern world because they are the basic pillars of society (Newton and Norris, 1999:2). Furthermore many observers argue that in our large-scale and impersonal modern world, social and political stability and integration increasingly depend on confidence in institutions rather than trust in individuals, so vibrant institutions matter more to contemporary democracies than does the quality of interpersonal relations among citizens. It is for this reason that Newton and Norris (1999) come to the conclusion that confidence in institutions is a central indicator of the underlying feeling of the general public about its polity.

Researchers have offered a number of rival explanations for low confidence levels in public institutions. Amongst the conclusions that scholars in political science have uncovered through years of study is that the dissatisfaction with those who occupy institutions leads to increased cynicism (Moy, Pfau and Kahlor, 1999). Such dissatisfactions may stem from institutional shortcomings in character. A second explanation concerns dissatisfaction with policy, for instance the unhappiness about the state of the economy. Both of these explanations presuppose intrinsic

shortcomings in performance based on the premise that public confidence levels are a response to real events (Moy, Pfau and Kahlor, 1999). Other arguments refer to social and individual level explanations. Rising education levels are assumed to lead to greater general awareness, which in turn leads to a greater awareness of government deficiencies (Moy, Pfau and Kahlor, 1999). Individual social locations and group membership may impact on levels of trust as the socially and economically disadvantaged achieve less than others and thus have limited faith in government (Moy, Pfau and Kahlor, 1999). This is clearly evident in South Africa, as evidenced by a number of service delivery protests that have mushroomed as citizenry feel that they are denied the basic rights which government had promised to provide its electorate. For instance the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), promises in its manifesto a better life for all by providing free houses, education and healthcare (www.anc.org.za). Citizens expect much more of democratic governance, but they are also often frustrated with the political process. In particular, the compromise, delay and dishonest procedures of legislatures that can be bewildering and alienating for the average citizen (Richardson, Konisky and Milyo: 2012).

It has become evident that there is a global decline in public institutions. Empirical evidence dating back to the early 1970s reveals a trend towards declining confidence and a growing mistrust of central institutions of representative democracy in a number of countries. For authors such as Orren (1997) and Dalton (1999), there has been a decline in confidence in major state institutions in democratic government. These include the executive branch, parliament, political parties, the police, military, the courts and civil service. Mojeed Alabi (2009), looking at the legislatures in Africa, states that, while parliaments are considered as supreme, parliaments are in reality supreme only to the extent that their functions and decisions reflect the policies and programmes of the government in power as represented by the president and cabinet (Alabi, 2009). The evolution of the cabinet system and the executive has grown in power and influence to the detriment of parliament, and has remained, notwithstanding the so-called collective responsibility of the cabinet and individual ministerial accountability to the parliament or internal democracy of the political party (Alabi, 2009:234). The legislative institutions of contemporary Africa perform all the basic functions of representative assembly legislation, oversight and representations. Specifically their functions include law making, approval of executive policies, and confirmation of appointments, budget and appropriation, oversight over government agencies, representation and education of the people (Alabi, 2009). Legislatures have however been bedevilled by a number of problems that have continued to limit their role as effective instruments of participatory democracy and limited governments. One of the failings of the parliaments in Africa is their inability to serve as effective counterweights to the executive (Alabi, 2009:239). A self-assessment of the Ugandan legislature did

not find a positive correlation between high academic and professional qualifications of its members and the House's performance. The situation in Nigeria, where the National Assembly has been viewed as an irrelevant talking shop, has been seen as the weakest link in making public policy. Attempts by the legislators to ascertain their relevance are often viewed as indicators of serious intra-governmental conflicts with the attendant stress on the entire political system (Alabi, 2009:239).

Among the criticisms that academics make is the limited institutional capacity in African parliaments (Nijzink, Mozaffar, Azevedo, 2006). The legislatures in Africa lack the capacity for effective discharge of their constitutional functions. In most cases, parliaments lack adequate resources and effective procedures for scrutinising the executive through debates, parliamentary questions and investigations (Alabi, 2009). African parliaments seem to be widely regarded as potential agents for democratic change but whether national legislatures are in fact enhancing the quality of democracy on the African continent is far from clear (Nijzink et al, 2006). Growing literature on the South African parliament points to the limited success of the National Assembly regarding oversight and the problems it is encountering in terms of representation and building links with citizens. One of the growing challenges for African parliaments is the lack of institutional capacity to be influential in law-making or oversight. Although Africa experiences such a challenge, the South African parliament is amongst those that are well resourced (Nijzink et al, 2006).

Possible explanations for confidence in state and non-state institutions have seen authors suggest numerous justifications ranging from general theories of economic transformation and global competitions, to the evolution of socio-cultural values. According to Newton and Norris (1999) there are three prominent explanations for the decline in confidence in state institutions amongst the public, namely socio-psychological, cultural and political factors. Political factors, which can be linked to the institutions performance model as advocated by Newton and Norris appears to be the only significant influence on institutional confidence among the citizens. The institutional performance model concentrates on actual government performance and assumes that citizens have the ability to recognise how state institutions are performing and then react accordingly.

According to Nijzink, Mozaffar and Azevedo (2006), parliaments in Africa receive little attention in the scholarly literature. Since the early 1990s many African countries have resumed multi-party elections, democratic practices and legislative strengthening programmes. Scholars say that despite these programmes, knowledge about Africa's current parliament remains limited.

3.6 Media and Parliament

The relationship between the legislature of any democracy and the media has engaged much attention down the years. At best it is a relationship of healthy tension but it should never be bland, or subservient on either side. At worst it can be mutually destructive and therefore destructive of a democracy (Bouchet & Kariithi, 2002). As alluded to earlier, parliament and the media are great foundations of democratic society. A freely and transparently elected parliament responds to the expectations of the public for a better world, an improved way of life. A free media gives voice to freedom of political expression. Thus it keeps people informed and promotes and gives space for the expression of divergent views (Minja, 2009). Except in specific circumstances, it is the function of the parliament to make laws, as it is the function of the media to investigate and analyse common public issues (Minja, 2009). Therefore, each must be prepared to assert its independence and not allow itself to ever be endangered by any organ in society.

A politician needs the media for publicity and to inform the people of their activities, especially during an election campaign. Media is a platform to gain exposure and popularity, and hence to get votes for politicians in the political arena. If political actors want to gain a place in the media, they should stick to certain conventions and genres, which are needed by media organisations to give priority to conflicts, power struggles and dramas (Tiung & Hasim, 2009:408). The emerging trends that follow on the reporting of news in relation to politicians in Africa and Europe need to be monitored by media scholars. The media follows standards of news value to determine what to report on and to what extent. One of the most important criteria determining news value is conflict, especially personalised conflict. Secondly, the media pays more attention to actors who have a stronger say in policy formulation. They are quite successful at picking out the most powerful actors within European Union policy formulation and focusing on them.

A recent study by Landu (2010) looked at how the print media in South Africa frame parliament in a case study of the Cape Times and Cape Argus. The researcher investigated if the print media reflects the work of parliament. The findings show that parliament received a significant amount of news coverage by both newspapers. The stories that appear in the two papers reported about the work of parliament. But news reports about the two houses of parliament, the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces, have significantly lower news coverage. The news coverage reflected a high number of news reports by the media this premised on the committee meetings and the oversight visits that were undertaken by parliament over the executive, the chapter nine institutions, have public hearings and conducting oversight during the period August and October.

The news frames about parliament that were monitored were negative, but the figures indicate that parliament gets a fair amount of news coverage and this is balanced and positive even though the number of articles published is low. The data collected showed the role played by parliament in setting the agenda in the media. This is resultant of the news reports about parliament during recess and the amount of stories that were printed, including the content published about parliament.

The relationship between the media and legislators is an imperative one because legislators use the media to pursue re-elections, but recent studies indicate that legislators use the media to achieve good public policy and power inside the legislature (Cooper, 2002: 354).

3.7 The Role of South African Media in a Democracy

Fourie (2002) argues that there is a need to rethink the role of the media in South Africa, against the background of the history of media and government relations under apartheid and the conflict between the media and the African National Congress government.

In terms of production, South Africa has first-world media systems. However, at the same time, it has to function in a developing country with developmental needs and conditions, such as high levels of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment, all of which impact on access to and use of the media. This duality intensifies the complexity of the role of the South African media in society and its mode of operation. For example, despite being a highly developed media system, access to and use by audiences is still mainly limited to a white minority and black elite who can afford the use of media (Fourie, 2002:37).

For the government, this raises questions about the media's claim to be the *vox populi* of the South African people and therefore of the legitimacy of the media's claim to the freedom of expression. Because the media claims that it has a right to inform the public and that, by so doing, it contributes to the formation of an informed public opinion and thus to the development of democracy, the government can rightly ask: who do you inform and who's public opinion do you distribute? These issues cause tensions and conflict. Questions such as these challenge the myth that the media is a vehicle for the dissemination of rational knowledge (Fourie, 2002: 33).

The media and government use the concept of freedom of expression as the basis for their interpretation and debate about the role of the media in South Africa. From such a point of view, a starting point for discussing the role of the media in South Africa could be a critical investigation of whether the meanings and values attached to the basic concept of freedom of expression are still

appropriate today. For the government, it would entail a critical investigation of the compatibility of the concept of freedom of expression with the developmental role they want the media to play. For the media, it would mean an investigation into whether their modes of operation, their production of content and their distribution of information and meaning are still in line with the original values associated with the development of the concept. Some of the prominent values are that only a free press can guarantee that there is an abundant supply of facts and arguments about facts, cultivating the habit of questioning and correcting opinions and leading to the victory of truth over falsehood, and that the freedom of the individual can be secured only under the rule of law (Fourie, 2002:34). These are the values that provide the impetus to think about the primary role of the media as one of protecting the individual from the state's misuse of power and to search for and expose the truth. With the emphasis on the role of the media to protect society from the government, the table was set from the beginning for confrontation and conflict between the government and the media (cf Ronning, 1994). According to Steenveld the role of the media amongst many issues is to highlight social ills and media coverage should be progressively tilted towards the poor and marginalised communities (2002:122). The role the media holds still remains unquestionably to be objective, informative and truthful.

3.8 Media and Public Confidence of State Institutions

In the United States of America, research concerning media and state institutions and how the coverage of public institutions affects individuals is an area with a significant history of academic research. Amongst the earliest studies combines data from a 1974 American national election study with the front-page content of 94 newspapers in an investigation of the relationship between the degree of negative political criticism found in newspapers and their readers' feelings of trust in government. The findings were that readers of highly critical papers were distrustful of government, but the impact of criticism on the more stable attitude of political efficacy was modest. The level of exposure to national news interacted with critical news content primarily to affect feelings of trust and not efficacy (Miller, Goldenberg & Erbring, 1979:67). The question posed in the paper was, does the reporting of news in a critical or negative way by the media taint the audience's confidence in government and their feelings about the political system in general? The authors argue that according to Klapper, 1960 and de Sola Pool et al 1973, media effects on attitudes are in fact minimal and that others have reported substantial relationships between various media measurements and political attitudes. The conclusion of the research was that, by 1974 a majority of the adult populations in the United States could be classified as politically dissatisfied; they distrusted government and viewed its institutions as unresponsive to their needs. These judgements resulted from the political scandals that had marred the second Nixon administration and from the

evaluation of the performance of their political leaders and government when confronted with the social turbulence of the past decade. Their government's response to such challenges as the civil rights movement, urban riots, the Vietnamese war and the worst recession since World War II was no doubt the primary cause of dissatisfactions for most people (Miller, Goldenberg & Erbring, 1979:73). The investigation revealed that the media style in reporting events also affects to some degree the level of popular political dissatisfaction found in America.

What is of vital importance to note in the studies that have been conducted is that the media not only sets the agenda of the people and the nation as a whole, but the media also influences public opinion with regard to elections, constitution making and corruption (Mukhongo, 2010:344). Furthermore, according to Mukhongo (2010) the media has three roles that it can play to contribute to democratisation and good governance: being a watchdog over the powerful, providing a civic forum for political debate and serving as an agenda-setter for policy makers. Therefore, in moving to the African agenda, achieving the dreams and hopes of an African and economic renaissance depend to an extent on what key roles the media play in African states. How African states individually and collectively utilise media to respond to increasingly complex and energetic international engagement with the continent will critically influence the extent and the ways in which persistent marginalisation of the continent can be significantly and sustainability diminished. The media then has a role to play in setting the agenda for African countries to individually and collectively respond to international political engagements. Furthermore it can enhance the accountability of government and other powerful actors through uncovering and publicising events and outcomes that run counter to public interest (Moi, 2010).

3.9 Overview of research completed at honours level - 2010

The period selected for the study was from 1 August 2010 - 13 October 2010. This period of study at the time of the research allowed for a broader overview of the reporting on Parliament. The press clippings studied comprised the third and fourth term of the parliamentary sitting. This period was particularly important because of the work that was handled by the two houses of parliament. The National Assembly (NA) and National Council of Provinces (NCOP) have been faced with public hearings on the debates of, for instance, the nationalisation of mines in South Africa. The Portfolio Committee on Mineral Resources conducted public hearings on this issue so to be informed on how to proceed as parliament on the topic. Public hearings on the Liquid Fuels Charter and AgriBEE Charter were concluded by the committees. The public participation process that was conducted enabled the committees to review the implementation of the two charters. Various parliamentary

committees have been dealing with State Owned Enterprises that have been in the media for all the wrong reasons. One such State Owned Enterprise is the South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC).

The objective and purpose of the study is to review how parliament is being covered by the print media. By studying the two newspapers, the researcher presented findings of the research question. As earlier stated in preceding chapters, the researcher will present work completed in 2010. The motivation for the study was to assess how the media frames state institutions and public figures in the print media, the study's main focus was on the South African parliament. The print media has been selected because newspapers may not have the reach of the broadcast media, but are nevertheless important for three reasons. Firstly, newspapers are likely to be the media choice among opinion makers, who may influence others in their community. Secondly, newspapers provide a deeper analysis than is often possible on radio and television. Thirdly, the press has an investigative capacity unrivalled by the broadcast media – major stories often break in the press and are then taken up by broadcast journalists (Davis, 2004:7). Compared to television and radio news, the print media are major sources of political news for which policy makers and political commentators resort to as evidential documents to push their own agendas (Nelkin, 1999).

Research Findings

The findings show that parliament receives a significant amount of news coverage in the newspapers. The Cape Times publishes more articles about parliament than the Cape Argus. The stories that appear in the two papers report about the work of parliament. But news reports about the NA and NCOP are low in frequency. The news coverage reflects a high number of the committee meetings that took place during the period August and October.

The news frames about parliament that were monitored are negative, but the figures indicate that parliament gets a fair amount of news reports that are balanced and positive, even though they are low in frequency.

The data shows the role played by parliament in setting the agenda in the media. This is resultant of the news reports about parliament during recess and the amount of stories that are printed including the content published about parliament.

During analysis, published articles are more prevalent than others. Articles that come out strongly deal with the protection of state information bill. The framing of it comes out negatively. The

Portfolio Committee on Communications is also dominant, this is as a result of challenges with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the problems with the board and the executive

3.10 Lessons learnt

The main objective of this chapter was to present studies in the field of media in democracy and Africa, the effect of media in society, media and state institutions, and the role of the media in determining public confidence. The chapter also presented studies on how the media report about parliament during elections – a critical time for politicians as this impacts how people view government in power. Although studies also show that there are contributing factors that determine the levels of confidence in the audience, such as education and service delivery on promises made during campaign phase, the media has been shown to have a significant influence on shifting how people think and debate about issues.

Chapter four of the study will explain and describe the chosen research methodology of the study.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four motivates the chosen research methodology and the rationale for the investigation to be conducted and to obtain the sought conclusions. The research thesis uses two research methodologies, qualitative and comparative content analysis.

4.2 Research Methodology and Approach

The preferred methodology selected for the study is qualitative research. This kind of research tends to be exploratory in nature and since it is not usually representative it cannot be used to infer behaviour or characteristic in the target population (Reagan, 2006:74). Qualitative analysis usually refers to designs intended to elicit words rather than numbers and is almost always descriptive.

The method of primary data collection is in-depth interviewing and questionnaires of a sample of relevant actors who can provide an in-depth understanding of the topic. Qualitative interviewing approaches are especially good at describing social and political processes, that is, how and why things change. Using qualitative interviews, researchers delve into important personal issues. Qualitative research is not simply learning about a topic, but also learning what is important to those being studied (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

The qualitative interview methodology selected is responsive interviewing. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), this kind of research is an approach to research based on in-depth interviewing. The responsive interviewing model relies heavily on the interpretive constructionist philosophy, which sees researchers elicit the interviewee's views of their worlds, their work and the events that they have experienced or observed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:27). Responsive interviewing investigates the lenses through which people view events, the common expectations and meaning through which people interpret what they see and what happens to them. The model emphasises that the interviewer and the interviewee are human beings, not recording machines, and that they form a relationship during responsive interviewing. The goal of the research is to generate depth of understanding, rather than breadth (Rubin & Rubin, 2005:27). In terms of the data that has been collected what the researcher intends to do is to use the qualitative interviewing methodology to gain data through the form of interviews that have been conducted from a range of specialists in the field of politics, experts or analysts and media practitioners.

As stated earlier, responsive interviewing is about learning what people think about their experiences and what rules they operate under. The model therefore implies finding a group of people who have had particular experiences or those affiliating in a certain group. Once the data has been coded from the interviewees, the responsive interviewing technique will answer the research questions and topic of the thesis which aims to discover *The role of the media in influencing confidence levels in state institutions, “A case study of the SA Parliament”*. In so doing the researcher performs a comparative study of two newspapers by investigating the landing of a private aeroplane on military air force base that was first reported to be National Key Point Act by the Gupta Family from India. The researcher looks at how the media covered the parliament in dealing with the incident.

The second approach that will be utilised by the researcher on the thesis is a comparative content analysis. Content analysis is the research method that answers many questions about the mass media. For instance this kind of research technique will aim to address the following questions when investigations by academic scholars are being done, is the news actually biased against female politicians? Media content analysis can help evaluate and sometimes improve media performance, provide input that is relevant to media policy and decisions, and help assess the effectiveness of information or advertising campaigns (Priest, 2010). Content analysis is the systematic study of what is actually contained in the media messages, whether news or entertainment (Priest, 2010).

Through the use of qualitative content analysis, the news stories and articles will investigate levels of confidence concerning the Gupta scandal and how the media covered parliament in dealing with this issue. This will be achievable by looking at the sources that have been used in the articles. Content analysis of the news articles will allow the researcher in looking if the sources in the articles and if the manner the content published is biased. This will be achievable through observing the voices and actors of each story that has been published. Data coding of content analysis will be employed, such as focusing on analysing the texts, and the frequency and volume of articles to observe the extent of coverage.

4.3 Selection of Interviewing Candidates and the Rationale

The sample used is a purposive non-probability sample that cannot be generalised and cannot be representative in any way. This kind of study does not allow accurate generalisations but it is useful for generating comments. (Reagan, 2006:75). The non-probability sample undertaken by the researcher attempts to investigate the views of a number of actors such as journalists, members of parliament and communications experts including legal experts.

According to the qualitative research methodology, any kind of research needs to be credible, henceforth the selection criteria of candidates who are part of the study is important. The purposive sampling method requires that interviewees should be experienced and knowledgeable in the area that the researcher is investigating. The members of parliament and media practitioners will form part of the sample study. These candidates have been chosen because of the knowledge and experience in the field in which they are employed, as they are the ones who disseminate information (journalists) and members of parliament are the ones that are written about because of the work that they perform as public representatives. As mentioned in chapter three about the relationship between media and parliament, both parties need to have a mutual working relationship, which has an effect on the audience. It is important in a purposive sample of this size to ensure that, as far as possible, a range of participant attributes is represented. Accordingly, when selecting candidates the researcher factors in race, age and gender. In questioning politicians the interviewer not only requests members of the ruling party but across the spectrum including opposition parties.

It should be noted that the study has elements of a convenient sample. A convenient sample means to interview people because they appear in a convenient location (Reagan, 2006:77). In this case, the journalists and politicians are situated in one location, the South African Parliament.²

The first group of respondents that were interviewed comprise media practitioners from both the print and broadcast background. The sample is a selection that aims to represent the demographics of the South African media industry players and seeks to investigate, through using questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the role that the media plays in shifting and influencing the levels of confidence in state institutions.

Journalists interviewed are from the Parliamentary Group Association (PGA). Amongst the respondents is the former chairperson of the PGA, a white male in his late forties who has been a journalist for 20 years, a white female in her late fifties who also has been a journalist for over 20 years (The white female journalist requested that her identity not be revealed although she agreed to participate in the research), a black male in his early forties who has been a journalist for over 14 years; a black female from the Mail and Guardian newspaper; and a black female reporter from the

² Ethical clearance has been obtained in using the participants noted above please see attached consent form appendix four

national broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC). Experts who responded to the questionnaire range from academic lectures, lawyers, and government communicators. The members of the legislature have been selected from the various political parties, ruling and the opposition.

Details of the Participant Demographics:

Table 1: Details of Respondents: Journalists

Name and Surname	Gender	Media House	Race	Age
Donwald Pressley	Male	Independent Newspapers	White	49
Siyabonga Mkwanazi	Male	New Age	Black	40
Anonymous	Female	Business Day	White	59
Andisiwe Makinana	Female	Mail and Guardian	Black	33
Asanda Mbetshe	Female	SABC TV	Black	30

Table 2: Details of Respondents: Experts

Name and Surname	Gender	Industry	Race	Age
Jane Duncan	Female	Media Studies Lecturer: Rhodes University	White	47
Thabo Masebe	Male	Spokesperson: Office of the Deputy President in SA	Black	49
Kevin Malunga	Male	Office of the Public Protector	Black	39
Anton Harber	Male	Journalism Professor University of the Witwatersrand	White	59

Table 3: Details of members: Members of Parliament:

Name and Surname	Gender	Political Party	Race	Age
Sisa Njikelana	Male	African National Congress	Black	57
Lance Greyling	Male	Independent Democrats	White	39
Sandy Kalyan	Female	Democratic Alliance	Indian	55
Liezl van der Merwe	Female	Inkatha Freedom Party	White	32
Peter Maluleka	Male	African National Congress	Black	60

Demographics: Four demographic variables were included as controls in measures to obtain credible results and analytical outcomes. The variables that have been taken into consideration for

the purposes of evaluation are gender, age, political affiliation and race. Gender (50%) male, female (58%), Age 38.4% (30-39), 30.7% (40-49) 25% (50-59), Race 8.4% White, 8,1% Indian, 50% Black and within the political affiliation for members of parliament, 25% ANC, 25% Independent Democrats (ID), 25% Democratic Alliance (DA) and 25% Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

4.4 Defining Variables

Variables are classified in terms of their relationship with one another. It is customary to talk about independent and dependant variables. Independent variables are systematically varied by the researcher, dependent variables are observed, and their values are presumed to depend on the effects of the independent variable (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). In other words, the dependant variable is what the researcher wished to explain. In the research, the researcher identifies the following as Independent Variables (IV): journalists, media and legal experts and members of parliament, race age, gender, political parties. Dependant Variables (DV): decisions and outcomes by the respondents.

4.5 Selection of the Media

The newspapers selected by the researcher are the New Age and Cape Argus. The Cape Argus is part of the Independent Media Group. The New Age has significant and majority shareholding belonging to the Gupta family, which was one of the significant reasons for selecting the newspaper. Additionally, the paper has been widely accused by analysts and journalists to be government's mouthpiece in that it is pro-government and the ruling party African National Congress (ANC).

According to the Amps figures for the period July 2012 - June 2013, the New Age is reported to have an average adult readership of 143 000 with a total penetration of 0,4% of its readership. In addition the layout of the paper is in a tabloid format. In sourcing the circulation figures for the paper, the researcher discovered that the New Age is not a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa (ABC), a non-profit organisation created through an agreement between media owners, advertisers, and advertising agencies to provide accurate and comparable circulation figures for print media, and to certify these figures. The ABC has an established and agreed standard that is audited, for the certification of publications' circulations.

The Cape Argus figures for overall readership is approximately 303 000 with a total penetration of 0.8% (AMPS, 2013). The total circulation figures for the Cape Argus for the first quarter of 2013 was 33 247 (Audit Bureau Circulation, 2013). Readers are 61% male; 63 % have a matric and

further education; and 77% fall into the much pursued LSM 7-10 category. The Cape Argus is a quality afternoon read that offers compelling editorial for entrepreneurs, sports fans, news hounds and the politically inclined (<http://www.superbrands.com/za/pdfs/CAPEARGUS.pdf>). The paper moved from a broadsheet layout to a tabloid format.

4.6 Selection of study period and rationale for print media

The period that has been selected is 1 April 2013 - 30 June 2013. The rationale for selecting the period for the purpose of the study is that the Gupta wedding, which sparked the term “Guptagate”, by media happened during this timeframe (April and June 2013). The wedding was held in the last week of April and first week of May 2013.

Hypothesis one

The media play a significant role in increasing and decreasing levels of confidence in state institutions.

Hypothesis two

How did the media frame parliament in the wake of the Gupta scandal?

Hypothesis three

The media framed parliament as weak and indecisive during the controversy surrounding the landing of the plane at the Waterkloof air force base by the Gupta family.

4.7 Learning Outcomes

Chapter four outlines the methodology selected by the researcher. Qualitative research methodology and content analysis has been used for the purpose of the study, wherein interviews will be conducted in order to gain deep understanding and insight into mass media, how it functions, and the behaviour that drives information that is disseminated to the public on parliamentary processes.

The proceeding section will present the interviews conducted and the analysis of the investigations by the researcher and a comparative content analysis of the two newspapers the New Age and the Cape Argus.

Chapter Five: Results

5.1 Introduction

This section of the paper will present data that has been collected in order to answer the research question: Assessing the role of media in influencing the level of confidence in the South African state institutions, a case study of the SA Parliament. The first section of the paper will present and analyse the data that has been collected in order to address the hypothesis as referred to in chapter four.

The researcher will provide results of the qualitative content analysis that has been conducted in two newspapers, the Cape Argus (CA) and the New Age (NA), and the second phase of chapter five will present and examine the responses from interviews conducted with journalists, politicians and analysts in the field of media studies and political communication.

5.2 Analyses of Data Cape Argus (CA) and New Age (NA) News Articles: Number of Articles April - June

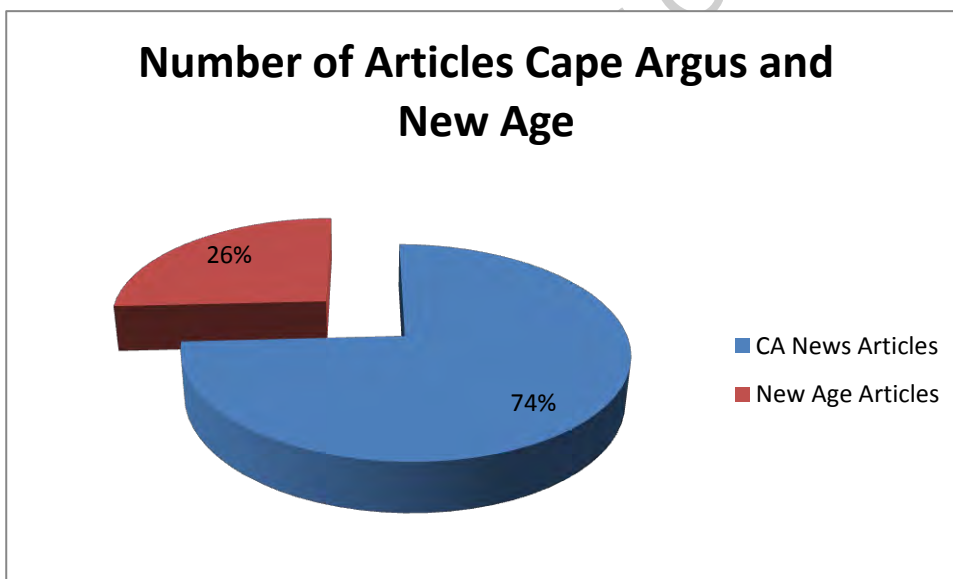


Figure 1

Figure 1 presents the overall coverage of the three months that the researcher investigated. The pie chart clearly indicates that from the period April 2013 – June 2013, the Cape Argus covered and had more news articles written and reported about the plane that landed at the Waterkloof air force base in Pretoria and how parliament was framed by the media. The plane was transporting guests attending a wedding in South Africa that was hosted by the Gupta family.

In terms of the figures and the statistics, about 74% of the news articles were published on the CA whereas the NA had about 26% news coverage. Statistically there is a huge contrast between the CA and the NA in terms of the amount of stories that were written and printed. Within the three-month period of the study, the researcher’s investigation revealed that within the month of May there was an increase in the number of stories reported and published. This is mainly due to the events that occurred afterwards and the revelations of illegal activities that were undertaken by various stakeholders.

The sample for the thesis analyses news reports that are less than 200 which therefore means it is a small sample as it is less than 200. The number of days is over three months which makes it 90 days. Although its 90 days the data that has been collected does not include weekend newspapers as the research focuses on two daily newspapers. The Cape Argus however does have a weekend publication but the New Age does not publish a weekend paper, hence the focus of the study is on daily papers.

5.2.1 Analyses Frequency over the selected timeframe

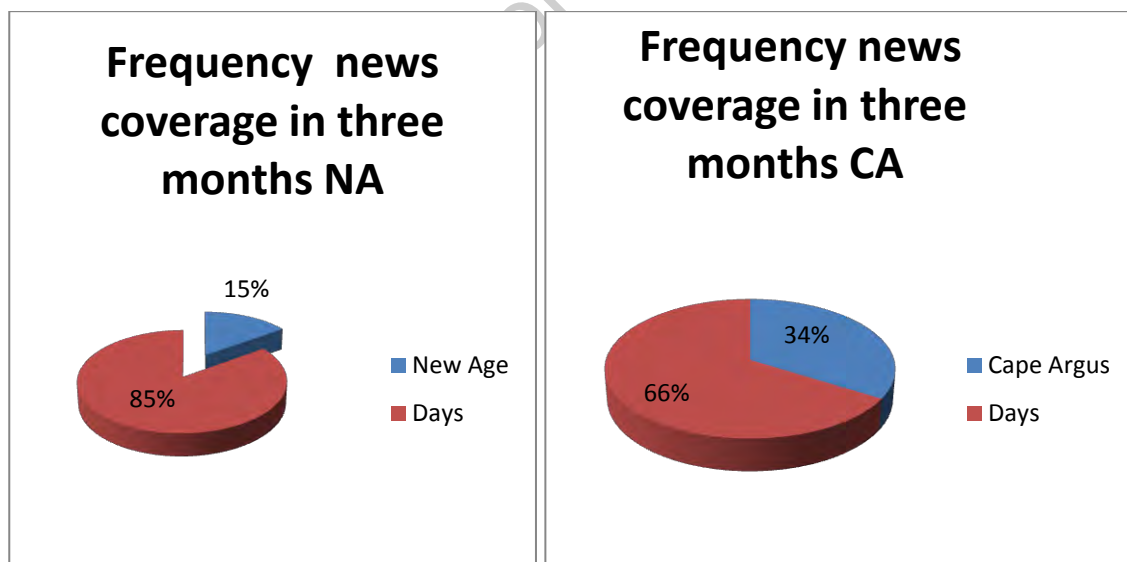


Figure 2

There is a significant difference in the frequency of articles from the two newspapers in the period chosen. The NA stands at 15% whereas the CA is at 34 %. The two graphs show that over the three-month period more stories were published by the Cape Argus unlike the New Age that did not publish articles in comparison to the Cape Argus.

5.3 Analyses of News Reports Month of May: Patterns

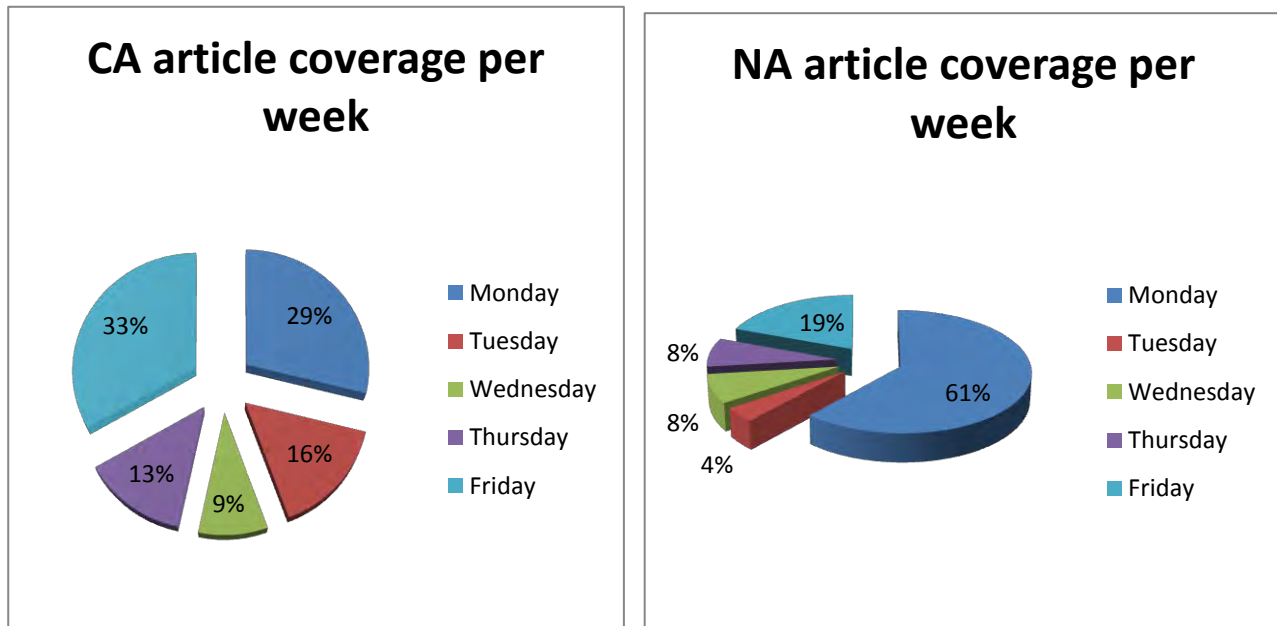


Figure 3

The two pie charts outline the number of news reports published on each day every week for the month of May. The biggest number of articles appear on a Monday and Friday from the two newspapers CA and NA.

During the month of May increased frequency is observed. On certain days of the week such as Mondays, the CA published approximately 29% of articles and on Fridays 33%. The NA published about 61% and on Fridays the figures stand at about 19%. The least number of articles published in the Cape Argus is Wednesday from the Cape Argus with a figure of 9% and Tuesday for the New Age at 4%.

Although the number of news reports as indicated earlier on (refer to figure 1) is different, with the CA having a huge number in comparison with the NA, what seems similar is the pattern in terms of the frequency in the news reports that appear on certain weekdays. With both newspapers, more articles are published on a Monday and Friday.

5.3.1 Gender Representation in the News Reports Cape Argus and New Age

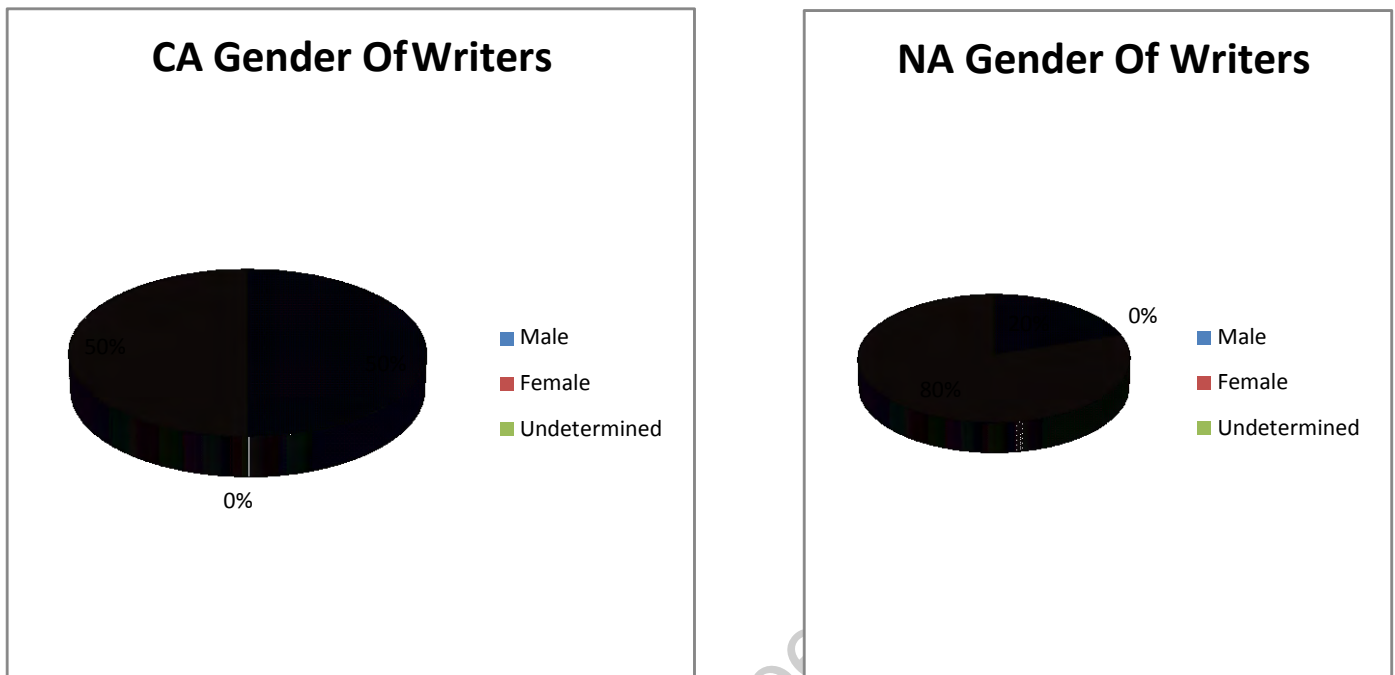


Figure 4

One of the elements that the researcher studied when collecting data from the sample was the gender of people who contributed towards writing of the news reports that is under investigation through a qualitative content analysis by the researcher. From the Cape Argus, what emerged from the data was that the journalists that wrote about the story and incident were the same person, a political journalist. This is was evident in some of the articles; a picture was used in the published news reports. The other 50% from the data that was collected and investigated the gender of the journalists could not be determined during by the researcher, in some instances, the published news reports would credit news agencies. This will be further revealed in the following subsections wherein the study deals with news agencies.

The NA has 20% news articles written by males and 80% undetermined. There are no news reports published by females. The undetermined percentage reflected a by-line that was either a staff reporter or a news agency.

The similarity between the two newspapers is that no female journalists are given credit for articles published. What is clearly distinguished with the two publications is the dominance and credit given to the male journalists who write about the news stories

5.3.2 Analysis of Journalists Name

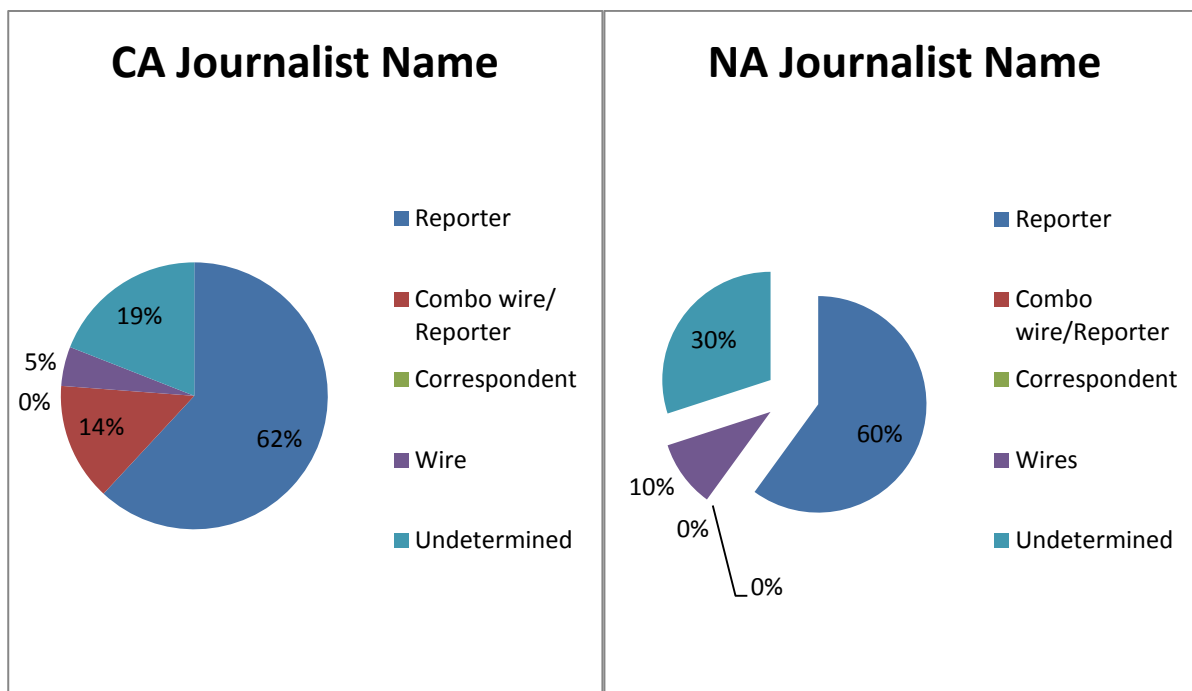


Figure 5

The previous section analysed gender representation of the two publications. Refer to figure 4 for the results. The following section further breaks down the analysis by distinguishing the various role players that have been given credit in the production of the news articles. This is done through analysing if news agencies, political correspondents or in-house journalists were responsible for publishing and writing the news reports. The CA, as mentioned earlier, had one person who wrote about the plane landing at the Waterkloof air force base in Pretoria which was reported to be a National Key Point Act governed under the South African Police Service.

The pie chart shows that 62% of the published news reports were written by journalists that are under the employment of the Cape Argus were responsible for writing the articles for the period of study under review by the researcher.. The figure stating 19% in the above pie chart reflects an undetermined percentage of news reports from the CA, meaning the articles were not credited to any source or no by-line was stated. Similar to the CA, the NA has high percentage of in-house reporters that contributed stories to the newspaper in the period under review. An amount totalling 60% were staff reporters that are under the employment of the New Age newspaper.

The two newspapers again present another similar pattern, using in-house news reporters to cover government incidences that spark controversy.

5.3.3 Standard of Reporting: Balance

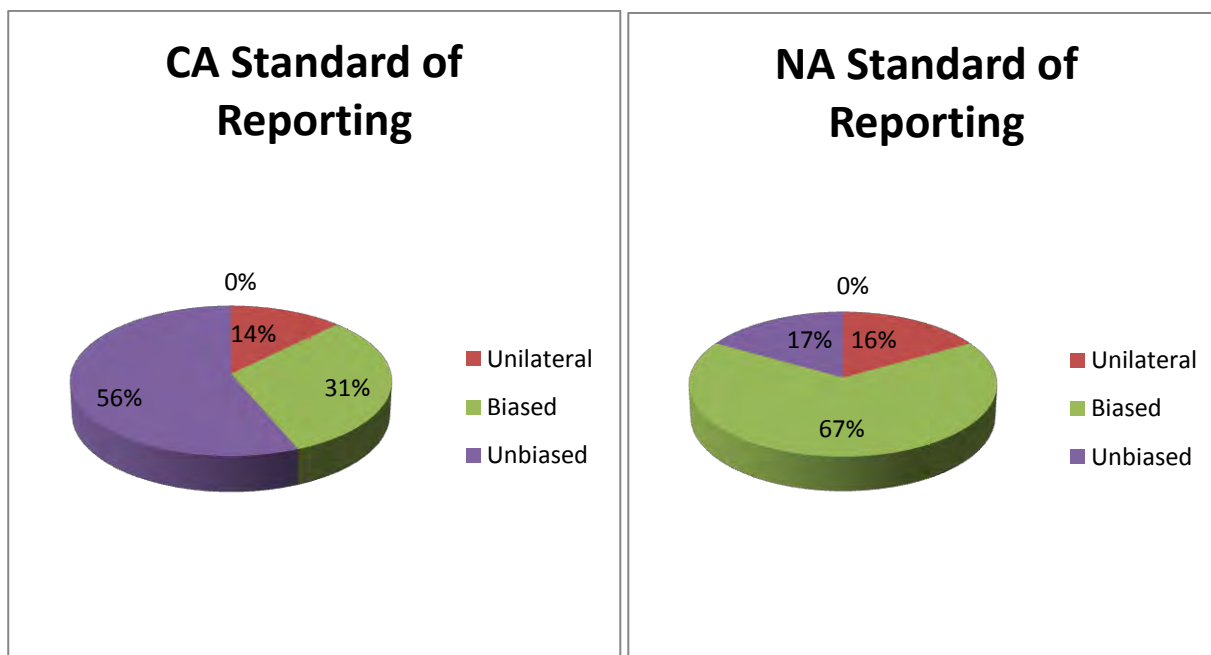


Figure 6

The coverage by the CA from the investigation reveals that the news reports were unbiased. This premised from the view by different sources and evidence utilised by the journalist in presenting the news reports. No one person overshadows but the tone used by the sources is strong. Sources that have been used provide a balance in the news piece. The manner of the story provides the reader with content in terms of how it is presented. The theoretical framework of agenda setting comes into play whereby the writers highlight issues of public importance. According to agenda setting the two newspapers set the nation's agenda by managing and bringing to the forefront of public attention a few key issues which have immense influence. The reporting by the media of Guptagate and the link that it had to high politicians alluded to the priming effect by Iyengar (1990) that was discussed in chapter two. The peak of the coverage came to light because of politicians' links to the Gupta family; moreover politicians are responsible for the state of national affairs. When there is a link with politicians with national problems there is increased attention by the media.

The difference between the two is that 56% of the news reports from the CA are unbiased and a news report from the NA amounting to 67% of the news content is biased. In comparing the two publications, the NA fails to provide a comprehensive overview of sources. The NA sources are limited to government briefings, the ANC and family media statements issued by the Gupta family. Some of the articles published by the NA do not reflect the views of independent sources, such as

business, labour and opposition parties based in parliament. This is in contrast with the Cape Argus, which uses an array of news sources.

5.3.4 Presenting of Information: Evidence

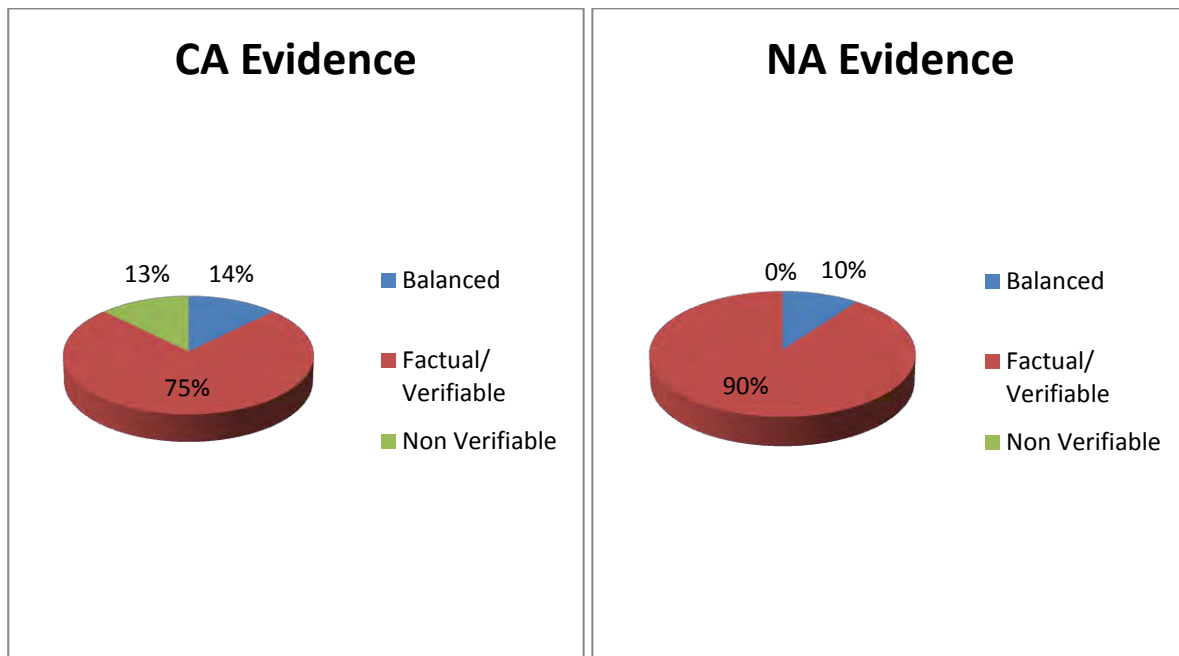


Figure 7

In presenting the articles and writing the stories it is important to note that both newspapers used factual and verifiable information at all times. This through the credible sources availed by the journalists to bring about information to the public domain and for political discourse which contributed towards agenda setting. The Cape Argus has 13% non-verifiable sources. These are stories that appeared in the editor's section of the newspaper, for instance letters to the editor or opinion articles written by other writers rather than the journalists attached to the media house. These articles contributed towards the political discourse of the thesis topic.

For the purpose of this section and study, the researcher has grouped non verifiable under those collected from the CA and NA opinion pages and letters to the editor. Mainly because it is one sided information based on the reports of the contributing reader. This is not to suggest that the information is not verifiable.

In comparing the two newspapers, the CA has 75% verifiable and factual information and the NA amounts to 90%. The evidence in presenting the articles is mainly due, as earlier discussed, as a

result of the sources used in contributing towards the news reports published during the timeframe sampled.

5.3.5 Analyses by Placement: Page Numbers

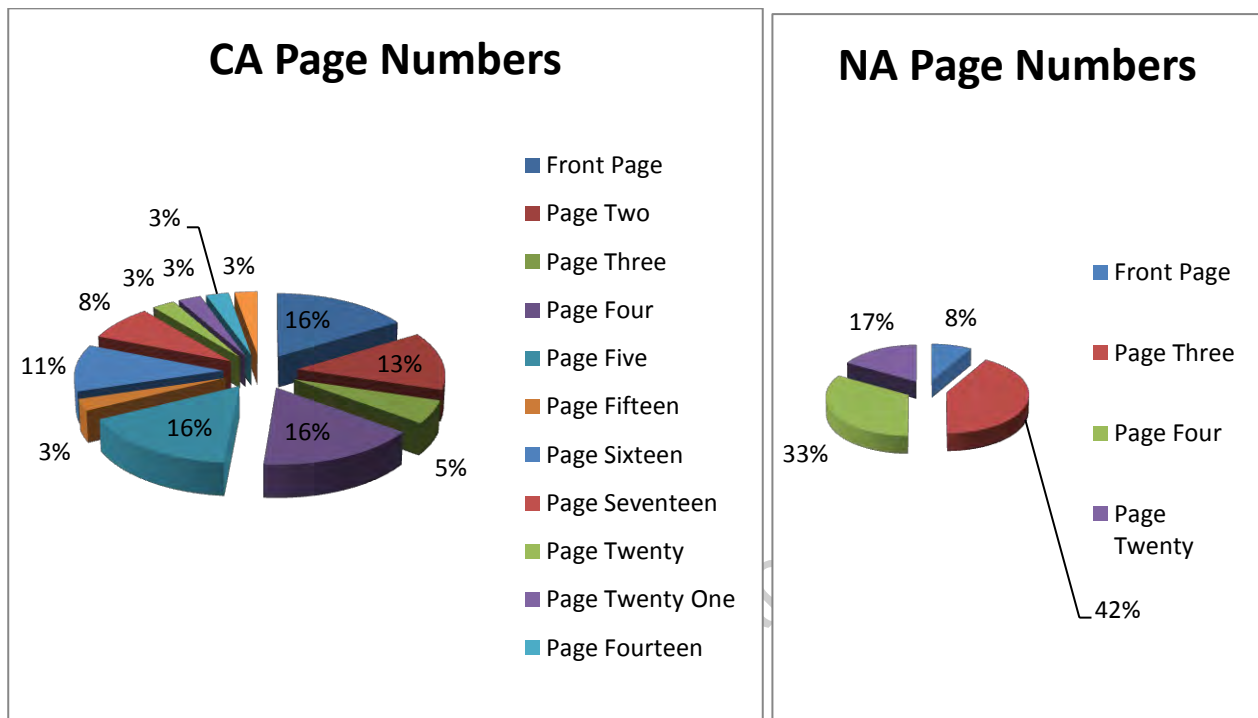


Figure 8

The data collected from the newspapers further studied on which pages the news reports were placed. What is clearly evident from the CA is the frequency and similarity of the front page, fourth and fifth page. A high volume of articles were published on pages one, four and five, and all articles that appeared on the front page served as a teaser for pages four and five and all articles were in a double-page format that were published in pages four and five.

Pages that cover opinion pieces and letters to the editor were placed on pages 15 to 21. The page numbers of the editorial section changed daily because on certain days the paper had more pages than on other days. In the editorial content, referring back to figure 7 in the aforementioned section, the pie chart in figure 7 for the CA analysis highlighted that 13% of stories published were categorised under the editor's page. Page 16 for the month of May, news reports accounted a high percentage of the stories amounting to 11%.

With the NA, the figure is similar, but in this case it is page three and four where coverage mostly occurs, with page four having about 42% of all stories and the front page 8%.

5.3.6 Representation of Visuals in the Content

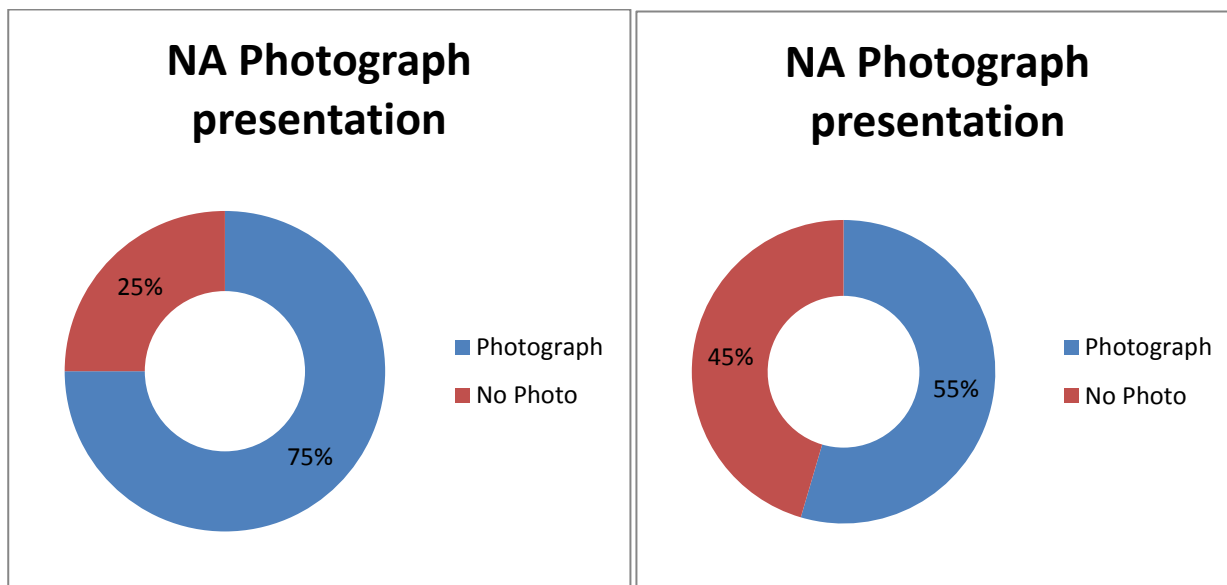


Figure 9

According to Greenberg (2008), in referring to the importance of a visual image in a text, its caption and the accompanying label or “punch line” provides clues to the preferred meanings and the types of outcomes or consequences the artist feels may legitimately result from the activity, issue or event being depicted. The presentation of a visual, according to the framing theory described by numerous media writers, provides a chance for the emergence over time of scenarios that would build a human interest frame, which “brings a human face, an individual’s story, or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (de Vreese & Semetko, 2000).

Referring to the visuals analysed, a similar pattern apparent in both newspapers is the representation of visuals in texts disseminated in the public domain. The quantity of photographs used in the publication of the stories is significant, with the CA figure totalling 75% while the NA has 55%. Although the study did not look at the type of visuals in relation to each article, the presentation of visuals on the findings by the researcher, the front, fourth and fifth page articles were accompanied by photographs.

During the investigation, some of the visuals used to enhance the news reports were various government ministers involved in the story or the ones asked to take responsibility for the incident, the president, members of parliament (mainly from opposition parties DA, Cope, IFP and the leader of the newly formed Economic Freedom Fighters), members of the ruling party (ANC), pictures of the wedding (guests, groom and the bride), arrival of guests at Waterkloof air force base and of the private jet. However, the visuals in the New Age were limited to pictures of wedding guests and the

bride and the groom, government ministers and the plane that landed at the Waterkloof air force base.

5.3.7 Analyses of Visuals and Text and Content

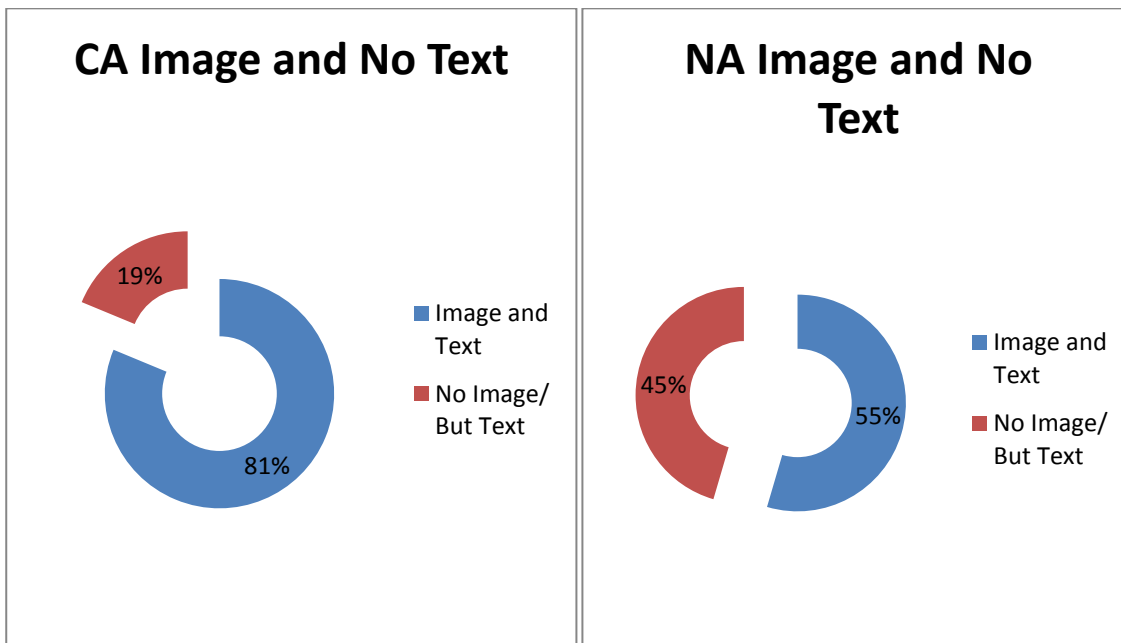


Figure 10

Scholars in the field of media and communication have studied the relationship between text and visual and the significance this has in content analysis studies. According to (Abraham & Appiah, 2006), in an article “*The Role of Visual Imagery in Priming Racial Stereotypes*”, the researchers examined the notion that both linguistic and visual resources are deployed for meaning making in multimodal messages. The concept derives its discursive basis from the theory of multi-modal discourse analysis (Norris, 2002). Multi-modal implies media representations that combine both verbal and written texts with visual images.

The perspective considers a message as a “material object”, with linguistic and visual features, both of which help signify meaning. Together and interactively, both material features (i.e. linguistic and material resources) contribute to the meaning of the verbal textual-visual material (Oremod & Ivanic, 2002). Analysis of texts that attempt to understand how both the linguistic and visual resources of the representation contribute to meaning allow a better chance of teasing out the potential coherent meaning(s) of the text.

The pie chart in figure 10 depicts the amount of news coverage that had image and text and those without image and text. The CA had about 81% representation of pictures with images and text and NA 55 % .The use of pictures in the text clearly elucidates the theory of de Vreese & Semetko (2000), which states that the presentation of visuals, in relation to the framing theory by Entman (1990 & 1993) which describes scenarios that build a human interest frame, which by bringing about a human face brings a new meaning and signifies the content into the news report.

5.3.8 Actors and Voices

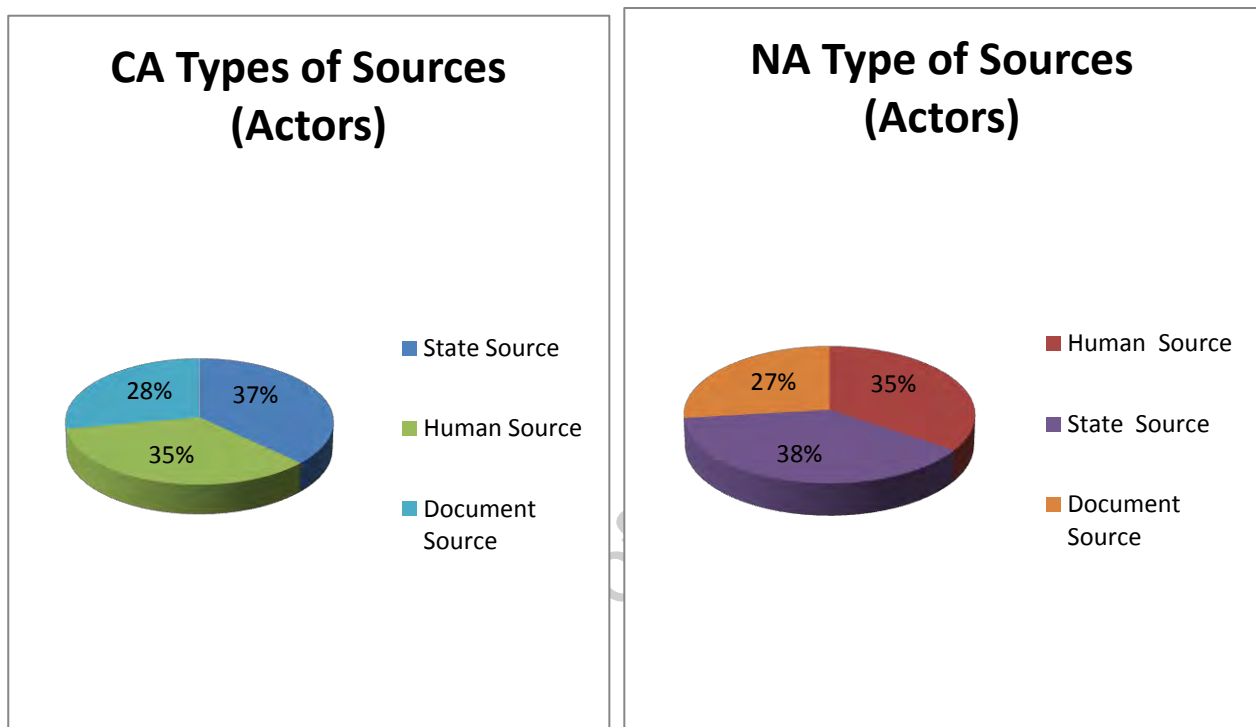


Figure 11

The above chart (figure 11) represents the voices that appear in the published news reports through various sources that have been used by the two newspapers. The state is paramount in the news reports that have been published on both newspapers. The CA has 37% news sources attributed to the state and the NA has 38%.

In describing actors according to Deacon (1999), actors in news articles are people or groups within a political environment that appear in texts. Actors are often coded to compare the differential presence of social and political groups in media content. Actors can either be political, economic or provide social context. The important of actors in media text is the influence that they (actors have on the public domain. Therefore the analysis of the various actors in the two newspapers and the actors also come across as voices that provide additional news sources in the media texts.

5.3.9 Voices and Actors: Part Two

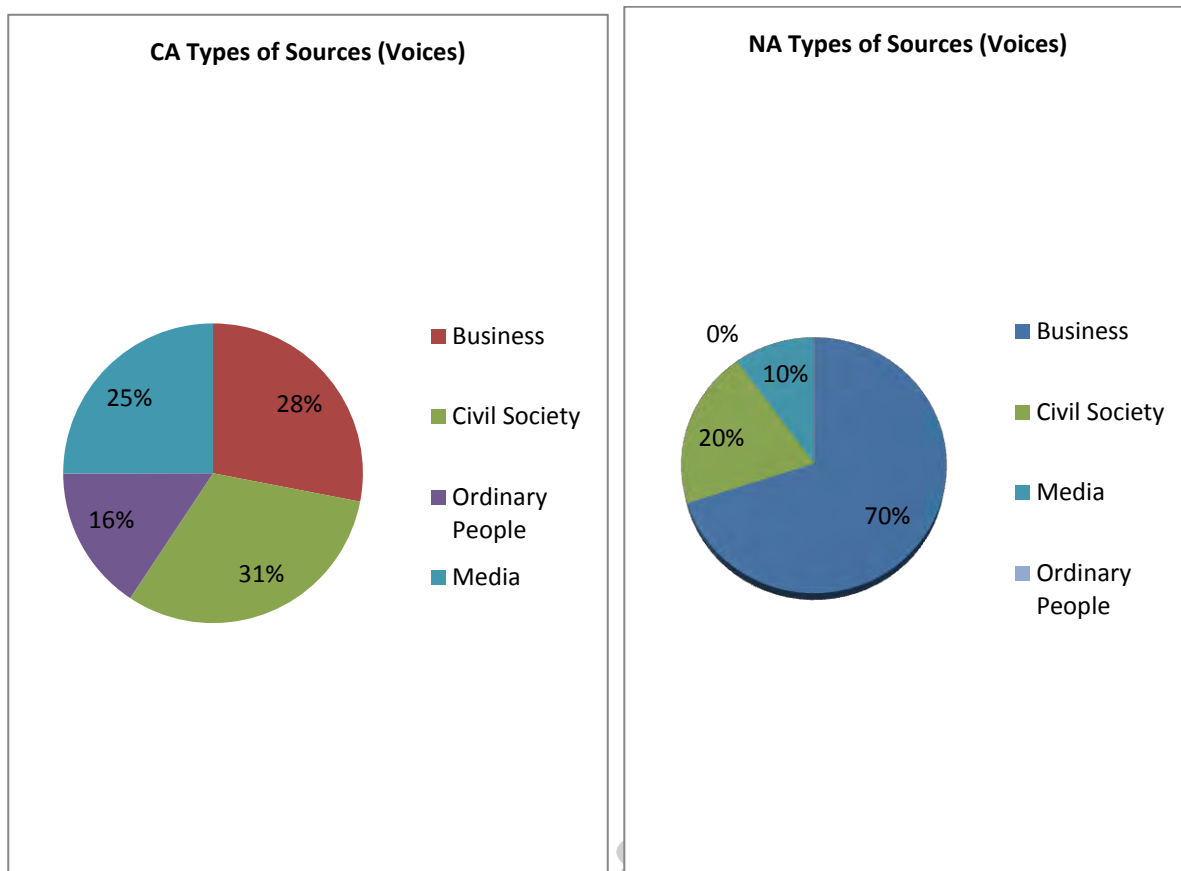


Figure 12

In order to provide balance to other sources that have been used the researcher further studied other sources that have been used in the data collected. The sources in figure 12 present voices that emanate from the news reports. In addition to Figure 11 where the state appeared to be the dominant actor based on the event and incident. Other voices that dominate from both articles in the above pie chart (figure 12) but differ in percentages are business sources with th CA 28% and NA 70% and civil society.

The chart in figure 12 presents voices that have been used in the stories. Figure 12 indicates that some of the voices that dominated the media space were civil society, including labour unions such as the Congress of the South African Trade Unions. Credible voices were used to add to the main narrative of the news reports which would then escalate the importance of the story. Voices from various stakeholders added to the criticism of how state bodies are open to abuse by people who were reported to have strong family ties with important people in government.

The articles in the CA have a balanced view but are quite critical towards state bodies in terms of how government reacted to the event.

5.3.10 Analyses Voices

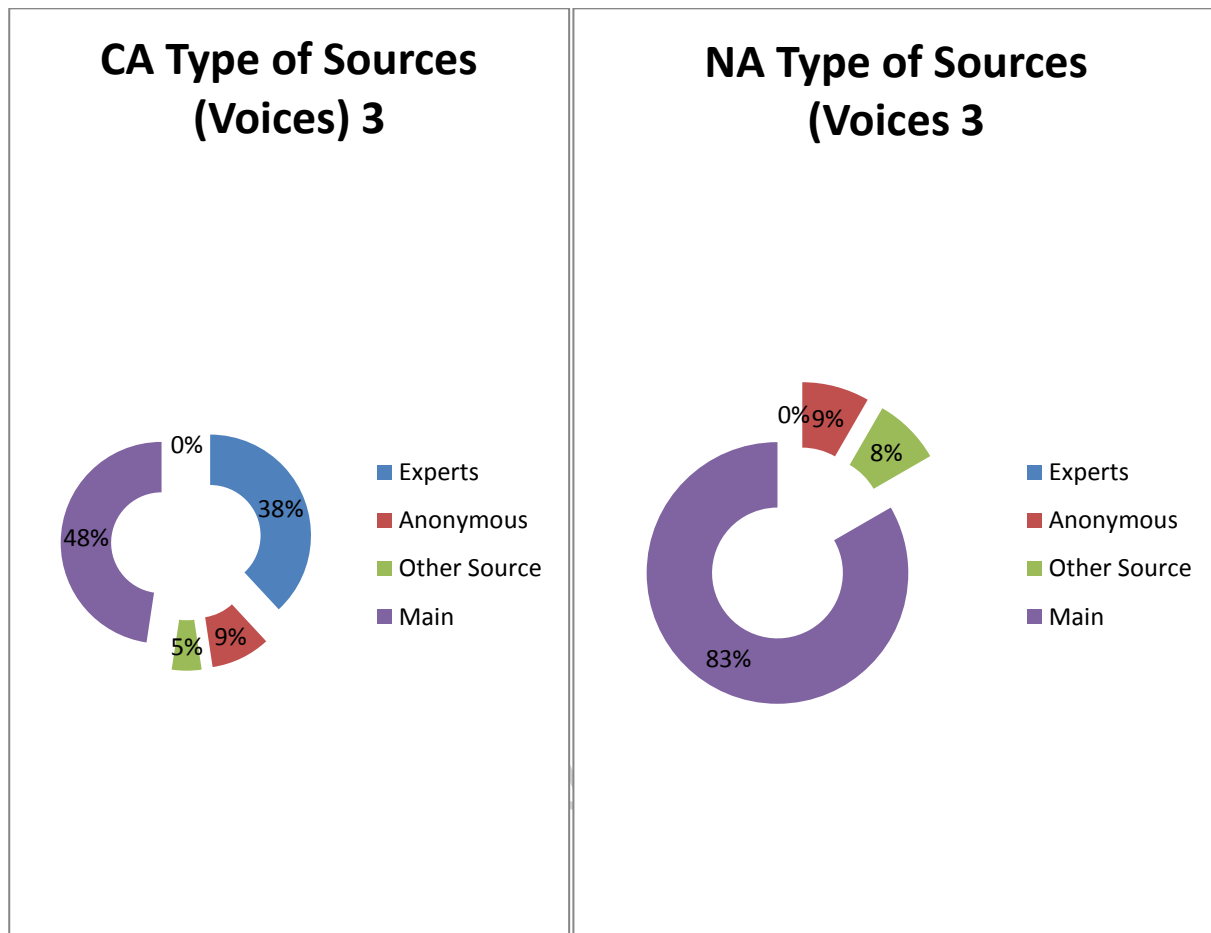


Figure 13

The sample drawn from the CA indicates in figures 11, 12 and 13 that multiple voices have been used in the articles published. Figure 13 once again reviews the main sources, which fall under the category of actor, being government including several departments (Defence, Presidency, International Relations, South African Police Service, South African Revenue Services and Parliament) and the legislature, but for the purposes of this study have all been grouped together and given one name (government/legislature). The rationale for this is because the thesis topic is investigating the role the media plays in influencing state institutions and whether the media contributes to confidence building in state institutions in the style of its news coverage or reporting. In comparing the two newspapers, the NA has made no use of experts as a form of an additional voice in reporting while the CA has a large voice of experts, which amount to 38% of the sources used in the articles. The NA has 0%. The voices of the experts are being used concurrently with the

main actors in the news stories or the data that has been collected from the period that is under review for the purpose of the study.

5.3.11 Party Political Coverage

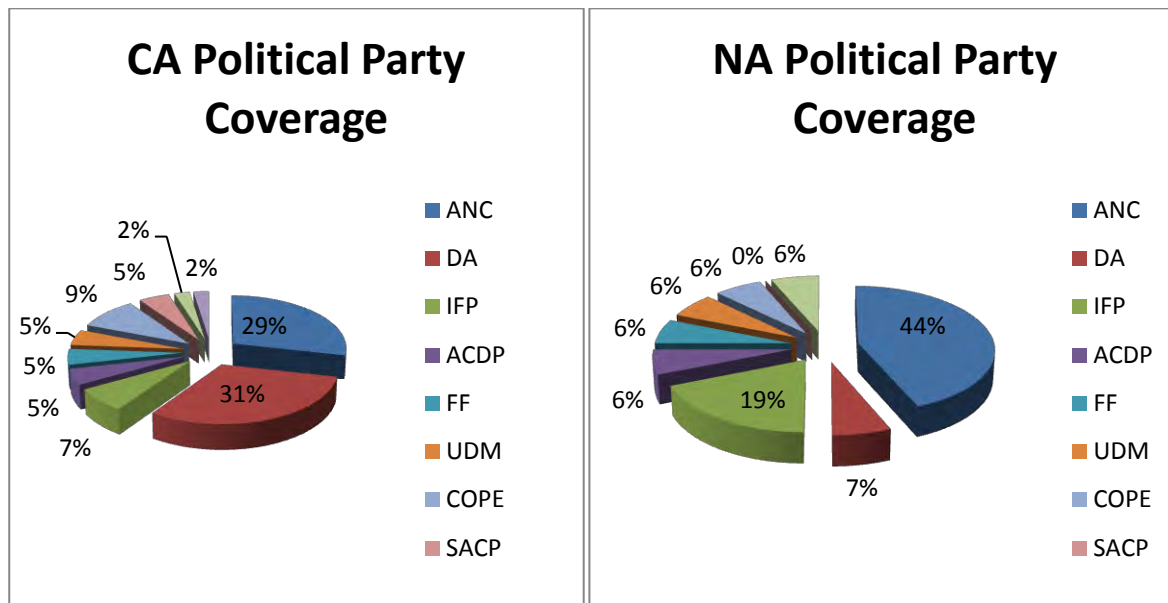


Figure 14

From the sample drawn the data clearly identifies the official opposition party in government and parliament, the Democratic Alliance (DA), as the one making the loudest noise among all the parties. Within the DA there is one person who is frequently quoted in the CA. In many incidences, his voice is very clear. This is when the political parties in parliament are said to be using their position and the institution to reveal the truth of what transpired so that someone can be held accountable. The coverage of the political parties is seen as the voice of helping to bring the truth whereas government is being presented as if the entire incident will be driven to an extent that no one at the top (such as ministers) will take responsibility. The DA in its coverage is reflected by using parliament as the only credible institution that will bring out the truth and this will be achieved through official channels of communication in parliament, sending through questions to the speaker of the National Assembly which will forcefully compel ministers to answer truthfully before the speaker. On the contrary on the news reports, the DA is quick to criticise parliament by implying that if the report is referred to the committee of parliament that deals with matters of national security then the truth will never be known by the people of the country. The African National Congress (ANC) in parliament, which is the ruling party in government, from the data collected is portrayed as the political party that will block the release of the report in parliament and this comes out based by the comments uttered by opposition parties. Opposition parties state

the ANC will hide under the committee dealing with matters of national security and the report will never be released because members in this particular committee are sworn to secrecy. The ANC uses its main structure meaning, its head office that is in Luthuli House situated in Johannesburg to release media statements condemning the landing of the private aeroplane at the Waterkloof air force base.

Comparing the two publications statistically, the differences are immense and there are no similarities. The CA uses the DA as its source while the NA uses the ANC in its news reports. In the majority of articles in the CA, the ANC is quoted but the voice of the DA is only used in a few stories in the NA. The use of another source by the New Age adds a different voice to the news reports and that being the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). When writing about the ANC in the NA, the manner and the tone is soft whereas the tone of writing and reporting in the CA is much more hard-line.

5.4 Thematic and Episodic News Frames

Academic scholars discuss framing as a fundamental part of political communication and news reporting. Specifically, as mentioned in chapter two when presenting the theoretical frameworks that will be employed by the researcher, the thesis will explore framing. A frame shapes an individual understanding and opinion concerning an issue by stressing specific elements or features of a broader controversy, reducing usually complex issues to one or two central aspects (Aaroe, 2011:207).

In the following subsection the researcher presents the frames that have been used from the samples collected from the two publications, namely the CA and NA. There are two kinds of frames, thematic and episodic. The study will distinguish the type of frame that prevails and the impact it has as discussed by media and political scholars. Frames are carried in rhetorical devices, including catch phrases, metaphors, caricatures, quotes and visual images. By framing a political issue through a selection of information and rhetorical devices, the sender of a communication may define the relevant policy problem and designate a potential solution (Entman, 1993:52).

In his research paper on framing, (Aaroe, 201) argues that frames can affect citizen opinion on a diverse range of issues but also that some frames have a stronger effect on public opinion than others (p209).

Content analysis, episodic and thematic frames have been identified as essential types of political news reporting (Iyengar, 1991) and effect studies indicate frames influence citizen attributions towards policy views and the intensity of their emotional reactions.

Episodic and thematic frames can be identified as two fundamental types of frames that appear across issues, time and space in political news communication (Iyengar, 1991). Thematic frames focus on political issues and events in a broader context and present collective abstract and general evidence. In contrast, episodic frames describe concrete events and particular cases that illuminate issues (Iyengar, 1990:22 & Iyengar, 1991).

Episodic frames carry human interest details that are expected to be more emotional and personalising than the pale statistics of a thematic frame. The human interest details presented in an episodic frame put a real and specific face on the presentation of a political problem (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000:5) and provide specific characters at which the receivers can direct their emotional reactions.

Conversely thematic frames carry abstract information presenting policy problems as impersonal figures and do not provide specific or characters at which receivers may direct their emotional reactions. Therefore the frames that encompass thematic frames are unlikely to elicit emotions whereas episodic frames as alluded to earlier somewhat influence public opinion.

In the two newspapers, the CA and NA, the framing theory discussed in chapter two and news frames present themselves in the stories published from the data collected. In all the articles, the episodic news frame has been used in the articles printed. One of the mechanisms used as part of the frame by both papers is visual images of the aeroplane as the guest disembark, wedding pictures the Waterkloof air force base, images of members of parliament during the debate on the matter in parliament. Pictures published the following day depicted the emotions of the MPs during the National Assembly debate as each one took the stand condemning the incident and demanding an independent institution to investigate what was widely termed is the media “Guptagate”.

News framing of parliament in all articles over the 90 day period used episodic frames that depicted institutions of government in negative frame this including the legislature of the Republic of South Africa.

5.5 Analysing the Findings

The objective of the paper is to investigate the role played by the media in influencing and assessing confidence levels within state institutions. This is achieved through studying reports in newspapers about parliament during the landing of a plane at Waterkloof military air force base. Three hypothesis were presented in chapter four, namely: the media play a significant role in increasing and decreasing levels of confidence in state institutions; how did the media frame parliament in the wake of the Gupta scandal; and lastly the media framed parliament as weak and indecisive during the controversy.

The first section of the results page examined the Cape Argus and the New Age through a qualitative content analysis. On the overall based on the hypothesis and in responding to the research questions parliament is seen and is framed in a way that propels government which is the executive to disclose information about the process and procedures that were taken by all parties involved into how a plane was allowed to land at Waterkloof air force base without authorisation from the relevant political heads of government. Opposition political parties and other non-governmental sources call for the executive to expose and release information on the truth behind the landing of the plane.

The framing of parliament by the two newspapers focuses on the various political parties of the legislature parliament. In comparing the Cape Argus and New Age, the Cape Argus is more critical and questions government and the ruling party through its actors. The opposition parties in parliament are the ones pushing for the truth to come out through following proper procedures that govern parliament, furthermore the opposition, in the media frame and place emphasis that government is accountable to the legislature. In its reporting, the NA is not diverse as the CA, the New Age sources are limited to the ANC in parliament and government the statements issued by the Gupta family. The framing of parliament appears to be positive by both the ANC and DA although the incident at Waterkloof is negative because of how it happened and that proper procedures were not followed, the framing of parliament as an institutions is not one that is negative as the news reports from the CA provide balance unlike the NA with limited sources. The Gupta incident exposed state institutions on how susceptible they (institutions) are to the abuse of resources by government officials and those that are in power including people who are associated to be friends with top politicians.

Moving on to a detailed explanation and discussion of the results, the theoretical framework of priming states that prominence is issues that have been given particular attention on a topic. The landing of the plane at the Waterkloof air force base (a National Key Point) carrying members of the Gupta family who were attending a family wedding at a private resort was given a lot of prominence in the two newspapers. The CA reported on the story more than the NA. In the three month period, in one month the CA had more than 74% of the articles compared to the NA, which had 26%.

The incident in itself presents state institutions in a negative manner. The tone of the coverage looked at how a private plane can be allowed to land at a strategic and National Key Point without the political approval of key government departments.

One of the differences that emerged between the two papers is the uses of sources. The CA uses different sources in presenting a balanced view of voices and actors but has dominant voices, such as the DA, in its coverage. State institutions in the data analysed are given a platform but at all times is countered by other sources that are given a voice. This is to maintain a balanced type of reporting so that the views are not one-sided. Parliament is covered as institutions that can be used to promote truth and justice. This tone is brought about by the political parties in opposition. Opposition parties in all of the news reports want the matter to be taken to parliament where government will provide a detailed report of the Gupta plane that landed at Waterkloof air force base.

The NA, on the one hand, uses two main sources: the government and the ANC. Few of the news reports made reference to opposition parties and civil society. Among the dominant sources used by the NA was the voice of the family, which gave its side of the story. In some of the data collected, news reports were one sided and unilateral in that the family media statement would be published with no alternate source quoted to provide balance to the story.

The newspapers did have some similar patterns in their coverage such as the days in the week when the story was covered, that being a Monday and a Friday, and the use of male journalists rather than female journalists on the by-lines of the news reports. In addition, the page numbers on which the articles appeared were similar with the use of pages three, four and five. Furthermore, similar patterns were present in the use of evidence in the news reports. Both have a high percentage of verifiable and factual information.

5.6 Responses from the journalists

The following subsection of chapter five presents, examines and discussed interviews and questionnaires findings that have been conducted from various stakeholders in the field of media and political communication.

The journalists responded to numerous questions but four have been selected that are relevant to the research topic of the thesis. The four critical questions revolve around role of media in creating confidence levels in state institutions.

- **As journalists, is the media doing enough in the way it covers state institutions, thereby influencing confidence levels in state institutions.**

From the respondents, about two indicated yes from the above question and three said no. In breaking down the answers according to the demographics, the researcher firstly looks at the responses according to the race groups. The two Caucasian respondents (Anonymous and Donwald) strongly feel that it is not the job of the media to influence confidence levels of state institutions. The two previous respondents felt that the current reporting of state institutions is sufficient enough. Whilst the two black respondents (Siyabonga and Andisiwe) are of the view that the media is doing enough in terms of reporting about state institutions. One respondent (Asanda), of the same race as the latter, was of the opinion that the media is not doing enough to cover state institutions.

The two Caucasians, a male in his late fifties (Donwald) and the other in her (Anonymous) early sixties and female, are of the view that it is the role of institutions such as parliament and government to ensure confidence and this is achieved and this through communicators and that institutions should be administered in a way that build confidence. The role of the media is to be critical and keep public institutions accountable.

Conflicting viewpoints emanate from the three black respondents, the male (Siyabonga) in his forties and the two females (Asanda and Andisiwe) in their thirties. The first lady respondent (Andisiwe) clearly feels that issues covered by journalists are those that negatively affect the people whereas (Asanda) highlights that the media emphasis is always on the negative side of state institutions, less coverage is received on service delivery. Media focuses on inefficiencies and corruption. Their male counterpart's (Siyabonga) stance on the matter indicates that certain elements of what government does is left out and more in this area could be done in reporting about

the positive aspects although some journalists make an effort in covering these areas but not all of them but the media remains highly critical of state institutions.

- **What role should the media play in ensuring sufficient confidence in state institutions?**

According to the two white Caucasian respondents the role of the media is to interrogate and question state institutions. The respondent's viewpoint on this question states that, if the institutions are run well the media will reflect this in its coverage and if the administration fails the media will portray the failures.

The three respondents viewpoints have similarities but at the same time have contradictions, (Asanda) the young black female journalist who works for the public broadcaster the SABC understands and feels that more could be done by the media in reflecting and providing information to the public about the work that is done by parliament especially around issues of legislation which is highly important to citizens. (Siyabonga), black male journalist who works for the New Age, is of the view that the media is not objective enough in covering state institutions, media tends to be subjective and narrow in its reporting. Furthermore he (Siyabonga) states that the media has a responsibility in exposing the work of parliament and journalists are failing in this regard. (Andisiwe) response is that the responsibility in ensuring that the media does its work properly is premised on the good media relations between institutions and the media. The reason it is difficult, in her view, is as a result of the lack of information from parliament.

- **In your own personal view do you think journalists report fairly about parliament?**

Responses were quite varied as the majority of the respondents are of the view that the news media publish and frame parliament fairly, as reports mainly range from the political parties and the legislation that parliament deals with and some of the scandals that happen within the institution. However, two respondents (Andisiwe) from the Mail and Guardian and (Siyabonga) believe the media report quite negatively about parliament.

- **Would you agree with the statement that the media undermines the confidence of state institutions because they focus on attack and counter-attack.**

Two of the respondents hold a firm view that the media do focus on attack and counter-attack when reporting about parliament, whereas the remaining respondents had a different opinion. Interestingly the male white respondent (Donwald) holds a firm view that controversy by government should be reported whilst (Asanda) notes that if counter-attacks and attacks happen she believes it cannot be deliberate on the part of the media. She states that the media at the best of

times tends to be sensationalist. The anonymous respondent at all times in her responses emphasised the point that the media's role is to hold government accountable and in most instances tends to be critical when doing that.

- **There is a growing perception that journalists are sceptical about state institutions. Previous studies that I as the researcher have come across have shown that the media used to be pro parliaments but over the years research has revealed that journalists are more critical of state institutions. What do you think has caused this change.**

According to Siyabonga, journalists are more critical of state institutions because of the bill of rights that is in place and the Constitution which allows journalists to express themselves in the manner that they (media) are more critical of state institutions. Andisiwe could not account for why media reporting style has changed but alludes to the fact that members of parliament complain about journalists and how their reporting on institutions of government and the ruling political party have changed over the years. Donwald, in his response, says: "The euphoria of a new democracy has started to ebb." The quality of the representation in the governing party and in the opposition is poor compared to 1994 to 1999. Thus parliament as "a state institution" is likely to be more critically assessed now. Asanda's response indicates that over the years a lot of responsibility has been placed on parliament, raising the bar for scrutiny as well. As parliament gets more responsibilities in terms of holding the state to account, oversight on service delivery and how state budgets are spent, there is growing belief that parliament then needs to be scrutinised more closely. Scandals about the personal conduct of members of parliament and involvement in state departments they are supposed to do oversight on has also created reason for a more sceptical mind set in journalists. For anonymous, the scepticism comes from the malfunctioning of the state institutions themselves – their capacity to deliver and their ability to fulfil their mandates. There is an understanding of the problems, such as a lack of capacity, but increasingly there is despair over corruption which several studies suggest has now become endemic to the state

5.7 Responses from Politicians

- **Describe the media coverage of politicians and the work that is performed by parliament and how it is covered by mass media.**

Responding to the question, (Mr Njikelana) a member of the ANC the political party that is the majority in government, sees the media as selective when covering issues and mostly sensational. (Mr Njikelana) states that the media often show skirmishes between the ruling and opposition parties. Furthermore he states that the media will never show the link between the committee

meetings and the two houses of parliament that is the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). Whilst (Mr Greyling), member of opposition, Independent Democrats (ID) feels that coverage of parliament is fairly good but at times tends to be sensational. Ms (Kalyan), a member of the official opposition in parliament, hold the same views as Mr Greyling in that the media has a fair representation and coverage of parliament. The only outstanding element in the coverage of news for her is that some committees receive more publicity than others and this is purely based on the sexiness of the committee, for instance the portfolio committee on police will get more coverage in comparison to the portfolio committee on science and technology. Two respondents Mr Maluleka from the ANC points out that the news is not always accurate and the oppositions parties always receive coverage whereas (Ms van der Merwe) from the IFP feels that the news about parliament is always negative and the stories that receive publicity are about politicians who are involved in corruption and fraud.

- **Asses the role played by the media in projecting a certain level of confidence and influence.**

According to (Mr Njikelana) the media emphasise parliament as being ineffective or as a talk show, he further adds that the media highlights delays and failures at the expense of whatever has been achieved. But (Mr Njikelana) is quick to appreciate the role of the media in helping influence a very subtle way of expressing confidence in parliament. For instance he notes that there are a number of marches that come to parliament. Why do people come to parliament he asks, it's a sign that parliament is not just another institutional body but we (parliamentarians) do have an influence. I presume that media in one way or another plays a role to profile parliament as one of the centres of power, which can address socio-economic issues. *“ It's an interesting way of expressing that confidence, the criticism in itself, the nature of the criticism where they say you are parliament and you have been given power. You are supposed to be doing this and you are not doing it and that on its own has a component of triggering awareness on ordinary people*

Two female respondents that are affiliated with opposition parties (Ms Kalyan) and (Ms van der Merwe) strongly feel that the media has an important role to play in shifting or influencing the level of confidence of state institutions especially in the manner that they (media) report and write. For instance, one respondent (van der Merwe) notes the following: “Most people only interact with politics and parliament through the media. And therefore, because they don't portray an image of confidence in parliament as an institution people generally don't have confidence in the institution either. If you ask anyone about parliament they will tell you it is a place where people go to eat, sleep and earn big salaries which they do not deserve.” Hence the media and journalists play a

vital role. They shape perceptions of the public at a large. Their male counterpart from the ID (Mr Greyling) is of the view that the media does not have a role to play in ensuring increased levels of confidence in state institutions. Media's role is to hold institutions such as parliament accountable as per their constitutional mandate. Supporting the two female respondents from the opposition parties, (Mr Maluleka) from the ANC reiterates that the media affects the way people view parliament. The media should try and give what is accurate and what happens in parliament not the views of the journalists. In his response he notes that at times news reports emanating from parliament about committee meetings seem to be reports about another meeting that he (Mr Maluleka) was not part of.

- **Is there a certain frame of how media project the parliament: positive, neutral or negative?**

The overall assessment by all the respondents is that the media tends to be negative in the framing of parliament. Issues in the press that relate to parliament or government institution, at the best of time, are said to be clouded by corruption and scandals and the important work that happens in committees is not given proper space in the newspapers or broadcast time on both radio and television.

5.8 Responses from experts

- **What role should the media play in shaping and influencing institutions in government?**

Responding to the question, Professor Duncan from Rhodes University notes that the media should play a key role in shaping public perception. He furthermore states that not everyone has a chance to go to parliament, so the only way they (public) can get information is from the media. The media need to choose which information is salient and how to frame it. Advocate Malunga he agrees with the notion that the media should play a role in influencing, shaping or shifting the state institutions because the media plays a vital role in the public perceptions about government institutions. Although two of the respondents have differing standpoints, Mr Masebe the government communicator, is of the opinion that it is the institutions themselves that need to do more in influencing the media's agenda. The media cannot take the role of ensuring increased confidence of government institutions. While Professor Harber from Wits University believes the media is there to report, analyse, criticise, explain and contextualise what happens in an institution, and whether this is positive or negative matters less than if the reporting is accurate, balanced, interesting, fair and useful.

Assessment of parliament's performance and news coverage.

From assessing the coverage and content that is portrayed by the media, Professor Duncan relates the following: parliament's work is mainly passing legislation. It does not do much oversight work. But when it does do oversight work, then it can be quite vigorous and in-depth. Also, parliament may not be as independent of the executive as has often been thought, certainly in relation to the Protection of State Information Bill, and will defer to the executive on really controversial issues. Mr Maluleka states that the news coverage tends to be thin and does not focus on the primary information of parliament, that of the committee meetings and oversight work. The perception of parliament created by the media is that it is a platform where members of the opposition take government to task over its failures. This might be informed by the fact that opposition MPs are often more critical of government while ruling party MPs tend to complement government, states Mr Masebe. Moreover he notes that very often media reporting of debates tend to highlight drama and controversial statements while paying less attention to more substantive issues. This could also be influenced by how MPs conduct themselves and relate to each other during debates, for example MPs interject and haul at each other when they do not like the point that another MP makes. Such things end up being the story and the real issues of debate are missed. Hence the coverage of parliament in most cases tends to be negative. Advocate Malunga adds that TV coverage of parliament is portrayed as vibrant and entertaining. However, in print media MPs are often perceived as blindly partisan and not diligent enough. This is due to a number of stories last year which highlighted absenteeism. Very little is reported on the success of the portfolio committees. Professor Harber in his response said: "My perception is that parliament adds little to the quality of legislation or the direction of policy, but is largely there to rubber-stamp decisions made in the party or in cabinet. The quality of debate appears to be low, the commitment to scrutiny of the executive uncertain".

5.9 Cross analysis of main research question from the three respondents

In chapter three the researcher discussed that the erosion of confidence in the major institutions of society, especially those of representative democracy is a far more serious threat to democracy than a loss of trust in other citizens or politicians (Newton and Norris, 1999). A wealth of evidence from academic scholars suggests that trust in leaders or particular administrations are subject to greater short-term fluctuation than confidence in institutions. However, institutions are large, impersonal and broadly based and the public's estimation of them is less immediately affected by particular news items or specific events. Thus, loss of confidence in institutions may well be a better indicator of public dissatisfaction with the modern world because they are the basic pillars of society

(Newton and Norris, 1999: 2). The underlying question is why institutions seem to be losing confidence. What seems to be escalating the problem further? Does the media play a role in this regard. Is the media entirely to blame because of the news agenda and the framing of government institutions?

Some scholars provide an array of reasons for loss of confidence within state institutions. In undertaking the research one of the main objectives was to assess study, investigate and look at the role the media plays in influencing confidence of state institutions. That is if media plays a significant role.

In attempting to answer the research questions, the majority of MP's agreed that the media have an important role to play in shaping and ensuring increased level of confidence in state institutions but one MP disagreed with this assessment. The respondent was of the understanding that media needs to be critical of parliament but when reporting media has to be fair and balanced. What comes across clearly from all the MPs is that the framing of parliament by the media is sensational. The media according to the MPs fails to report about essential work that parliament accomplishes, especially committee work which is where the substance of parliament's work is done. The respondents are of the view that parliament is framed in a negative manner by the media.

The experts that participated in the research answered the research question but did not all provide a similar answer. About two respondents indicated that media needs to focus more on state institutions because the general public do not have interaction with parliament but only through the media. The importance of the media is the influence that journalists have on the perceptions of people. Also that media serve as the middle man between the government and the public and this is an opinion that is shared by the members of parliament. Amongst the respondent from the panel of experts, one indicated the role of the media does not lie in writing positive articles and broadcasting favourable news inserts about government – that responsibility rests upon the institutions. One respondent was of the view that media need to report in a fair, balanced manner whether that is negative or positive.

What is clear is that the role of the media is to report and to hold government accountable but the media need to report in factual and balanced manner. The media is important because of the influence it has in society and the message that it carries. What differs amongst the journalists is how the message is framed. Some are the view that it is not the role of the media to create confidence but contradictions in the responses indicate that more still needs to be done by media in

writing about parliament and that presently it is not happening because issues are clouded by the inefficiencies and scandals of politicians.

5.10 Learning Outcomes

In concluding chapter five, insights have been gained about what role the media should play in influencing and shifting the levels of confidence in state institutions, and an answer has been attained from the qualitative content analysis and participants about whether the mass media should shift the levels of confidence in state institutions.

From the content analysis, the study demonstrates notable differences between the two newspapers on their coverage. Some of the differences are in the use of sources within the articles and the tone prevalent in the content. The framing of parliament comes across in a positive manner because of the issues that are brought before parliament by the opposition seeking truth and justice.

The interviews with journalist, media experts and members of parliament on the one side reveal something contradictory from the research findings of the qualitative content analysis. What arose is that the journalists and experts feel institutions themselves should create confidence in their organisations/state institutions, in this case parliament. Journalists are of the view that what they are currently performing is within the ambit of their work. The media participants feel that they need to keep watch to make the state accountable for their priorities and be a watchdog of service delivery. Where institutions do not perform, are corrupt and squander tax payers' money, something which is always in the spotlight, the media has a responsibility to report such cases. If government or parliament was performing in an effective fashion, more positive stories would be publicized in the press, according to the journalists. A small percentage of journalists believed that the media can do more to highlight the work of parliament. There is a general consensus that many critical elements of parliament's activities which have a significant impact on people's lives go unpublished. This is a view that is shared by majority of members of parliament interviewed and the panel of experts interviewed.

What also emanated from the respondents is the consensus across journalists that they are agenda driven, and reporters agree that political thinking plays a huge role in what influences them. Some stories are covered more than others, some committees are reported on more than others, and the media reports on the frivolous dealings of the two houses of parliament when members behave in an un-parliamentary way as opposed to the substance of law making. A concern that is shared by members of parliament and panel of experts is that most media houses and journalists miss out on

important issues, debates from both houses, public hearings and the oversight work that is performed by the various committees of parliament.

What is missing from the news reports is the good work executed by parliament that of making laws, doing oversight work and the public hearings on topical issues which then influence a lot of policy issues in government. This is as a result of the agendas and bias journalists agree they have within their profession.

During the interview phase what also came out is the 100% agreement from all journalists that media disregard commentary from the chairperson of various portfolios and select certain committees because they say the opposition parties do a better role of making government accountable in the line of questioning taken. This element is something members of the ruling party see as an agenda by the media to profile opposition and make their lead stories on what the opposition parties say about the inefficiency of government.

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Chapter Six: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

6.1 Overview

Before summing up the thesis it is important to recap on the research question, which aimed to investigate the role of media in creating confidence levels in state institutions, and also to investigate the impact of the agenda that journalists have in relation to the content disseminated in the public domain for discourse.

Chapter two of the thesis presented the theoretical framework of the influences on media and models of confidence in government institutions. The theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter two were framing, agenda setting and priming. In a South African context one model of confidence that seems to be more applicable is the Institutional Performance Model. It states that if governments perform well this will elicit the confidence of citizens, while those that perform badly or ineffectively generate feelings of distrust and low confidence. The model assumes that the general public recognise whether government or political institutions are performing well or poorly and react accordingly. This then is what the media focuses on and exposes as the lack of performance by the government, which ordinary citizens react to.

In chapter three the researcher presented an academic literature review of similar studies that relate to the topic, an overview of the history of the topic by discussing the media and confidence levels within the various elements of the state. The chapter also focussed particular attention on how the media generally covers parliament in western democracies, including African countries. In addition to the literature review, this thesis examined the covering of parliamentary elections by the media in Africa.

In answering the three hypothesis presented in chapter four where discussion detailing the methodology employed by the researcher, the investigation of the content analysis which is the first part in the research before dealing with in-depth interviews and questionnaires, the findings in the content analysis indicate that the media play a significant role in increasing and decreasing levels of confidence in state institutions. This through the various theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter two such as framing, agenda setting and the use of priming on matters concerning politicians. The framing and choices made by journalists through the various theoretical frameworks have an impact in institutions. The framing theory which makes refers to salient issues being made noticeable and agenda setting theory dealing with providing content that enables the public to think about issues in the public domain.

Overall, based on the hypothesis and in responding to the research questions, parliament is seen and is framed in a way that propels government (the executive) to disclose information about Guptagate. Opposition political parties and non-governmental sources call for the executive to expose and release information on the truth behind the landing of the plane. The framing of parliament in this incident particularly focuses on the various political parties in parliament, not the overall institution. In comparing the CA and NA, the CA is more critical and questions government and the ruling party. This it does through its sources whilst the opposition parties in parliament are the ones driving and pushing for truth to come out through parliament, including government institutions that appear to be independent of the executive. The NA in its reporting is not as diverse as the CA, the sources are limited to ANC in parliament, government and the statements issued by the Gupta family.

The second part of the research dealing with interviews such as in-depth interviews and questionnaires indicates that's, news framing of parliament has presented the legislative arm of government as unsuccessful and one that lacks credibility for the people it represents. The investigation revealed that people have a distorted view of parliament. This was confirmed through the admissions of members of parliament who agree that people have no understanding of what a member of parliament does, because of what people watch and read in the media. This view is also shared by the experts that were interviewed in the research.

Reporting the proceedings of the Houses of Parliament, it was evident that most people do not have the time to go through various committee reports and Hansard – as one respondent alluded to in the interviews (**See annexure three**), therefore individuals have to depend for information on the news reports of the daily and weekly media houses, with these reports moulded by the agenda of the media. The moulding of the news content is of critical concern because of the important role the media plays in creating perceptions of the state.

In keeping with the framing theory, it is clear that the media makes certain issues more prominent and noticeable than others, and devotes different amounts of time to certain issues. The content disseminated has a direct bearing on the levels of trust in society. Numerous studies, as mentioned in chapter two and three, examine the impact of media in society and the general effects of the press. The power of the mass media can determine the fate of politicians and political causes; they influence governments and their electorates (Street, 2001:231).

One thing remains pertinent when dealing with the media in relation to political organisations or institutes in nothing will change – the press will remain the watchdog of the nation. That is what the interviews with the respondents revealed. The research also proved that the media is ever alert to find fault, to give honour where it is due and to report fairly and to the best of its ability on the proceedings of the legislatures (Cutten, 1935).

6.2 Conclusions

The outcomes of the in-depth interviews show that the media rejects responsibility for shifting confidence levels in state institutions. Similarly, the media participants believe that what is watched and read in the newspaper is as a result of the state organisations themselves, because of the manner in which government performs on issues of service delivery and how they are held accountable by the media and citizens. In contrast, experts in the field mention that to some degree the media should play a meaningful and positive role in regard to shaping views and opinions, and making fair representations of the institutions. This is something the politicians also allude to. This can be achieved through fair reporting and reporting on topics that are deliberated by parliament instead of simply sensationalising the institution.

6.3 Limitations

One of the limitations as a researcher in doing this master's thesis has been applying the selected research methodology. Initially, when presenting the proposal, the number of people identified to be participants amounted to 15, and the researcher ended with a total of 14 participants. This is not through the lack of trying from the researcher, but the realisation that working with human participants who are professionals is problematic. It was a challenge for my participants to commit to times and dates for interviews. The nature of the work done by research participants resulted in the researcher having to concede up until the last minute. Some of the participants agreed to participate during the research but never returned the consent forms whilst others had reservations about having their names in a document that would become available to the public, hence their request for anonymity.

Amongst the limitations with the thesis is the methodology that was used. To mention but a few of them would be as if the researcher is writing what is already in the texts in communication research methodology. Access to respondents became a major hurdle, even though all the respondents are housed in one address. It seemed challenging to commit to a date and time. Obtaining information was another challenge, all the respondents had various viewpoints on the subject matter thereby making it difficult to analyse and code the data. Another element that came up was the time

required to do in-depth interviews, hence questionnaires were sent which were followed by telephonic interviews in areas that needed clarity.

6.4 Recommendations

The research can be extended in various ways. Firstly, the research could be extended to include other role players such as political analysts and civil society to study their influence on state decisions. Secondly, the methodology could also be extended to include a more quantitative approach that seeks to determine the scale and composition of influences of media on public perception of state institutions and influence on political decision-making by attaching a statistical influence of each role player on key state decisions. Some of the key decisions the research could focus on could include, amongst others, the decision to close the Scorpions (an elite crime fighting unit dealing with specialised cases), the e-toll saga and the Protection of State Information Bill and the Traditional Courts Bill. The methodology to be utilised is testing dependent variables against the independent variables or vice versa. Political analysts and civil society (represented by various organisations) also influence the state's decisions through various arenas. Firstly, they can change the perception and the outlook of the government or representatives of the government on specific issues through rigorous debates and discussions. Secondly, they are able to force the government / or representatives of the government to effect desired outcomes through pressure (boycotts, strikes, marches). Thirdly, they sometimes create an environment where they are able to act as the only legitimate link between civil society and government or the mouthpiece of civil society on various policy matters e.g. HIV/Aids, e-tolls, housing, public health sector, sexual abuse of women and children etc.

The research has raised the question of how we judge confidence of state institutions. Can this be attributed only to the media by judging what we read, or is there a need to go further by observing the institutions themselves, whether they have met the targets in relation to the role of the media in portraying the success. Can confidence levels in state institutions mean something different to different individuals? A public perception study focussing on people and how the media impacts on them or an investigation into whether people driven by the institutional performance model are an area of study that I as a researcher recommend for further investigation.

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Annexures

ANNEXURE ONE : Journalist interviews transcript

- **As journalists, is the media doing enough in the manner it covers state institutions thereby influencing confidence levels in state institutions.**

Siya: I think the media is doing enough to create level of state institutions. There are elements of institutions that are being left out but there is sufficient coverage from those that are being mentioned by the media.

Andi: I don't think as journalists we highlight issues to build confidence but we sort of highlight issues that negatively affect people. I don't think it's about parliament when I report it is not about parliament it's about the people. I don't care about the image of parliament. It's about what will affect the people. I feel bad last week I did a story about what to expect in parliament for 2013. I had to write in 600 words. I wrote about the secrecy bill that it is coming this year and the transparent amendment bill the one which will deal with toll. If I had space I would have mentioned more because these bills attract negative publicity. I thought afterwards I would have done more to write about positive bills

Don: I do not believe it is the media's role to build confidence in state institutions. It is the institutions themselves that need to be administered in a manner, which engenders confidence. They would then automatically be given "good" coverage.

Asa: No the media is not doing enough to cover state institutions the coverage about state institutions has for the most part been laying blame, exposing inefficiencies without acknowledging success or where improvements are taking place. Focus has been mostly on corruption and very little on delivery where it occurs. This happens in both print and broadcast media.

Anonymous: It is not the job of the media to create confidence in state institutions so I think the question is not posed correctly. The real question I believe is the media truly reflecting the way state institutions are operating. Whether or not this creates public confidence in them is a question for the government communications unit to address.

- **What role should the media play in ensuring sufficient confidence in state institutions?**

Siya: I don't think so I think what is happening the role played by the media is not objective enough in terms of covering state institutions therefore its role becomes narrow and subjective. I think media has the responsibility. Let alone what people do in those institutions. We have a

responsibility of exposing the work of parliament what it is doing for them and the relationship of society in that.

Andi: We don't know if there are any positive things that come out of parliament. The spokesperson hardly ever comes out and tells us if there is anything. We don't know about the things that happen in parliament because they never tell us. We have to go out and find news and we have to go with what we think well. And that might have an impact in the confidence levels. Our role is to report about what happens but that is difficult when media managers are less forthcoming with information, which then makes our role difficult in term of reporting on what really happens about the institution

Don: I don't accept the premise. It is the role of the media to question and interrogate the administration of state institutions. If they are run well, the media will reflect that. If they are not – such as the SAA or Denel or Eskom – the media coverage will reflect that.

Asa: The media could do better in providing the public with information when there are new measures to deliver services to the public. To educate the public more about what state institutions provide, not just when they fail to provide those services. For instance, the Child Protection Register has received very little attention in the two years it has come into existence. That has robbed the public of the opportunity to know and take part in this measure to help protect vulnerable children against abuse

Anonymous: I don't think the media has a role to play in creating confidence in state institutions. On the other hand, the media operates from a set of values about how society should function – that is it promotes a concept of democracy, justice for all, equality. In this regard I think the media does promote confidence in these values by exposing the lack of service delivery, corruption etc. Where state institutions function well, then the media does report this.

In your own personal view do you think journalists report fairly about parliament?

Siya: I don't think so negative

Andi: Negative

Don: Yes, in the main. I believe there is a general goal to reflect a broad range of opinion (and party political positions)

Asa: Reporting about parliament has been fair, with a few cases where it's been unfair or there were lapses in checking facts but generally reporting about what happens in parliament has been fair and

balanced. This has been fostered by good relations between parliament's communications team, chairpersons and secretaries of committees also tend to be accommodating of the media, even when they disagree with how some issues have been reported in the media.

Anonymous: Yes I think they do, though they do so from the basis of a set of values, which might not agree in all circumstances with those, expressed by the ruling party in its legislation and decisions. So the reporting may sometimes seem to be less favourable to the ANC but this is because it holds the power and it defines the parameters of debates.

Do the media report from a biased position?

Siya: Very much so, I think the problem with the media in general we are subjective we never look on the positive side of what institutions or elements of society that we are covering journalists tend to focus and look for negative things.

Andi: We are never biased.

Don: If there is bias, it is probably a commitment by the SABC to support the ruling party. The New Age is also unashamedly supportive of the ruling party. If that is characterised by bias.

Asa: There has been some bias, but that is to be expected. It is human nature to have opinions on certain issues and where there are lapses in editing of content within newsrooms then bias would creep in. This is a challenge for editorial teams of newsrooms to always check, for the sake of their credibility

Anonymous: I don't think they report from a politically biased position, but from the basis of a set of liberal assumptions about how democracy and society work. This might in some circumstances gel more with opposition parties than the ruling party. That being said I think journalists generally try to reflect both sides of an argument, regardless of their own personal viewpoints

Do journalists have political agendas when reporting?

Siya: Yes, I don't know. Sometimes I have felt ashamed of the kind of stories people put out there, you look at things that people write about. You look at print media, broadcast is quite limited. People have a lot of time to express themselves that is where they play out their emotions and thinking and bias views

Andi: Yes journalists have agenda. For instance the info bill, the media feel that their space is going to be closed down and the reporting on the information bill is so biased and unfair and I think it is because the media feel that in this case the bill is targeting them as journalists. Even on health when the late Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang was minister there was only negative stories but there was so much good the department was doing. If you look at the annual report when the department

came to report in parliament. In all other aspects the department was doing so well but was failing on the HIV and Aids. I think there was an Aids agenda.

Don: If there is bias, it is probably a commitment by the SABC to support the ruling party. The New Age is also unashamedly supportive of the ruling party. If that is characterised by bias.

Asa: There has been some bias, but that is to be expected. It is human nature to have opinions on certain issues and where there are lapses in editing of content within newsrooms then bias would creep in. This is a challenge for editorial teams of newsrooms to always check, for the sake of their credibility.

Anonymous: Of necessity, each individual has a set of values and political beliefs, which underpin the way, they report, the angles that they choose as the most relevant etc. But this is a universal, human characteristic, which reveals itself in all forms of endeavour whether it is academic research, journalism or anything else. It relates to the philosophical question of “subjectivity” and “objectivity” and the impossibility of one’s approaching the world except from a particular standpoint. However, this operates at a fairly abstract level and beyond this I don’t think journalists promote a political agenda as such, if this refers to the political programme of a particular political party.

If there is a political agenda what impact does it have in the writing of an article?

Siya: I think the journalist’s political thinking influence their style of writing or should I say our political views influence our style of writing. I am referring to those journalist who are not objective I am very objective. This is the problem that I had with my senior you write a story and they would then present it or want a particular style. Change focus or angle this how the story should look like this.

Andi: If there is political agenda I try that it does not impact on my writing but sometimes I try to ensure that I don’t write like the other journalists who go for the obvious. But, I suppose because I try to be different that then means that my bias means my writing is influenced.

Don: Oh yes, If one is inherently a socialist or a social democratic, a liberal or a conservative, it must reflect in the choice of issues, content and sources you use. However, one must always strive to be fair, even to those you do not agree with. I don’t believe there is such a thing as objectivity, because all writing is subjective. It includes the choices of words used, the construction of a sentence, the choice of sources. They are all subjective decisions.

Asa: Some journalists have shown agenda in their reporting, often this comes with historical baggage that South Africa carries and journalists from certain quarters would be eager to believe

opinion from those of their kind and be harder in scrutinising others. In the four years I have been members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery I have come to be aware of which side certain journalists go with between the ruling party and opposition parties in parliament, something that constantly comes through even in their line of questioning during media briefings

Anonymous: It all depends on what is meant by “political agenda”. All journalists will have ideas about the way democracy and society should work and this will be reflected in the approach to an article. This is inevitable. It also depends on the nature of the article. If it is a simple news report, then these factors will not be so prevalent, except perhaps in the choice of commentators one chooses to get comment from and whether one opts for a critical approach or simple reporting. One’s personal views will be more apparent in an opinion piece but then that is accepted practice that they do so.

There is a growing perception that journalists are both sceptical about state institutions.

Previous studies that I as the researcher have come across have shown that media used to be pro parliaments but over the years research conducted has revealed that journalists are more critical of state institutions what has caused the change over the years.

Siya: I agree with last part of the statement I think journalist are more critical of state institutions I think it is because the bill of right that is in place and the constitutions those documents allow us to express ourselves in the manner that we want to that we become critical of state institutions

Andi: I don’t know, it’s like this MP who said the media used to write positive stuff about the ANC and now you are hostile and I asked when was this the member of parliament said it was during the Mandela era and what has changed. And so much has changed. I don’t have the answer I don’t know what has changed

Don: The euphoria of a new democracy has started to ebb. The quality of the representation in the governing party and in the opposition is poor compared to 1994 to 1999. Thus parliament as “a state institution” is likely to be more critically assessed now

Asa: Over the years a lot of responsibility has been placed on parliament, raising the bar for scrutiny as well. As parliament gets more responsibilities in terms of holding the state to account, oversight on service delivery and how state budgets are spent, there is growing belief that parliament then needs to be scrutinised more closely. Scandals about the personal conduct of MP, involvement in other dealings with state departments that they are supposed to do oversight on has also created reason for a more sceptical mind set in journalists.

Anonymous: The scepticism comes from the malfunctioning of the state institutions themselves – their capacity to deliver and their ability to fulfil their mandates. There is an understanding of the

problems such as a lack of capacity but increasingly there is a despair over corruption which several studies suggest has now become endemic to the state.

Since 1994 how would you view the relationship between parliament and journalists in 2013

Siya: I think it is somehow strained I don't think we have flexible relationship that allows a free flow of information and interaction we have strained relationship with parliament. This mainly media personnel of parliament it does not stem from the members of parliament.

Andi: I cannot compare the relationship I was too young I cannot compare at this present day.

Don: There is a very poor relationship between the parliamentary media office and the parliamentary press gallery association. The GCIS has a far better relationship and interacts with us effectively. Parliament and its media office simply do not. It is poorly managed and deeply inefficient. It has a leadership problem which filters down to the ordinary staff, many of whom are quite efficient.

Asa: I'd like to believe that relations between parliament and journalists have been good but somewhat strained during the 'travelgate' scandal and when details of the arms deal came through and some members of parliament were implicated.

Anonymous: In the early years of democracy journalists were seen as a vital part of the functioning of the institution. We had offices in the parliamentary precinct, and were valued for our role in reporting on what was going on. Government was in its early stages and there was much more confidence and hope for the future. The expansion of Parliament and the lack of office space meant that journalists were pushed out of the main building after a long and acrimonious battle which created a chasm between the institution and the media. MPs and parliamentary officials became less available to reporters. As journalists began to report on the growing underperformance of government the lack of trust in the media began to grow and government developed the idea that the media was not on its side

The current relationship between media and politicians is there a need to improve media relation How do you describe the inter relation between the parliament and journalists?

Siya: I think we should be more forthright and open about one another. That is why we don't have better relationship we can improve it that way.

Andi: Yes it does it need to improve, more communication from parliament and ANC from the meeting with committees.

Don: Politicians don't need – or deserve – to be model-coddled. It is up to the party political media structures to improve their relationship with the media.

Asa: I believe it is good. Parliament has been approachable and accommodating and where there have been problems these have been addressed through discussion with the PGA.

Anonymous: It is a working relationship which is functional but not very collaborative.

How should these relations be improved between the two media and members of parliament (politicians)? Are there ways to improve the communication between the parliament and the journalists?

Siya: Being open with one another.

Andi: Parliament needs to communicate more with the media with what they are doing and they don't. It's rare to get a press statement from parliament you get one press conference from parliament and that is before the state of the nation address (SONA) and that is just to say we are going to have a SONA on this day and this is what is going to happen and that happens once a year and you get probably less than 10 statements in a year. 2012 was a very busy year. Parliament does not communicate effectively; statements are issued when they respond to something already in the public domain.

The only time when parliament communicated is when they were taken to court and informed us what was happening and what the outcome was and then parliament informs us about the people's assembly women's parliament.

We are also informed when parliament has oversight a visit by the committee's then parliament does communicate. I think they can do more and be more specific when they communicate better.

Donwald: The political parties need to communicate more effectively. This simply means regular press briefings, regular updating of party political lists which are provided to journalists. It means answering telephones when spokespeople are listed as being available.

Asa: Parliament could do more to improve relations with journalists by educating chairpersons of committees about the role of the media, especially when new chairpersons are elected. There have been incidents where journalists have been instructed to leave committee meetings, without prior notice that meetings would be closed as provided for in the rules of parliament. At times there have been attempts to target particular commentary to certain journalists when some chairpersons have not liked what certain journalists have previously written on topics addressed in their committees. This at times skews debate in committees towards addressing the media instead of dealing with parliament's oversight duties. There will always be tensions as the role of the media is to hold government and politicians to account, a spotlight which is not always welcome. So I don't think one should hope for a cosy relationship. That said, I think ANC politicians in particular are too bound by party discipline to feel free to express their own views which inhibits the growth of a

vibrant relationship between the media and politicians Are there ways to improve the communication between the parliament and the journalists? There could be a formal liaison officer that would be available for journalists to address their concerns to. The speakers are rather remote and busy and so there does not seem to be ready channels of communication through which to operate.

The work that I have done has seen me as a researcher communicating with politicians within parliament and one of the issues that most politicians have with media or journalists specifically located in parliaments precinct is the manner in which stories are covered. Politicians complain that more commentary is given to opposition parties during committee meetings, True or False? What is your view of this statement?

Siya: It is true most stories that come from parliament would emanate from opposition parties I think it is because you know that a bad story is always a good story so they would come up with something that generate debate and discussion and because journalists think that chairperson of committees are not posing tough questions that they (committee chairperson's) are soft on ministers and government officials therefore opposition parties play that role of posing tough questions and are more hard on ministers and official.

Andi: Yes I agree with this statement, it embarrassing it annoys me. I think people have their own agendas. Journalists know that the opposition will say something that is negative even if the chairperson will spin it. They don't go to him because the chair is nonpartisan when he sits their chairing meeting. And having said this some of the chairperson can be so useless. I go to some chairperson to get commentary. I have no idea why some journalists do what they do in knowing.

Don: This is generally true because the quality of the debate from the ruling party MPs in most committees is poor. I cover the economics cluster committees. The opposition MPs tend to be better informed, better read up on their topics, more ready to ask probing questions. That, however, is the nature of opposition versus government politics, because it is the governing party's positions which are challenged. There is also a reluctance of ruling party MPs to stick their necks out if they disagree with a governing party position. This is generally true, but not always true. There are governing party MPs who are well read, know their portfolios well, but they are few and far between.

Asa: Yes, more commentary is given to opposition parties. My view around that is that often ruling party MPs tend to protect and defend government officials when issues are presented in committees, some blatantly block debate around critical issues that audiences of the media would want to know about. Opposition parties often ask the questions the media also would like to get answers to and that is why they tend to get more coverage. Where MPs of the ruling party are being critical of

government they do get coverage though. Vincent Smith of the Correctional Services Committee, Eric Kholwane of the Communications Committee, Ben Turok of the Ethics Committee and ThabaMafumadi of the Finance Committee are some of the chairperson that get good coverage despite coming from the ruling party, that is because they tend to ask the questions everybody would want answers to, they speak frankly when government officials or even other MP are not conducting themselves appropriately in committees.

Anonymous: This is true but has to be put into perspective. The ANC controls the government and so legislation or policies coming before Parliament are ANC laws or policies. In covering them one is covering the views of the ANC and then the only option to get an alternative view is to go to opposition parties. Also, ANCMPS tend to know tow to the ruling party and never saying anything critical or different so one is not getting views any different from that presented by government. Finally, ANC MPs are not willing to express their own views in the light of the very strict party discipline that prevails.

Would you agree with the statement that media undermine confidence of state institutions?Because they focus on attack and counter attack.

Siya: It's a difficult question. To some extent I agree with that statement.

Andi: Yes partly, we never hear anything positive because I think parliament fails to state and inform us as journalists when there is positive stuff. Sometimes the department sits makes presentations when there is nothing interesting. If parliament communicated more it would be interesting to see how journalists were to write. If there are committee meetings the DA issues statement and journalists run with the statements it's rare to get a statement from the committee meeting or a chairperson. I know committee issue statements after a meeting but they don't do it as often as the DA. The ANC does not do it all it never issues statements after committee meetings and all of the statement issued by the DA go to the online news like polity, SAPA and what follows afterwards radio.

That is where I wonder what if parliament was communicating and what if they were pro-active. Parliament has to be defensive. It would be interesting to see what would happen if parliament issues statements.

Don: State institutions which report to parliament – such as SAA, Denel, Eskom and Transnet? Journalist is about finding the “atypical” – something that is not normally known. Thus if the SAA does not have a single accident all year, that is not news, it is an example of a job done. However, if it needs a R500 million loan guarantee, is that not an example of failure? Politics and the management of the state, including of parliament, is a controversial business. It must be reflected in this way.

Asa: I don't believe it's a deliberate action to undermine, but that rather is a consequence of the style of reporting that most media tend to use. Many want headlines, scandal and sensationalist material and that comes with a great element of attack/counter attack or blame/shame.

Anonymous: No, I would not agree. It is not the role of the media to support or undermine state institutions. Their role is to hold government to account which often means adopting a critical stance. Where government departments and state institutions perform well, the media reports this.

When writing an article do journalists still prescribe to the three functions of journalism that the media informs, entertains and educates or does a the media aim to persuade how people think?

Siya: I think the focus is more about shaping the agenda and shaping peoples thinking and sticking to those three functions or principles.

Andi: I think the media tries to persuade the public domain in the manner it covers its articles. All stories we write about are said in public in parliament and it is an open parliament.

Don: I am not sure whether it is the role of the media to persuade people of anything.

Asa: There's a lot of agenda setting, where the media attempts to guide people on what debate to have around certain issues and that often comes with a narrow focus on certain elements of that debate and blocking out elements that don't go well with the set agenda. But there is still a lot of attention given to the duty of informing the public

Anonymous: No, I would not agree. It is not the role of the media to support or undermine state institutions. Their role is to hold government to account which often means adopting a critical stance. Where government departments and state institutions perform well, the media reports this.

What would you say is the role of media in ensuring increased confidence in the institution?

Siya: Role of the media, we should be more objective of what state institutions stand for. People out there do not know much about state institutions and what they stand for and what they do. We should be more objective and critical where we find it necessary to do so to create that kind of confidence in state institutions.

Andi: Parliament needs to be more open improve relations with the media office of parliament with journalists.

Don: I see no magic wand here. I can only restate that if parliament or a political party wishes to improve relations with the media, transparency, openness and efficiency go a long way.

Asa: I don't believe it is the duty of the media to increase confidence in public institutions that is the duty of public institutions themselves. In my opinion the role of the media is to report fairly when public institutions deliver services that serve to increase public confidence in them. For

instance, the media is reporting fairly on the improved performance of the Home Affairs department in the past three years or so, that is because that department has done a lot of work to improve its services to the public.

Anonymous: As I have said, it is not the role of the media to ensure increase confidence in state institutions.

ANNEXURE TWO : Expert Interviews

Where do you get your news from, print radio, TV,online

Jane: All of the above

Thabo: All of the above

Kevin: All of the above

Anton: All of the above

How would you view the general coverage of parliament by the media

Efficient	Comprehensive	Problem Solving	Sufficient	Informative

Jane: Coverage is often thin and doesn't help one to get a good grasp of Parliament's priority areas. The focus tends to be on controversial bills, not much coverage of oversight work, or of the performance generally of Parliament.

Thabo: Media coverage of Parliament is informed by the general approach by most of the mass media that bad news sells. This approach informs the selection of news coverage as well as the news angles that are often adopted. More often negative stories and instances where government's and other state institutions like parliament performance is questioned receive greater coverage in the media.

Kevin: Media coverage tends to comprehensive and sufficient at times but except the committee work that gets lost within the media realm that the bulk of the work falls under. Media coverage of the parliament is informative.

Anton: This question is too general too answer. Different media cover it in different ways. Some barely cover it.

Which bills and laws have been controversial in the media for the past year, please explain and justify?

Jane: Protection of State Information Bill – has received a lot of publicity because of the potentially negative impact on access to information and freedom of expression

Traditional Courts Bill – has been controversial for threatening to reduce rights of people living under traditional authorities

Thabo: The most controversial bill reported in the media in the past year is the Protection of State Information Bill. The media’s coverage of the bill is not objective as most media believe the bill will negatively impact the work of journalists especially when reporting on corruption and other supposed failings of government.

Kevin: Traditional Courts Bill, “Secrecy Bill”

Anton: Protection of State Information Bill, the e-tolling legislation.

What are the observations that you have about parliament based on the news coverage?

Please identify and give examples:

Jane: That parliament’s work is mainly about passing legislation, and that it does not do much oversight work. But when it does do oversight work, then this can be quite vigorous and in-depth. Also that Parliament may not be as independent of the executive as has often been thought, certainly in relation to the State Information Bill, and will defer to the executive on really controversial issues.

Thabo: The perception of parliament that is created by the media is that it is a platform where members of the opposition take government to task over its failures. This might be informed by the fact that opposition MPs are often more critical of government while ruling party MPs tend to complement government.

Very often media reporting of debates tend to highlight drama and controversial statements while paying less attention to more substantive issues. This could also be influenced by how MPs conduct themselves and relate to each other during debates; for example MPs interject and haul at each other when they don’t like the point that another MP makes. Such things end up being the story and the real issues of debate are missed.

Kevin: Based on TV coverage Parliament is portrayed as vibrant and entertaining. However in print media MPs are often perceived as blindly partisan and not diligent enough. This is due to a number of stories last year which highlighted absenteeism. Very little is reported on the success of the portfolio committees.

Anton: My perception is that parliament adds little to the quality of legislation or the direction of policy, but is largely there to rubber-stamp decisions made in the party or in cabinet. The quality of debate appears to be low, the commitment to scrutiny of the executive uncertain.

What is your assessment of the performance of parliament from the news coverage?

Jane: That Parliament's work is mainly about passing legislation, and that it does not do much oversight work. But when it does do oversight work, then this can be quite vigorous and in depth. Also that Parliament may not be as independent of the executive as has often been thought, certainly in relation to the State Information Bill, and will defer to the executive on really controversial issues. See the previous answer.

Thabo: My assessment is that parliament can do more to influence more positive media coverage. Parliament must cultivate good working relations with the media and encourage regular engagement between office bearers and Parliamentary Correspondents. Parliament can do more to influence the news agenda by providing background information to journalists to help them better understand the issues it is dealing with.

Kevin: I think it's a strong institution which needs MPs to engage each other more on the issues.

Anton: I have answered this above.

What role should the media play in shaping and influencing institutions in government?

Jane: It should play a key role in shaping public perception. Not everyone has a chance to go to parliament, so the only way they can get information is from the media. This means that the media need to choose which information is salient and how to frame it.

Thabo: No, this is not the role of the media. State institutions themselves must do more to influence the news agenda by among other things engaging journalists and providing background information to help them better understand the context of the issues they report on.

Kevin: Yes the media is critical in shaping the public perception of Parliament. A praise singing media would be a disservice to Parliament and democracy.

Anton: The media is there to report, analyse, criticise, explain and contextualise what happens in an institution, and whether this is positive or negative matters less than if the reporting is accurate, balanced, interesting, fair and useful. I am not sure media should try and be positive and negative, but rather engaging, interesting, fair and accurate.

How should the media improve the levels of confidence in the state institutions?

Jane: By reporting fairly, accurately and impartially and also providing more in depth coverage. Confidence will increase only if the state institutions themselves inspire confidence, which has less to do with the media coverage and more to do with the institutions.

Thabo: How should the media improve the levels of confidence in the state institutions? State institutions themselves need to do more to improve confidence levels. This they must do by cultivating good working relations with the media.

Kevin: Yes the media is critical in shaping the public perception of Parliament. A praise singing media would be a disservice to Parliament and democracy.

Anton: By reporting accurately and responsibly, by being critical where necessary and giving praise where it is due. Whether that increases public confidence depends as much on the institution as the media.

Does the medium sensationalise issues and if your answer is yes why and if it no please justify?

Thabo: Media do sensationalise issues. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that as the public always look for sensation and drama. The challenge for State institutions is to package information about their work in such a manner that it would be found to be interesting and compels the editors to use such information in their platform. Most State institutions think that by simply issuing cold statements, speeches and other documents to the media they will succeed in communicating their views to the public. They ignore an important fact that there are many issues competing for media space.

Kevin: Yes, it does. Many issues are pre-judged without facts or official reports coming out.

How should the media improve the levels of confidence in the state institutions?

Anton: By reporting accurately and responsibly, by being critical where necessary and giving praise where it is due. Whether that increases public confidence depends as much on the institution as the media.

Does the media sensationalise issues and if your answer is yes why and if it no please justify?

Anton: Some media do, some don't.

What is the role of the media concerning institutions such as parliament when reporting?

Anton: To engage the public on the institution, to be interesting, to inform, to stimulate, to be fair, balanced and accurate, to ask questions and probe on behalf of the public, to help convey information about and understanding of the workings of parliament to the public, to be the eyes, ears and mouth of the public, or some part thereof.

What influence does the media have in public institutions especially parliament?

Anton: The media provides the link between institutions like parliament and the public, and without this link, parliament is rendered irrelevant. Parliament is important only insofar as it links to and has the support of the public, and it is the media that provides this connection.

ANNEXURE THREE: Members of Parliament Interviews

What is your main source of news information? TV, Radio, Online, Print

Sisa: All of the above, I read everything.

Lance: Online news (Internet based) and print media

Sandy: All of the above

Peter: Newspapers and partly television

Liezl: Mostly online but also TV and Print

How long have you been a member of parliament and the various responsibilities in parliament?

Sisa: I have been a member of parliament for nine years and chair of the Portfolio Committee on Energy

Lance: Nine years and sits in various committees.

Sandy: Fourteen years since 1999

Peter: It has been ten years

Liezl: Joined in 2012

How do you describe the media coverage of politicians and the work presented by the parliament that is in the mass media? Please make concrete examples and cases:

Sisa: One the first things is not to paint media with one brush because there is a category of **media practitioners or houses who try to be balanced coverage** of what we do in parliament there are those who are just oppositional and at the same time the interest and focus of conventional media as compared to alternative media tends to be different if not variant. **Because of its predominance mainstream media tends to be sensational or selective about covering parliament and that includes SABC, which is a national broadcaster.** I suppose they are guided by what is supposed to be newsworthiness, which is what they can claim to be objective, which to me is subjective. The work of parliament comes in different forms and shades within the committee system by the time issues are debated in the two houses, national assembly and national council of provinces it's an eventuation or the final point or journey of a piece of legislation or a report very few things are

introduced in both houses however media has portrayed work of parliament as work that substantially obtains in the houses. Rather than showing or articulating the link between committee work and oversight work and house engagements. Public hearings or public consultations that we do hence I am saying they are selective. The impact of this and the significance of our work are hardly appreciated by the ordinary person to the extent at times their understating of what an MP is distorted. I am subjective in saying this.

I expect media to show the work of government or parliament for that matter is all about and as well what a member of parliament is supposed to do or doing. Go out of their way to show big skirmish between the ruling and opposition parties. Even at times the key issues that are discussed in the committee's when it comes to print media they hardly find their way in the first page it is the third and fourth page. Equally with television my sense is that they pick up the sensational issues that are newsworthiness.

Lance: Its big question, I think it is **fairly good** its I think that particularly emanating from committee meetings I think journalist try very hard to get a good sense of what is shared in the meetings. I think that obviously there are some of the divisions are sensationalised that are in the house (National Assembly) that is what the kind of big news coverage tends to gravitate towards. I think that sometimes what tends to get lost is the kinds of consensus that gets reached in the dealing with some of the pressing complex issues.

Sandy: The media provide a **fair representation** and exposure of the work of parliament especially on the current issues that is if you have a sexy portfolio. That will then receive a fair amount for instance the portfolio committee on police is one that gets coverage from the media as opposed to portfolio committee on science and technology which is hardly ever mentioned.

Peter: Peter: I think it is not always accurate, it as if we were not attending the same meeting. The coverage is always one sided and tends to be what the opposition has said.

Liezl: Mostly negative – always a focus on that which is negative and never really anything that is positive. Politics in general, and parliament as a whole, is associated with one another and the “big news” I find is always stories of politicians involved in corruption, tender fraud, scandals and such. For example, I read a story in the *Star* in March last year that forty percent of South Africans think parliamentarians and councillors are corrupt, according to the Afrobarometer survey. The figure increased from 2008, when 25% of South Africans thought “almost all” or “most” members of Parliament were involved in corruption. It is a clear indication in my opinion that the media coverage of politicians and the work presented by parliament, that is in the mass media, is presented in a negative light.

Balance is skewed towards Ministers, the institution itself, ANC MPs and the official opposition.

But there is not a single answer because it would depend on which media institution one is referring

to. *Die Burger* for example is pro-DA and therefore gives a lot of coverage to the activities for the DA politicians. While the *New Age* and *SABC* is pro-ANC and therefore the balance is skewed in their favour.

Is there a certain frame of how media project the parliament positive, neutral or negative?

Sisa: Media tends to be positive and critical or you can say negative because they are critical of what we are doing and rightfully so, so that we are not defective of our oversight work.

Oppositional media when they are positive things, they avoid them and pick up frivolous negative issues I have seen articles in meetings that I have attended they will avoid issues of substance and pick up frivolous issues to cover. At times when it comes to alternative media I have found it to be attractive as they give public representatives more time to engage with both them and the listenership which I must say to quite an extent the propensity is to be seen in a much more positive light. But unfortunately at times it tends not be so. As we tend to be confused with the executive.

The media is not helpful in portraying a true picture of what a parliament is what it supposed to be.

Lance: There is the issue and there is parliament as an institution. The issues are well covered fairly well in terms of the stuff that we deliberate on. I think that when it comes to covering parliament in itself and members of parliament it tends to gravitate towards scandalous issues which there are a lot of unfortunately. Dealing with parliament as an institution and the news a lot of it tends to be sensationalised and dwells more on the negative as opposed to positive as the institution.

Sandy: The coverage that parliament receives is not always positive. What the media write about is got to do with of profiling the negative as opposed to the positive. The good work that is performed by the members of parliament hardly makes it to the media in most cases it is overshadowed by the corruption cases within government. Corruption which in itself being a negative thing.

Peter: It is sometimes negative but not always but I would not say that the coverage by the media is neutral.

Liezl: Negative. As motivated above

Asses the role played by the media in projecting a certain level of confidence and influence.

Sisa: It's a tough one; the basis for me is the various philosophies or the various categorisations of the media. Look the media grouping and coverage I take they do their best to display confidence around government however where they do they get highly critical of government. But I mean oppositional media once again they always look for excuses and opportunities to shoot down confidence on government or the state as whole. They (media) emphasise parliament as being ineffective or as a talk show highlighting delays and failures at the expense of whatever

achievements that have been put in. Also I think we must appreciate the role of media in helping influence a very subtle way of expressing confidence in parliament there are a number of marches that come to parliament and why do people come to parliament, its a sign we are not another body but we do have influence. I presume that media in one way or another played a role to profile parliament as one of the centres of power, which can address their issues. Its an interesting way of expressing way that confidence the criticism in itself, the nature of the criticism where they say you are parliament and you have been given power you are suppose to be doing this and you are not doing it and that on its own has a component of triggering awareness on ordinary people if you take negative part of criticism but balance media which will look and the positive side then it reinforces that through the coverage it is subtle to pick up.

National credit act, which has saved a lot of people who then cheers, the children act and the national consumer protection act. Look at the amount of laws glaring and strong which are helpful to the BEE.

This confidence will be expressed through sector based or group interest. Group interest come on that basis we want you to this and that its not like they are here everyday media has played a role in sharing the experiences.

Lance: I don't think that the media has that sense of responsibility of shifting confidence in state institutions, I think that the way journalists perceive the role of the media is to hold parliament accountable both in terms both playing this role in society and in holding government accountable and in ensuring that delivery happens I think journalists report on that and write. They do kind of bring that out, I think that a lot of the time reports are about how parliament is failing to live up to some of those constitutional obligations.

Journalists tend to report about the issues where members of parliament hold government accountable, At times they tend to get it right. They focus a lot of the time form the media is how parliament if failing to some of the constitutional obligation that the institution does have.

People have a shallow understating of what parliament is all about if for that, I think as MP's we have done a bad job of publicizing the work and the inner workings of parliament ask most people in the street say parliament is about people sleeping in the benches. People don't have understanding of the committee section of the work that goes in there. They think that it is about the kids fighting so which is partly from the media because this what they are picking up those fights and this is what gets presented but I think it is parliaments duty to advertise its work and precisely the role that it should play in the South African system. I also think that MP's should take some responsibility to because the constituency side of it is badly put out there. People don't know who their constituencies are. There is that fundamental disconnect that needs to be addressed.

A failure in the constituency lies within the parliament themselves, training is within these buildings hardly ever any time is given to constituency training and so MP's are expected that their political parties will take care of it or you as the MP will go and take of it as an constituency MP. But parliament does not seem to have any kind of accountability mechanism to hold MP's accountable in the constituency work. It's the kind of black hole out there. Parliament needs to play a bigger role in enforcing it the constituency obligations it has there is breakdown that happens in that. This is the kind of work that is not seen in the media the work that MP are involved in their constituency work

Sandy: The media absolutely has a role to play in creating a certain level of confidence in state institutions including shifting the levels so that people have a sense of understanding of what parliament stands for. Media also has a social responsibility to the public. What the media portrays is the infighting and hauling within the house (National Assembly) mainly because and sadly there is no decorum and regrettably that is portrayed in a negative way. The work that politicians do gets lost.

Peter: The media affects the way in which people view parliament. The media should try and give what is accurate and what happens in parliament not the views of the journalists.

Liezl: They play a vitally important role. They shape perceptions of the public at a large. Most people only interact with politics and parliament through the media. And therefore, because they don't portray an image of confidence in Parliament as an institution people generally don't have confidence in the institution either. If you ask anyone about Parliament they will tell you it is a place where people go to eat, sleep and earn big salaries which they do not deserve.

How would you assess the current relationship between members of parliament and the media?

Sisa: Hot and cold. SABC which has been giving us much coverage imagine if that coverage was one hour or like the Greek parliament where people are covered debating at night. We have media that is sensational we are debating as issue of substance and when we are finished they go and talk to a government official and leave and the most interesting this is that it came from the committee and the ones that picked up the topic and made suggestions that let us talk about electricity distribution industry nobody comes and say what made you pick up this what informed you and what will you do. Its hot and cold in that they are less appreciative but I sense they an attitude of engaging with us when necessary whereas if I can explain in a comparative way when they engage with government officials the executive you would find that there is some affinity on that side. They run like rats to government ministers and director generals. Unless we are handled a sensationalist thing like the secrecy bill they then take note. The relations are not necessary negative hence I say they are hot and cold. How many times do you them covering the speaker or the chairperson they

should from time to time it's like covering the president because those are the heads from one component the state is that not so. Like they would pick up on Judge Mogoengmogeong who tells us about justice. Why run after the president only. But also once again it is informed by attitudes and traditions it is informed by quite a number of things. To be a member of parliament is to be inferior to a minister and MP to minister is like getting a promotion when we conduct oversight and that influences it. They can be negative because any negativity espoused by the media is much to do with their attitude to the ruling because they know we are in the majority and majority tend to provincial and municipal level.

Lance: It differs either when you ask the opposition of the ruling party. You will get different responses. From our side as the opposition I find the media quite receptive, the challenges that the media face though in dealing with us (members of parliament) a lot of journalists are rushed for time and are rushed in terms of they struggle to get into grips with some of the complex issues. They have a number of portfolios under them which they have to report about and they can't really report about the committee meetings that sit in a particular day and have looming deadlines to get the story out and things like that. I do think they really struggle to understand the issues but that is why the interaction between the journalist and the MP is vital in terms of getting across the different nuances of the particular issues I have a fairly good relationship with quite a number of the journalists that are here in parliament because we depend on each other.

Sandy: On a personal level I have good relations with the media and on a party level (The democratic alliance) has a good working standing with the journalists and this is mainly attributed to the interventions and the team that the party has in order to ensure the understating between the two. As MP's we need the media and equally needs members of the parliament hence good relations need to be maintained.

Peter: A lot of work needs to be done to improve the current relationship. One wishes fo a situation that exist in the first world countries where the people rely on the media because of the trust and confidence that they have. That does not exists in South Africa. The media have a deem view of politicians.

Liezl: Again, depends on which institution you are talking about – I often see DA MPs engaging with Die Burger journalists socially and same goes for Ministers and ANC MPs with the SABC and other so-called pro-ANC media institutions. So some members of parliament enjoy good relationships with the media.

Based on the assessment in the above question how would you propose that there be improved relations between media and members of parliament?

Sisa: Unless and until parliament in itself as an institution takes an initiative like it is doing now (with the various initiatives like media networking sessions and media briefings) to profile itself and to improve its image to engage more intensive and positive with the media otherwise I almost have zero confidence on the media take any initiative with the current set of relations and their attitudes in general and it is us that bring change to ensure better responsiveness. One distortion that media has is that it articulates the thinking of the communities I sense that some journalists feel that they are the choice of the majority of the people sometimes they feel that they have the legitimacy to facilitate the message to the people.

Lance: It is difficult, I am not media strategist of parliament, the public get boring information about parliament and how does one turn that round and make it sexy so that media right about. Parliament needs to play a much more aggressive role in marketing the role it plays in our democracy and the details in that. I think the relationship is fairly good better than before 1994.

Sandy: refer on previous question

Peter: Communication work is key as it is an important instrument. Media is an effective because it connects the public and the people

Liezl: I think firstly, journalists should strive to be truly impartial and not let their personal political preferences stop them from trying to engage with all members of parliament. On the other hand, MPs must be more accessible, engage journalists on topical issues and generally strive to build a good relationship with the media.

Do you think media sensationalise the state institution issues?

Sisa: Yes they do and it is part of their general trend and it is no different with parliament.

Lance: The institutional part of it is sensationalised I think tends to pick up on the negative. Media portrays a negative view of the institutions. The members are also seen in a negative light.

Sandy: Oh yes, media do sensationalise. It is their business to sell newspapers and generate advertising. This then affects the serious of the MP's which does not get enough publicity for instance the making of legislation

Peter: Media tend to sensationalise.

Liezl: The standard of journalism is South Africa, I believe, is at an all time low. And in some instances sensationalism is reverted to. The Daily Sun for example – is one of the largest tabloids in our country, but it has generated controversy for its perceived lack of respect for privacy, brazen sexual content, and unrestrained truth stretching – sensationalism. Please mention cases and examples:

Marikana: the efforts of our mass media, some by outright accusation and others by implication and innuendo, trying to lay the blame for the Marikina massacre on Cyril Ramaphosa.

What would you say is the role of members of parliament in ensuring increased levels of confidence in the institution?

Sisa: It is multiform in that we should do our work with commitment and diligence and they are components of media that appreciate what we suppose to do with passion and commitment we should in any case profile parliament as individuals we live in a real world and of course we have to be proactive when engaging with media to create understanding. Media shock me every time.

Lance: I think that they (MP's) should play a leadership role, in the kind of values that we ourselves espouse to, looking at the travel gate and the various utterances from the members. The leadership roles and the values that underpin members of parliament, I think we need to scrutinise that member's. I often hear members of parliament discuss in chief whips forum how we need to be respected and I think we need to do stuff that deserves that respect and I think that there is a great sense of entitlement from the members of parliament and that needs to be curbed. There is a kind of disconnect from parliament just in terms of the perks we gets. This creating disconnect for MPs and public and the struggle out there. A greater sense from MPs are empathetic to people's struggles and that they are aware of the kind of society we live in

Sandy: Members should know their subjects and should be ready to impart knowledge and ever be ready to be available to serve their constituencies by not switching of the mobile phones as they readily do so.

Peter: Once again I need to emphasise that communication is key in that it keeps us in constant touch with the public. We also need to respond to the concerns of the people

Liezl: MPs must be more pro-active, prepared when they arrive for parliamentary duty and must be seen to be actively involved in driving bread and butter issues which will counter act the notion that MPs come here to eat and sleep.

Would you support further regulations of the mass media based on the manner journalists portray government, politicians and parliament?

Sisa: No, I would opt for a different approach regulation gets dangerous at times. Laws are there to change social behaviour. But remember there are certain things that needs mere socialisation or re-socialisation to me the focal area would be re- socialisation instead of further regulation. Another focal point is for government to set up its alternative and can portray itself and present itself. Why is the media outright sensationalist?

Lance: I am certainly against regulations from the media; I think that it is very slippery slopes I think when it comes to communication's people think that they are fairly important. We are in the public domain we are performing a public duty where we need to be accountable and I think the

media will get it wrong but we have to have a proper appeal mechanism maybe such as the ombudsman to make sure it works effectively. The media need to be receptive to criticism and media needs to amend things where it has made mistakes.

Sandy: No, I would not support further regulation. The way things are is not perfect either. MP's also need accept responsibility. If people want change it is vitally important not to antagonise your partner as this is a mutual relationship

Peter: I am one for a free press; I want them to be free to report in a manner that is quite balanced.

Liezl: No. Press Ombudsman's office must be beefed up, but by in large, it is doing a good job and so too the BCCSA. Co-regulation modules could be considered but I am not in favour of a tribunal model which would give the ruling party too much power to control media affairs

Your thoughts of how the media has been reporting about the laws before parliament for instance, traditional courts bill, protection of state information bill etc.

Sisa: A substantial portion of the media is politically motivated, when covering bills they are tainted. In this instance I'm blunt. I do my best to read papers and monitor TV as much but unfortunate the coverage and comments is politically tainted you hardly ever get people the cover what it is that happens. The implications are covered and you can pick what is said but at times it is obvious the coverage is balanced.

Lance: The media played a critical role especially looking at the two bills information bill and the traditional courts bill. We have seen some important concessions being made and that is the result of the pressure and the coverage of the media and the critical role that the media has played in the area in covering legislation. Also in referring back to what I said earlier on the media when it comes to understanding the bills or the legislative process most deal with the complexity in getting into grasp with the issues.

Sandy: The coverage in relation to the two bills over the past year (2012) has been thorough, mainly so because it has a direct bearing to the media which is the state information bill which will affect the media. When it comes to the traditional court bill, that one has been sensationalised and it became more of a gender issue because of the one clause.

Peter: The media play a big role in whooping up emotions. If a journalist has a position they take an advantage and rally what they think and believe about of a particular case. With the state protection bill for an example it was clear that they had n interest and that they wanted to paint it in a negative manner. The etoll bill is one example that poor people will suffer and that is not true at all. The coverage benefitted a political party that saw it as something to use for elections

Liezl: Coverage on the protection of state information bill balanced – projecting facts, concerns and comments from both those who oppose and those who are in support of the bill. In general the media do a good job of reporting on all aspects pertaining to bills before parliament. However, the traditional courts bill has been a bill which the media has in my opinion, strongly emphasised the arguments against it, but have not really given publicity to the arguments in favour of the Bill.

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