



The Framing of the African National Congress' 55th National Conference by International Online News Media

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

ABSTRACT

African National Congress (ANC) hosts a national conference every five years. The national conference, also referred to as the elective conference, is a significant political event in South Africa because apart from electing new national leadership, some of whom ultimately lead the country, it also outlines the political strategic direction as it relates to policy formulation, constitutional matters and the administration of government (Nantylia, 2018). As such, over the years, the elective conferences of the ANC have garnered significant media attention nationally and abroad (Booyesen, 2019). These conferences have historically attracted media attention worldwide, particularly in the period leading up to, during and after the conference (Booyesen, 2019).

Accordingly, during these conferences, the media plays a crucial role in informing the public about the discussions, policy issues, election processes, candidates, and election results. It is meant to be a platform of enriched discourse. To this end, the media serves as a public forum or conduit for meaningful public participation on matters of political, economic, and social significance during political events, in particular those involving elections (Cushion and Jackson, 2019:986). In this capacity, the media should be a nonpartisan institution that serves the public interest, presenting all perspectives and allowing the public to make its own decisions. Entman (1993) and Cushion and Jackson (2019) have found that this is not always the case. Pointedly, Entman (1993) has found that there are numerous competing factors that influence what and how events are portrayed in news coverage and that news coverage is not always neutral but is framed and packaged to serve specific interests, convey a particular message and have a particular intended result or influence.

Against this background, the research aims to analyse the selected international online newspaper coverage of the ANC's 55th election conference, which took place in December 2022. Specifically, it will examine how the conference was framed, what aspects of the conference were highlighted, and to what extent the coverage highlighted some facts and not others – thereby possibly influencing the reader's perception of the 55th ANC conference. This was done to answer the primary research question: how was the ANC's 55th election conference framed in international daily online media.

The study used the framing theory as its theoretical foundation and a qualitative methodology. The methodological approach selected was the most suitable when combined with content analysis and critical discourse analysis. As it enabled the evaluation of texts, language, and

communication in the context of larger social processes. It included theory-based literature and newspaper articles from international online daily newspapers. The study's datasets were compiled from primary and secondary sources acquired through a combination of Google searches and the Press Reader, an electronic data repository, with the temporal demarcation being between 1 January 2022, the start of the new year, and 20 December 2022, four days after the conference.

The study found five overarching frames, namely, A weak factionalised declining ANC, Ramaphosa the redeemer: the one who influences the rand and markets, Phala-Phala as a political ploy, Winners and Losers: Game framing the leadership contestation, The scandal-tainted Former Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize. The frames were identified, analysed and reported using critical discourse analysis. The study found that the coverage of the conference was influenced by societal discourses linked to the factional battles of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa's Phala Phala farm theft, and related issues. As such, the conference itself was not the primary focus of international publications' coverage.

Keywords: *Framing, ANC 55th Conference, Cyril Ramaphosa, Zweli Mkhize, CR22, South African politics, International media framing, Framing of political events, NASREC 2022, ANC conference 2022.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

This study is an analysis of how the ANC's 55th election conference was framed by international daily online media. Given, however, that the ANC is the biggest liberation movement in Africa and leading one of the most influential parties in the continent, it is important that the said analysis is contextualised within how Africa and its politics have been historically framed by global media (Muringa, 2019).

Africa's representation by global media outlets has been the subject of scholarly research for many years (Tsikata, 2014: 35). Historically, there has been a dominant claim that the coverage of Africa by Western media portrayed Africa negatively through the use of negative stereotypes (Ogunyemi, 2011). According to the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO, 2001), this was because Western media, in their coverage of Africa, was influenced by ideological perspectives and national interests. As such, they systematically used their power to construct negative narratives and representations about Africa (VSO, 2001). The latter is congruent with Atadoga's (2020) postulations, which argue that the contemporary world is influenced by Western perspectives and power structures that are informed by colonial narratives and agendas (Atadoga, 2020). To this end, negative representation of Africa by global media outlets has encouraged the propensity to "overlook the diverse political, economic, social and cultural experiences of individual African countries" (Tsikata, 2014: 35). However, Ogunyemi (2011:458) puts forward that contrasting claims in scholarship have arisen that posit that not all coverage of Africa is negative by so doing refutes the dominant claims Africa is represented disproportionately by western media. It is particularly these contending views that also serve as the basis for this research. It is in this context of representation of African politics that this study of the framing of the ANC's 55th national conference by international online news media is pursued.

Africa tends to be examined in the international media in terms of whether it has achieved Western standards of modernity in relation to its politics. This is because colonialism served as the basis for modernity in Africa and enforced European knowledge systems, practices, values and customs at the forefront of the world (Poncian, 2015:73). Consequently, many people, including many Africans themselves, view Eurocentrism and its practices as the most advanced.

and civilised forms of social and political order and any other practices are deemed to be subordinate (Atadoga, 2020:2).

Influenced by the aforementioned perceptions, African nations adopted Eurocentric systems as part of their governing structures, with democracy being the most noticeable. Central to democracy's functioning is the sentiment that the majority should govern through the power of the vote and elect political candidates or parties (Ogunyemi, 2011). Another aspect of this is modern mass media.

In this context, the media enables citizens to become active voters by furnishing them with information needed to empower their decisions whilst also acting as a platform to facilitate public discourse on pertinent matters such as foreign, domestic, economic and security policies (Mazango, 2005; Boyd, 2019). The media has the role of being able to bring together experts and analysts to help decipher complex policy issues for ordinary citizens to understand (Muringa and McCracken, 2021). As such, the role of the media in national or political party events or elections is that of an active intermediary (Zulu, 2021). It is precisely this active role that served as the bedrock for this study as this research sought to examine how international media framed the 55th national conference of the ANC. This is because the media significantly impacts society, particularly when it comes to influencing public opinion on political matters (Mutsvairo, 2016; Muringa and McCracken, 2021). This is why authors Hallin and Mancini (2004:8) postulate that there is a reciprocal relationship between political and media systems, arguing that, in essence, media systems have an impact on social and political structures (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:8).

From a scholarly perspective, Hallin and Mancini (2004:8) argued that the mass media can be regarded as an institution that warrants serious consideration, given its substantial influence on politics, potentially equal to or even surpassing that of other political institutions. Adding to this sentiment, McQuail (2005:83 cited in Ogunyemi, 2011) posits that journalists serve as a reflection of society, shaping public opinion by employing deliberate perspectives, sometimes referred to as frames. Although scholars have argued that mass media is an influential tool that is not direct as it does not pointedly instruct one on what to think, there is, however, a consensus that mass media does influence what one thinks about. Therefore, the media is considered highly influential (Boykoff, 2011:345). It carefully guides one's thoughts by providing a narrative that leads to a predetermined conclusion through the use of persuasion rather than forcefully.

In a research project that explores Africa's representation in Western media, Pitkänen (2019:1) advances that the media's representation, particularly news content, influences people's perception of issues. Pitkänen (2019:1) continues to argue that this is because the news is typically seen as the common truth from a trusted source, even though news content is constructed, framed and influenced by "journalists and editors with their own ideas, beliefs and ideologies" (Pitkänen, 2019:1). The latter is important, as often news reports are taken at face value, by its consumers, with little to no interrogation of facts, perceptions, influence or bias. Thus, blindly trusting the news as it is represented.

Reporters and news organisations have the power to pick and choose which topics are included and omitted from public discourse. Which events are more important than others. Which countries are viewed as being unimportant and so far removed from the West that they are hardly ever covered (Pitkänen, 2019:1). The author posits that additionally, the media chooses from whose viewpoint and from what aspect different issues, people, and events are depicted. To this end, Pitkänen's (2019) research makes an important assertion that reporting never entails reporting the truth because there are so many variable factors that affect what and how content in the media, specifically the news, is portrayed (Pitkänen, 2019). Thus, understanding how the media presents news, especially of African countries, is crucial as it allows for an appreciation of why certain perspectives are prevalent, and narratives perpetuated in the world, given the changing global politics and the rise of nations in the global south.

Although there is plenty of research on how South African media portrays elections, political candidates, political party events and how international media portrays Africa (Khuluse, 2014; Muringa, 2019; Muringa and McCracken, 2022), there, however, is a scarcity of literature examining how the international online media frames South African political party conferences, associated democratic processes and political leadership candidates and contestations. This perspective is an important factor to consider. Research and scholarship are constantly expanding, and in order to advance knowledge and understanding, new knowledge must be created to add to the existing body of literature. In addition, this is important in the backdrop of the shifting global political landscape and South Africa's growing role in the international community. Political conferences such as the ANC's 55th National Conference have a significant impact on continental and regional political stability and are likely to attract attention from the international media. Thus, this research perspective, specifically, examining how the international online media frames South African political party conferences, associated

democratic processes and political leadership candidates ought to be examined in order to enrich scholarship.

This study focused on analysing the international online daily newspapers' framing of the ANC's 55th nation conference. The reason for this is that the coverage of Africa and its democratic processes by the international news media has been narrow, biased, and lacking in political policy analysis (Atadoga, 2020). In some instances, it has even been negative (Nantulya, 2018). This is because the media's perceptions of Africa have been historically informed by the earlier literature of pre-colonial and colonial explorers whose thoughts are often deeply imaginative and misrepresentative of Africa and its inhabitants (Poncian, 2015:73; Atadoga, 2020:1). These earlier writings depicted Africa as a homogenous state that was an impoverished and disease-ridden continent with a high prevalence of corruption, cruelty and dictatorship (Ogunyemi, 2011).

Academic discourse has witnessed the emergence of scholarly voices, exemplified by Nothias (2018), who has expressed apprehensions over the depiction of Africa in the global media throughout recent times. This argument posits that the media has not fulfilled its ethical obligation to mitigate harm, specifically in relation to the portrayal of Africa on the global stage. There is a contention that despite the formal cessation of colonialism many years ago, media depictions of Africa persist in perpetuating racist narratives, dehumanising stereotypes, and colonial ideologies. This phenomenon saw a notable exacerbation during the 1990s, coinciding with the advent of round-the-clock news coverage (Nothias, 2018:1139).

ANC conferences have been a major focus of the South African and international media, particularly because of South Africa's regional and continental influence (Tyali, 2019). According to Williams (2011:147), the prominence of a nation or region in the global news agenda and its ability to exert influence across the world is contingent upon its economic and political significance. In other words, the level of newsworthiness an event garners on a global scale is determined by a country's political and economic factors, rather than its size, population or resources (Williams, 2011).

In essence, major political events, such as the ANC's nation conference, become the main topics of international media attention in Africa. As these countries' actions directly or indirectly affect international relations, international diplomacy and international security significantly (Muringa, 2019). To this end, many scholars have examined the determinates of

newsworthiness in relation to African news stories; however, the way the international media frames South Africa's political events and democracy remains relatively understudied.

It is precisely this active critical role that served as the bedrock for this study which sought to examine how the international media framed the 55th national conference of the ANC. The media's influence on society, particularly in shaping public opinion on political issues, has been extensively discussed by scholars such as Muringa and McCracken (2021). In agreement with this perspective, Hallin and Mancini (2004:8) assert that there exists a mutually influential connection between political and media systems. According to Hallin and Mancini (2004:8), media systems have the ability to influence the social structures in which they operate.

Significance of ANC national conference

The ANC is the national governing party in South Africa, a position it has held and sustained since the dawn of South Africa's democracy in 1994 (Butler and Southhall, 2015). This is because according to Campbell (2019) and Booysen (2011) the party has had a majority vote of over 50 percent in every national election since 1994. Over the years the ANC utilised its majority to enact and repeal legislation that has effectively served the citizenry of South Africa thus seen to be working in service of the people (Booyesen, 2011).

The ANC's elective conference is a crucial event that determines the party's national leadership, and subsequently, the presidential candidate for the national general elections, if the party wins and takes office and leading the national government (Muringa, 2019). Decisions made at these conferences have far-reaching implications, shaping the party's long-term ideological and programmatic decisions that influence the national government's policy priorities (Butler and Southhall, 2015). Consequently, the media's heightened interest and scrutiny of the prevailing political dynamics in the country during this period are justified given the possible immense political, constitutional and parliamentary change (Muringa, 2019).

Given the importance of the conference, it is imperative to contextualise the conference within the broader framework of South Africa's role as a regional leader and the emergence of a new global order that is redefining how African nations are portrayed in the international media (Tyali, 2019). As the balance of global power shifts, traditional alliances and hegemonies (alliances between United States of America and European nations) must adapt their diplomatic strategies to account for new alliances that are reshaping global governance and African development prospects (Carmody, 2013). The ascendance of developing nations in the global south, including the alliance of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), has

threatened established powers and their policies (Carmody, 2013). This has resulted in increased media coverage of developing nations and their emergence in relation to Western powers and colonial narratives. South Africa, in particular, has become a regional hegemon with significant influence on the continent, thereby making its national and foreign policies, which are informed by policy decisions taken at the ANC conference, of interest to consolidated global democracies (Williams, 2011:147). To this end, the ANC and its conferences and policies have become a focal point for international media, as decisions emanating from the conference have significant ramifications for national policy and legislative direction, and by extension, foreign policy (Williams, 2011). While scholars have scrutinised the determinants of newsworthiness in relation to African news stories, there is still much to learn about how the international media frames South Africa's political events and its democratic processes (Rachman, 2013).

Muringa (2019) conducted a research study examining the news coverage provided by South African online press media during the ANC's elective conference held in December 2017. The findings of the study indicate that the media predominantly directed its attention towards the pre-conference developments as well as the political candidates and their respective campaigns. The latter informed the frames used by the South African media. It is worth noting that before Muringa's (2019) study, Butler (2007) pointed out how the media coverage of the ANC's conference revealed the high level of division present in the South African media. Thus, emphasising the importance of adopting a more considered approach to how political candidates and related events are reported on. The latter further highlights the importance of this study in understanding how the international news media covered the ANC's 55th National Conference and towards growing this body of scholarship.

Theoretical Framework: Theory of Framing

Media framing is the study on how journalists present information in ways that may have an impact on readers' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). According to Entman (1993), framing is the process of strategically selecting elements from ordinary occurrences and accentuating them in order to underscore a particular matter, establish its definition, offer a moral assessment, and propose a course of action. As previously said, the involvement of journalists and their reporting on political events and electoral processes plays a crucial part in the construction and development of a nation. The role of public discourse

facilitation and dissemination of crucial information to the population is of particular significance.

Qing (2000:666) posits that frames are employed by the media as a means of presenting a depiction of the world. The media functions as a perceptual filter that shapes individuals' perspectives and influences their cognitive processes on many matters. Tankard (2001) and Babin (2016) provide support for the notion that newsmakers employ frames to convey opinions. They assert that frames are constructed by the deliberate selection, emphasis and presentation of information that pertains to what exists, occurs and is considered significant (Gitlin, 1980:6-7). During electoral cycles, the way news is presented becomes more crucial, as the media wields considerable sway over the voting population through moulding public discussions and perspectives on crucial issues. This is done by highlighting and downplaying facts against candidates and political parties using frames (Ndyondya, 2013). This study will use the framing theory as its theoretical framework to answer the research questions.

Problem Statement

The media's role is essential in informing, educating and empowering the public to make informed decisions that can affect their lives (Sunstein 2018:56). In a democratic context media can serve as a public forum or conduit for meaningful public participation in the matter of political, economic and social significance (McNair 2017:45). Equally the media is ethically bound to providing information that is unbiased and does not misrepresent the truth. They ought to be an unaffiliated medium that serves the interest of the people. Accordingly, the news ought to present all aspects allowing the audience to make their own determinations (McNair, 2017:45). However, this is not always the case. News is framed and packed in a manner that serves other interests. As previously noted by author Pitkänen (2019), reporting never just entails “reporting the truth” because there are so many background factors that affect what and how things are portrayed. Particularly in elections times, media frames are often ideologically loaded with perspectives that seek to reinforce particular narratives, introduce particular thoughts whilst encouraging its readers to percolate over the information provided (Radebe, 2022).

Therefore, it is against this understanding that this research seeks to examine how the international media framed the 55th ANC National Conference which took place in December 2022 and how did the media frame Cyril Ramaphosa and Zweli Mkhize as the two main contenders for the presidency of the ANC.

Research Questions

Embarking on research involves a process of exploration, discovery and analysis. It is crucial for research to pinpoint a problem and approach it by asking relevant questions. As such, this research sought to answer three questions. First, how was the ANC's 55th National Conference framed in the selected international online media (newspapers), second, how did the media frame Cyril Ramaphosa? and third, how did the media frame Zweli Mkhize? Framing in relationship to the contestants would examine the leadership qualities, the manner in which publications reported about them language used and all other reported matters.

Research Assumptions

The primary assumption of the study is that international online media's framing of the ANC's 55th national conference did not cover the conference in and of itself, specifically, the political contestations, the policy proposals and the leadership qualities of contestants but rather focused on the political scandals that were prominent in national political discourse. The second assumption is that international news media built into their news frames societal discourses in reporting on the conference. The research argues that this was able to occur because journalists emphasised specific information in order to make it more significant and noticeable to the audience as supported by the framing theory (Entman, 1993). Furthermore, by employing strategic framing techniques, the international media may have been able to influence public opinion consistent with their intended message.

Research Objectives

Given the historical overview discussed afore of Africa and its representation as well as the African democratic processes this research seeks to examine western or global framing of the ANC's 55th Conference as it had two key features of interest namely, its political significance and the occurrence of a democratic process – elections.

This study has three objectives. It first aims to explore how the conference, in and of itself, was covered. Second, how Cyril Ramaphosa as one of the main contestants was covered. Third how Zweli Mkhize was covered. Specifically, it aimed to analyse what aspects of the conference were highlighted in the coverage by different international online publications. The study will analyse the use of words, phrases and figures of speech which may influence the intended reader. The latter is central to the research, as according to Smith (2000: 313), language

frequently tells us more about people than they choose to admit or are aware of and may provide information that a researcher might not have thought to ask.

The study is significant because South Africa has established itself as a prominent force in the region, exercising significant sway over the continent. The decisions made at the ANC conference shape the national and foreign policy of the country, making them of interest to established global democracies (Williams, 2011:147). This is why the ANC, along with its conferences and programmes, have garnered global media attention. It thus become important to examine the manner in which international media frames the ANC conference and the outcomes as they carry significant implications for domestic policy and law, as well as foreign policy (Williams, 2011). While researchers have extensively studied the factors that contribute to the newsworthiness of African news stories, there is still much to learn about how the foreign media portrays South Africa's political events and democratic processes (Rachman, 2013).

Research Methodology

The choice of research methodology is central to answering the guiding research questions. To this end, the researcher first delineated that the research will employ a qualitative approach that allows for the exploration of concepts, definitions, characteristics and metaphors used in framing the 55th ANC National Conference in international online newspapers. This was important because the study seeks to examine how the 55th ANC conference was framed in online daily newspaper this methodological approach would allow for the identification of themes, patterns and linkages. As (Mokhtar, 2017: 40) correctly notes, qualitative research is guided by the use analysis of words not figure. To this end, qualitative research interprets meanings, ideas, concepts, metaphors and symbols (Mokhtar, 2017: 40).

The qualitative research methodology is applied in the analysis of how the conference was covered. In addition, the study will examine how the leadership qualities of Cyril Ramaphosa and Zweli Mkhize (candidates) were portrayed in the conference's coverage between January 1, 2022, and December 20, 2022. Additional this research method was chosen because it is compatible with content analysis and critical discourse analysis, allowing for a comprehensive examination of texts, language and communication within the context of larger social processes, as well as literature, theoretical works and newspaper articles from designated online daily publications (Muringa, 2019).

Content analysis and critical discourse analysis would be used. This is because content analysis is nonreactive as a methodological approach (Bryman, 2001). This means that content analysis

uses and analyses pre-existing texts, and the researcher has minimal impact on the subject matter being studied. According to Babbie (1989:309), this reduces the researcher's own ideological position. In contrast, critical discourse analysis is concerned with the exploration of diverse modes of communication, encompassing verbal, preverbal and multimodal expressions (van Dijk, 1988). Critical discourse analysis is a valuable tool for scholars to identify the social implications embedded in frames, which in turn enhance the credibility of intricate media productions (Gitlin, 1980:303). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) and Lasswell (1948:12) assert that this particular technique enables academics to analyse the aspects of who communicates what, through which medium, to whom, and with what consequences. Despite the inherent constraints, content analysis is frequently used due to its practicality and relevance.

The two methods complement each other in the study as they allow for the texts to have meaning. Meanings are made in a certain setting, and the author, reader, and researcher all play a part.

Data Collection

To find the news stories, the study will combine searches on Google with the electronic repository called Press Reader. The archive, Press Reader, will be used with the understanding that the articles would not be readily available in large amounts, or might not accurately represent the subject in question (Smith, 2000). However, the use of both Google searchers and Press reader would allow the Researcher to yield a large and diverse sample size with relevant and useful data.

The Sample

This study is based on non-random sampling when considering the sample methodology. First, the study intentionally and specifically sought out news stories related to (a) the ANC 55th conference, (b) Cyril Ramaphosa in relation to the ANC 55th conference, and (c) Zweli Mkhize in relation to the ANC 55th conference. Second, these stories need to be published in the sampling period (between January 2022 and 20 December 2022). Third, as this study wanted access to international online news reports, it then focused on two main platforms: Google search, web search, and Press Reader. Google search allowed the research to reach a number of news sites that could have covered the ANC conference and the two contestants. Web search was conducted because google search provides one with views based on one's search history. Press reader, provided international newspapers also as physical copies. For a study of this nature, these different sites are a great source of data. In the context of what this study was

searching for, the chosen and then analysed stories had equal chance of being chosen as units of analysis to be subject to content analysis.

To arrive at what constituted international news media, this study was informed by three reasons. First the categorised regions according the United Nations (UN) classification: Asia, Europe, Africa, Antarctica, Oceania, North America and South America. Second, these news sites are only qualified here because they carry stories that are meant to be ready beyond their respective national states. Third, the stories concerned a country (South Africa) beyond their nation-state. The following sites/countries covered the conference the most. These countries were Australia, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain, India, Scotland, United Arab Emirates, India, Korea, Kuwait, Qatar, India, Mexico, India, United States of America, Australia, Scotland, United States of America and Swaziland and the identified online news were Australian Guardian, Bangkok Post, BBC, Biznews, Deccan Chronicle, Glasgow Times, Gulf News, Hindustan Post, Korean Times, Kuwait Times, Qatar Tribune, Republic World, Reuters, Santa Fe New Mexican, The Asian Age, Boston Globe, The Carins Post, The Courier and Advertiser, The Denver Post, The National (Scotland), Times of Eswatini and Washington Post. In order to assure the inclusion of several media channels, a selection of newspapers from diverse sources was made. The inclusion of these references was crucial for conducting the comparative analysis (Muringa, 2019; Khuluse, 2014). In terms of stories focused on, this study focused on only the stories that related to the research question, sub questions and objectives. In other words, only stories that had to with the 55th conference, Mkhize and Ramaphosa. The structure of this work is as follows.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter one serves as a comprehensive introduction that presents an overview of the research issue, delineates the research objectives and identifies the research challenge. This chapter offers a comprehensive examination of the various scholarly arguments within the field of study, while also elucidating the importance and relevance of the research being conducted. This chapter additionally presents a comprehensive summary of the research methodology, encompassing the strategy, design, processes and methods employed for data gathering, as well as the overall structure of the research. This chapter functions as a navigational tool for the research endeavour.

Chapter two focuses on reviewing existing literature. It is an extensive but not exhaustive examination of scholarly works that have dealt with the scope of the study. This examination of existing literature is important for three reasons: first, it contextualises the study within an academic field; second, it gives an understanding of what has been dealt with prior and lastly; and thirdly it highlights the paucity in the literature. This is important as it allows this research to identify areas in scholarship that still need investigation.

Chapter three this chapter provides a theoretical framework for the research. It is an examination of applicable theories and concepts. The study is grounded in the theoretical and conceptual framework of media framing, which serves as the analytical foundation for this research. This study offers a framework through which readers can comprehend and examine its findings. The chapter commences by providing a comprehensive exploration of the origins and subsequent development of framing theory. Subsequently, the way it was implemented in this particular piece of work is elucidated.

Chapter four is the methodological chapter. The methodology section serves as a comprehensive framework that outlines the methodologies employed in the process of identifying, analysing and interpreting data in order to address a specific research inquiry and establish the credibility of research findings.

Chapter five focusses on the findings and analysis of the study. Using critical discourse analysis and content analysis this chapter analyses the frames used in the coverage of the conference. It is in this analysis that patterns, trends and frames will emerge which will answer the primary and secondary questions explored in this thesis.

Chapter six is the concluding chapter. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the research findings pertaining to the research objectives and research questions, together with an analysis of their importance and contribution. The chapter will additionally address the constraints of the study and recommend directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse relevant literature for this study. It aims to conduct an examination of previous studies to understand the focus, arguments, findings and recommendations. The analysis will be based on two categories of literature: media framing of African nations and media framing of political party contests, campaigns and elections in Africa and South Africa. In examining the existing literature, the study will pay particular focus to the methodological approaches used, key findings and recommendations. This examination will help identify gaps in the literature and areas for further research with the goal of adding to the existing body of work. While there is a vast amount of literature on these topics, this research focuses on a particular period, starting from the 1990s. This is because during this time, many African states were consolidating their democracies, post-independence from their previous respective colonial rulers, and both the media and political actors were active in the framing and influence of the political landscape (Said, 1955). The chapter will be a presentation of selected literature review on the framing of Africa.

The framing of Africa: From ashes to rising star

The study is anchored in the framing of Africa and African politics which have largely been framed negatively by international news media. So it is important to first explain Africa itself in brief to contextualise the stereotyping. Similar, to other continents, Africa is constituted of several heterogeneous nations, varied in their “economy, political systems, culture, social structure and in some instances traditions and customs” (Tsikata, 2014:34). However, over the years, Africa has been depicted as a single heterogeneous nation with limited diversity, cultural or indigenous knowledge offerings. Essentially, Africa was depicted as a dark void land mass in need of civilization (Wa’Njogu, 2009). This single heterogeneous view of Africa was entrenched centuries ago by western explorers who failed to appreciate the diversity and nuances of the African continent and thus formed a homogenous representation of Africa with no regard for its native and vast offerings (Wa’Njogu, 2009).

The representations of modern-day Africa can be linked back to ancient times. Wa’Njogu (2009: 2) postulates that representation can be traced back to the 5th century when Greek historians shared their encounters of the African continent which were often mythical and

primitive in description. Over time these earlier mystical writers and their thoughts were advanced by influential authors such as Charles Darwin. In detailing his theory of evolution, Darwin validated the earlier representations of Africa and what was thought of as civilization, postulating that Africans were still evolving and did not fall under the same category as Europeans who were deemed the favoured race (Wa’Njogu, 2009).

Throughout the colonial era in Africa, the Western media served as a powerful tool in shaping the way people perceived the continent. As highlighted in scholarly literature such as Ziegler and Asante (1992) colonial rulers strategically utilised the media system to disseminate their ideologies and messages, as well as to maintain their rule. Unfortunately, the portrayal of Africa in the Western media during this period was overwhelmingly negative, with the continent being depicted as underdeveloped, hopeless and in dire need of Western intervention (Wasserman, 2017). This perpetuated the notion that the West was Africa's saviour, while the continent itself was seen as incapable of achieving progress without external assistance (Wa’Njogu, 2009). Supporting the latter, Serwornoo (2021:22) puts forward that the Eurocentric perspective of Africa has been promoted by the Western media, which has depicted Africa's identity as a product of colonial manipulation.

Legum (1971) mentions that it is worth noting that in French-speaking colonies, the colonial governments directly imposed strict media censorship, while English-speaking colonies were subjected to censorship through sedition and other laws. Legum (1971:27–38) provides insights into how these laws were used to stifle the voices of those who were critical of colonial rule. In essence, the media was co-opted to serve the interests of the colonial powers, and those who dared to challenge the status quo were silenced. This underscores the extent to which the media was used to reinforce the colonial project in Africa and the impact that this had on the way in which Africa was perceived both within and outside of the continent (Legum, 1971).

Authors such as Louw and de B’Berri (2011); Hawk (1992) and Bunce (2014) have all criticised news reporting that homogenises the continent, overemphasises African humanitarian issues and emphasises Western-led rescue missions promoting negative stereotypes. Bunce (2014) cautioned that these representations were dangerous as they supported neo-colonial power imbalances, and undermined cross-cultural empathy and connection. According to Schiller (1976:9), a significant peril associated with imperialism lies in its ability to exert control not only through oppressive measures, but also through the dissemination of Western norms,

organisational frameworks, values, language and cultural artefacts. These influences often persist and exert influence even after the departure of imperial powers (Schiller, 1976).

According to Bunce (2014:1), part of the problem with the framing of Africa by international media was that international journalists wrote news stories about Africa from their western viewpoint. Limited attention was given to ensuring that news stories reflected the nuances of the subject matter whilst carefully ensuring that the news story was not alienating the native cultural dynamics in its reporting. Consequently, news articles had an objectification and exotic slant enabling the othering to take root by way of contrasting to a Western way of life. Taking Bunce's (2014:1) point further, Mengara (2001:8) posits that our knowledge, understanding and perception of Africa is a product of European influence, narratives and idiosyncrasies, resulting from a deliberate and comprehensive process of shaping the continent. Amplifying this point Serwornoo (2021:22) refers to this Eurocentric lens as the Western gaze which is a western perspective of Africa informed by colonial prejudice.

Therefore, the objectification and exotic slanted framing caused an Afro-pessimist sentiment which rose globally. Afro-pessimism is the persuaded belief or understanding that Africa is unable to advance in all aspects without Western intervention (Behnke, 2019). According to (Wa'Njogu, 2009) it is a myopic understanding that is expressed through language, doctrine, or stereotypes that represent the social, political and cultural exploitation of Africans. Behnke (2019) advances that this is evident in the framing of Africa by the international media who commonly use three different frames to present Afro-pessimism. First, the designations of tribal or ethnic frames that are routinely used to describe African nations and their citizens. Second, Africa's portrayal as a homogeneous nation leads people to believe that it is a single nation and not a continent consisting of many independent nation states and therefore Africa's diversity and origins are not expressly considered in representations. Third, Africa's development is perceived as contingent on Western intervention almost as a messianic towering figure waiting to intervene and rescue (Behnke, 2019). The latter will be expressly evident through the presentation of literature and previous studies.

For instance, Schraeder and Endless (1998:32) examined how The New York Times framed Africa between 1955 and 1995. The study found that coverage of Africa was negative, yet it was this negative perspective that served as the foundation of American foreign policy ambitions (Schraeder and Endless, 1998). The authors further argue that this negative frame acted as an agenda-setting tool which reinforced Afro-pessimism among the American people,

as embedded in Afro-pessimism were stereotypes which are used to validate Western perceptions (Amoako, 2008:17).

Harth (2012) conducted research wherein she sought to categorise the stereotypes that Western media most frequently used in their framing of Africa. Harth (2012) argued that these stereotypes are not only distorted but also built on other myths that supported the tone and meaning of the stereotypes. To this end, she divided stereotypes into five identifiable myths. The first myth, according to Harth (2012:12–13), was the idea that Africans have not made any major advancements in technology, trade, art, history, or politics. This is supported by the second myth, which portrays Africa as backwards and disconnected from global progression. The third myth is that African traditions, culture and rituals are frequently regarded as exotic or primitive. African customs, ceremonies and rituals are not seen as valuable indigenous knowledge but rather as static and archaic (Harth, 2012). The fourth is the African continuity myth which implies that the continent is homogeneous and neglects to explain that the continent is constituted by 54 independent nation-states which were previously colonised (Harth, 2012). The last myth is about Africa's history, which claims it does not exist because history evolves over time, and since Africa is a static continent, it cannot exist. This myth holds that Western colonial endeavours were the root cause of Africa's past (Harth, 2012). Interestingly, in a 2021 study examining how four national Ghanaian newspapers cover the African continent, Serwornoo (2021) found that Afro-pessimism had influenced African nations' coverage of its own continent. Arguing that this was because Western news outlets accounted for approximately 80 percent of the global coverage. Some scholars, such as Ojo (2014) and Obijiofor and MacKinnon (2016), have disagreed with the notion that all reporting on Africa by Western media outlets is negative. Interestingly, South Africa and its coverage was often different as Western media frequently had to balance denouncing the Apartheid system with preserving their diplomatic and commercial interests (Saunders, 1997). Saunders (1997) makes the important observation that there were some oversimplifications in this coverage. The anti-apartheid movements in South Africa were mostly framed through a Cold War prism by many foreign media outlets, especially those from Western nations that were either allied with the state or had vested interests. This frequently led to the anti-apartheid movement being oversimplified and reduced to a conflict between capitalism and communist as opposed to a struggle for liberty, equality, human rights, and dignity (Saunders, 1997). While drawing attention to the problem, this selective coverage ran the risk of just giving a portion of the lived experience of most South Africans.

Thus proving Jarosz's (1992) postulation true that Western media often used historic, ideological and negative rhetoric in their reporting of Africa, even if they had an inherent interest in the nation. Agreeing with this sentiment, Hammett (2013) pointedly calls out the British news media for constructing pessimistic imagery of Africa.

Framing of African political leaders and democratic processes by international publications

The aforementioned sections illustrated how Africa was depicted in colonial times. According to Hammett (2011) colonial narratives are still prevalent in the reporting of contemporary African news stories such as Africa's independence and democratic processes. This propensity increased particularly during and post the independence era and Cold War and when many African nations, who had formed alliances with Soviet nations, were othered and portrayed with a strong undertone differentiating from the West. Coverage of African history, culture and political events was oversimplified and stereotypical. The depiction of Africans evidenced this as being dependent on or subordinate to Westerners (Ibelema, 1992).

In her 1992 book 'Media Coverage of the Angolan War', author Elaine Windrich illustrated the limitations of US media coverage of African affairs (Windrich, 1992). She begins by explaining how the 1990s was a period of independence and how many African states consolidated their democracy through the hosting of national elections marked with fierce campaigning periods. She states that this was happening in the milieu of the Cold War, which delineated the world into two competing groups, namely those who were pro-American and those who supported Russia and its communist pursuits (Windrich, 1992). With reference to the Angolan War, the author explained that America's foreign policy interests influenced its framing and coverage of the war. This was evidenced by President Reagan's support of Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), who was anti-Communism. The author postulated that in covering this war, the American media accepted President Reagan's agenda and used it as its main frame in reporting on the war. This resulted in shallow information and untrue reports of the war (Windrich, 1992). The latter reflects similar findings to those by Schraeder and Endless (1998), who found that the media often framed its covering of Africa based on America's foreign policy ambitions and perspective. Bookmiller and Bookmiller (1992) conducted a study of the Time, Newsweek, the New York Times and the Washington Post's coverage of the Algerian War of Independence from 1954 to 1962. The study used a content analysis methodological approach. By way of context, the study begins by explaining that Algeria, a colony of France since 1830, rose up in

revolt and fought for independence in 1954. Gamal Abd al-Nasser, the president of Egypt, supported the rise to independence by supporting a sister country as well as the pro-Arab agenda (Bookmiller and Bookmiller, 1992). Consequently, Gamal Abd al-Nasser often fought with global powers who were more supportive of colonisation. The study found that because of this strong stance against global powers, in the media, Nasser was framed as being pro-communist through the use of sensational labels and frames clearly marking him as an enemy. In contrast, the Algerian War and its causes were framed against Western power's foreign policy ambitions (Bookmiller and Bookmiller, 1992).

The study by Reta (2000) examined how the Washington Post and New York Times, two American media publications, framed important issues and actors in South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. Using a frame analysis methodology, the study revealed that the frames used by the media promoted compromise, understanding, fair elections and the establishment of an inclusive democratic administration. Similarly, the media used positive media frames to promote the image of South Africans who supported elections while disparaging any groups or individuals who opposed free and fair elections. The key and important finding of the study was that the American political administration was in support of the election. Thus the coverage of the elections would reflect the friendly diplomatic stance that the US had toward South Africa. In addition, the media utilised American journalistic and democratic values to frame the coverage of the elections which framed the elections favourably (Reta, 2000).

The study conducted by Behnke (2019) investigated the extent of media framing of the presidential election in Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The focus was on three prominent foreign news companies, namely CNN foreign, BBC World News, and Al Jazeera. The research employed a two-step content analysis methodology, enabling the identification of keywords, frames, and themes within a sample of 135 news stories (Behnke, 2019).

Pointedly half of the sampled news articles mentioned how the political situations were marred by violence and unrest; this was evidenced by the use of adjectives which had negative connotations such as "plague" or "damaged". Importantly, these adjectives were used in the headlines or lead paragraphs of articles (Behnke, 2019).

The articles focused on elections and candidates rather than a discourse on actual policy advancements to allow for deeper insight and engagement, leading to voter education. The framing of corruption in many of the stories painted the nations as having systematic political administration failures, further reinforcing the negative narrative that African states needed

Western nations for advancement. The latter resulted in international observers frequently questioning the legitimacy of elections (Behnke, 2019).

In addition, Behnke (2019) found that the same news frames that were used to report on conflicts, corruption, bloodshed and regression were also used to report on elections. This constant framing suggests that attitudes towards emerging nations may not have altered globally. The media's preoccupation with election related violence and corruption gives the impression that achieving democracy is very difficult in Africa, as stated earlier, and required external interventions (Behnke, 2019).

Western media covers and frames democratic processes in Africa from a simple and stereotypical aspect which often aligns with self-serving agendas (Behnke, 2019:6). In addition to being brief and frequently biased, the news about Africa is sometimes overtly false or sensationalised.

Thus, Stevenson (1988:124–125) states that Western news reporting of events in African countries can also be viewed as a type of media imperialism, specifically for three reasons. First, the Western media deliberately avoids covering developmental news from emerging nations showing the nationhood and ingenuity of African nations. This aspect of development would show the industriousness of Africans and the unique and native solutions that Africans had found for their own problem. This, however, would be counterintuitive to the narrative that was being framed. Secondly, the coverage of developing countries tends to ignore the slow but real developmental progress and nuances that illustrate progress through systems and knowledge that are anchored in African heritage. Thirdly, the international media favours reporting on disruptive events like coups, conflicts and crises (Stevenson, 1988:124–125).

The study conducted by Elega, Oloyede and Özad (2021) examined the international media's portrayal and framing of Nigeria's 2019 general election. This study conducted a content analysis on news articles gathered from ten foreign news sources to investigate the manner in which the 2019 general election in Nigeria was portrayed by the international media. This study aimed to evaluate the tones utilised by the foreign news media when reporting on the 2019 general election in Nigeria, as well as the dominant frames applied in their coverage. The research revealed that the primary frames that surfaced from international news sources were the political system frame, the human-interest frame, and the violence frame. It is noteworthy that the international media's portrayal of Nigeria's 2019 general election exhibited a neutral stance, despite a notable prevalence of news articles that expressed criticism and negativity (Elega, Oloyede and Özad, 2021).

Concerned about Africa's global media image, Ezeru (2022) conducted a longitudinal study on the framing of Africa by four British national newspapers, namely The Guardian, the Financial Times, The Times, and the Daily Mail, between 1992 and 2017. Having studied 7027 articles using both content analysis and semi-structured interviews, the study found that neocolonial and racist frames were still used in the reporting of Africa.

Njoroge (2021) conducted a study on the framing of Africa's response to COVID-19. Through a content analysis of articles collected from the Washington Post and the New York Times, the study found that homogenous poverty and lack of frames were used in the coverage of the pandemic in Africa. The study found that the problem was not only the negative framing of Africa but also the lack of nuanced reporting of the Continent, even in current times.

Using a mixed-methods approach, of content analysis, critical discourse analysis and interviews, Malaolu (2012) examined the coverage of Nigeria in five UK based newspapers between 1997 and 2007. The study used theories of politics, representation and news discourse as its theoretical framework. The study found that the coverage of Nigeria by the selected UK newspapers was significantly influenced by precolonial history and geopolitics. Of interest was that the research noted that although journalist had, in their own individual capacity, tried not to be influenced by pre-colonial assumptions or use 'othering' in their coverage however, the precolonial and colonial assumptions had been institutionalised and prevailed (Malaolu, 2012: ii).

Media framing of African political leaders and elections

There have been notable changes in the way the ANC has been portrayed in the media since 1990, which is indicative of the organisation's evolution from an exiled liberation movement to South Africa's first democratic governing party (Jacobs, 1999). Interestingly, Willems (2012) points out that the world media, in the early 1990s, primarily adopted a miracle narrative, depicting the ANC as pioneers of reconciliation following the transition from apartheid to democracy. However, this framing changed over time, with the media highlighting issues with inadequate policy implementation, internal party strife, corruption, and governance that were frequently directly related to the ANC's presidential leader (Votmer and Wasserman, 2014). Examining the presidencies of Cyril Ramaphosa, Jacob Zuma, and Thabo Mbeki makes the latter clear. For example, the ANC's economic policies, especially the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) plan, were scrutinised more closely during Thabo Mbeki's presidency since it was frequently presented in the context of neoliberal criticism (Kariithi & Kareithi, 2007). While the media began to focus more on claims of state capture and corruption

during Jacob Zuma's presidency, this was a change (Wasserman, 2017). In a more recent study, Chuma et al. (2020), led by Cyril Ramaphosa, see a conflict in media portrayals between reform narratives and the enduring presence of structural problems inside the party.

Although there is a large body of literature on political leaders and events around the world, and to a lesser extent in African countries, there remains a paucity of literature dealing with the framing of South African political leaders or political events and contestations by the international media Muringa (2019).

In a scholarly study by Muringa (2019), the author examined the framing techniques employed by two prominent South African newspapers, namely News24 and IOL, in their coverage of the 54th National Congress of the ANC. The study focused on how these newspapers utilised framing strategies to both legitimise and delegitimise election candidates. The researcher utilised Van Gorp's (2007) framing theory and Foucault's (1980) idea of discourse analysis to examine 100 news stories sourced from News24 and IOL. The data was analysed to ascertain the manner in which news coverage influenced the perception of Cyril Ramaphosa and Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma's leadership capabilities, both at the national level and within their respective political parties (Muringa, 2019). The study identified six overarching frames that served as evidence for the production of news frames through language that is culturally constructed. The research revealed that News24 and IOL employed prevailing societal discourses in their framing, resulting in a notable influence on the content of their respective reports.

In an earlier study, Botha and de Beer (2005) examined the News framing of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki in South African Media using a framing theory as its theoretical framework. The study found that the media used frames to favour and compare the leaders against each other. Mandela was framed as the warm, approachable leader who was people-centered, whilst Mbeki was the aloof, power-centered intellect.

In a similar study Chambwera (2016), examined the use of frames by the Herald and Daily News, two prominent Zimbabwean daily newspapers, in their portrayal of Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai election candidature. The research aimed to explore if frames were used to legitimise or delegitimise candidates in relation to one another. Utilising the framing theory, Chambwera (2016) was able to illustrate how media frames strategically used cultural values and ideologies to portray politicians in a manner that resonated with the Zimbabwean population. Additionally, the research found that journalists utilised frames which were strongly rooted in societal norms, beliefs and discursive practises, and had remnants of specific

historical times and incorporated discursive delegitimisation strategies. These frames were used consciously and subconsciously, when reporting on Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai. The latter reinforcing the earlier assertions that western lens or framing had been embedded into African news reporting.

Similarly, Khuluse (2014:67) looked at how the print media in South Africa covered the Jacob Zuma rape case using a qualitative discourse analysis research method. The study found that media frames were utilised to create a reality in which other cultural norms and preferences were ignored, ultimately delegitimising Zuma as a leader (Khuluse, 2014:67). The latter supported the claims made by Maseng, Koosentse, and Ani (2018) that the media had the ability to negatively impact people and change people's thoughts and behaviours.

Deciding on a different approach, scholar Behnke (2019) explored the framing of African political events, specifically CNN International, BBC World News, and Al Jazeera's framing of presidential elections in Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. Using a two-step content analysis, the study found that violence and corruption were used as the main frames.

In contrast, China an Asian hegemonic power frames news stories from Africa in a friendly and positive. This is posture is two-fold. Firstly, the shifting geo-politics environment is allowing China to rise a global power. However, China would need the support of African countries in its global political agenda (Gabore, 2020). As such framing African nations as friendly association is a means of soft power and global influence (Gabore, 2020). Secondly, its strategically promotes China's interests abroad. The latter reinforcing the earlier assurances that framing can often be linked to a nations foreign policy ambition.

Beyond only analysing media coverage, this study is significant because it sheds light on the wider implications of how African political events are portrayed abroad. Scholar Wasserman (2011) asserts that the way the world perceives African nations is greatly influenced by how these nations are portrayed in the media. Thus, the purpose of this study's research of how the ANC conference was covered by foreign news media is to provide meaningful insights into how the world perceives South Africa's political circumstances. Ojo (2014) asserts that these viewpoints have a significant effect on international investment and diplomatic relations, which in turn influences South Africa's development goals. Furthermore, this analysis contributes to the ongoing discussion about media representation and its effects on global knowledge by highlighting potential biases or misunderstandings regarding African politics in international reporting (Nothias, 2018). The study clarifies how the ANC has evolved since apartheid and how its internal dynamics are believed to affect both national and regional stability. As Melber

(2018) points out, such opinions might have a big influence on South Africa's reputation in the global political and economic arena. A critical investigation of these narratives will not only advance our understanding of how the media presents political events in Africa, but it will also offer crucial context for comprehending South Africa's international standing and the consequences for the nation's future development.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the existing literature on Africa's representation in Western media. The chapter begins by exploring how Africa has been represented from as early as the 5th century, colonial and post-colonial times. The study found that during these times, Western explorers and leaders wrote about Africa from a Western imperialist perspective, which portrayed Africa as homogenous, primitive and backward. The study discussed at length how these perceptions contributed to Afro-pessimism, which was an understanding that Africa is unable to advance politically, socially, or economically without the assistance of the West and emphasised Western cultures. According to this ideology, superior cultures and inferior cultures can be distinguished based on a nation's degree of economic and political development. This led to stereotypes and myths being created and deeply entrenched. The literature revealed that stereotypes and myths continue to be used in present-day reporting, even in democratic processes such as elections and political events. Furthermore, international media representation of Africa revealed a lack of interest in global development matters unless it benefits foreign powers. It further revealed that the international media tended to report on Africa in a binary way without considering the nuances of the continent, such as the political, social and historical context of African democracies. The chapter noted that there was a gap in the literature of studies that examined international media coverage of African political leaders and contestations, a gap this study hopes to contribute towards.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Media framing is the theoretical framework and the basis of the analysis for this study. It provides the lens through which the reader should understand this work. Foss, Foss and Griffin (1999) opine that theory helps understand or examine subject matter and how theory is applied to a study.

The media is an essential component in the functioning of democracy. This is because the media is a significant source of information for people who frequently rely on it for updates on topical matters, including political developments, political party events and elections (Knight and Chiang, 2011).

Cornelissen, Daly, Sinandile, de Lange and Barnett (2019) note that one of the most important knowledge paradoxes is that the more information flows, the more people rely on the media to evaluate information. This reliance is slightly more pronounced during election periods. As it is during election periods (before, during and after) that the media plays an important conduit role (Cushion and Jackson, 2019). Pointedly, there are two roles that the media plays during election periods that are relevant to highlight in this study. First is to inform the public on topical issues or matters of interest and concern, and second is to influence public discourse or to set the agenda on matters that are of interest to and for the media (Cushion and Jackson, 2019). This is because framing events and issues in a particular way can impact public opinion in a significant way (de Vreese, 2005:51). Thus, it is important to give considerable thought to the media's function and how it frames political figures and similar occurrences.

According to Kozman (2017), the concept of framing has evolved into a comprehensive theoretical framework that may be effectively employed in the analysis of frames, as it facilitates the application of both inductive and deductive approaches (D'Angelo 2022; Entman 1993). Nevertheless, Kozman (2017:779) argues that the challenge in conceptualising theory as a theoretical paradigm lies in the loose usage of the terms "frames" and "framing" which has resulted in varying definitions and outcomes that only share the commonality of the word "framing." This inconsistency in the conceptualization of media frames has posed a persistent issue. However, despite this limitation, framing has undergone development and now stands as

a robust theoretical framework. This chapter examines the framing theory in the context of the framing of the 55th ANC national conference by international online media.

The chapter begins by tracing the genesis of the theory. It is critical to understand what gave rise to the creation of the theory, as this will inform its application and relevance to the study. It then explores framing theory in and of itself, how it works and the typology that may be relevant as lens for this study. Central to the decision to use this theory was that framing theory allows for the examination of how issues are covered.

The origins of framing theory

It is widely accepted that the worldview of society is significantly influenced by mass media. People's understanding, perception and decisions are, to some degree, influenced by the media (Gabore, 2020). The latter is evident during election periods as often the citizenry depends on the views of political commentators for discourse done through news media to shape their view on a political matter.

If indeed the "news media provide a representation of the world through journalists", as put forward by (Qing, 2000:666), then this would happen through the use of frames. In essence, the media provides a lens through which people perceive the world. The latter is supported by Tankard (2001) and Babin (2016), who advance that newsmakers communicate viewpoints through frames as they implore principles of selection, emphasis and presentation of what exists, what happens and what matters (Gitlin, 1980:6-7). The framing of news becomes particularly important during election periods as the news media often have a larger influence and are able to shape public discourse and opinion on critical matters (Ndyondya, 2013). The use or correctness of the frames is not the focus of this study but rather how frames are used for salience specifically the selection, emphasis, inclusion, exclusion and presentation of news stories (Gabore, 2019).

This chapter seeks to create a theoretical framework which will aid the research in answering the guiding questions, specifically, how was the ANC's 55th National Conference in 2022 framed in daily online international newspapers and how were the leadership qualities of Cyril Ramaphosa and Zweli Mkhize framed in the coverage of the conference and did the portrayed characteristics induce media biases? Thus, through the framing theory this research would examine specific clue, interpretations and suggestions in order to answer the guiding research questions.

The concept of framing has its origins in two disciplines: psychology and sociology (Lecheler, Bos and Vliegthart, 2015). In psychology, framing is often referred to as belonging to the long-term or cognitive theory (Lecheler, Bos and Vliegthart, 2015). The connection to psychology, specifically the long-term or cognitive theory, is explained by scholars as when someone is presented with a stimulus, their mind will refer to previous internal frames made by memories to grasp the information (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007:11; Linström and Marais, 2012).

In the sociology sphere, Ervin Goffman, a sociology professor, shaped the theory of framing in earlier years (Goffman, 1974). He based his theories on “symbolic interactionism and social constructionism” (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). According to Ardèvol-Abreu (2015), Goffman's work was fundamental in advancing our understanding of how humans process information to influence their decision-making. Thus, Goffman found that “people struggle to interpret their life experiences and completely comprehend the world. People use interpretive schemas, also known as primary frameworks, to categorise and interpret information in order to process new knowledge quickly” (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007:12).

Gleaning from these earlier psychology and sociology studies, Entman (1993) evolved the framing theory decades later and established it as an academic theory in media studies. The theory, according to Entman (1993:53), when appropriated within media studies, looks at two factors, namely salience and selection. For Entman (1993), framing was a process through which the media organised its reporting as they selected specific aspects and made them salient in an effort to influence the intended audience. The application of frames takes place in various forms. In some instances, framing may take the shape of a metaphor, a story with a narrow emphasis on culture, customs and practices, value assessments of the positive or negative with inherent bias, or even the presentation of a subject with contrast (Arowolo, 2017). According to framing theory, the media concentrates on one aspect and then offers it to the audience inside a field or frame. In doing so the media affect how people think about the problem as well as what they should think about the said problem (Arowolo, 2017).

Framing theory

The theory of framing is the selection of information and making it more significant such that it is easily noticeable (Davies-Laubscher, 2014:47). According to Norris, Kern and Just (2003:11), the concept of framing involves the conscious or unconscious selection and

prioritisation of certain facts, pictures, or developments above others, resulting in the promotion of a specific interpretation of events.

To this end, Entman (1993:52) indicates that there are four critical components embedded within the framing of news stories. These could also be understood as the functions of framing: (a) frames define a problem; (b) seek to understand the cause of the problem; (c) seek to understand how moral issues are evaluated and (d) the possible remedial action or recommended treatment of the problem (Babin, 2016:7; Davies-Laubscher, 2014:47). Tankard (2001) agreed with Entman's (1993) understanding of framing and adds that there are other "verifiable characteristics such as language and wording patterns" which are an integral part of a frame (Tankard, 2001). As such, through the use of frames, news can illustrate the same event differently (Gabore, 2019). Importantly, frames can embed ideological beliefs and preferences and influence people on socio-political matters (Gabore, 2019).

Building upon the preliminary concepts put forth by academics like Entman (1993) and Tankard (2001), recent work has clarified the nuances and implications of framing in media studies. For example, scholars Cacciatore et al. (2016) propose that the framing effects involve stimulation of cognitive schemas that impact interpretation in addition to salience. This viewpoint is consistent with the contrast made by academics Scheufele and Iyengar (2017) between equivalency framing and emphasis framing, the latter of which entails presenting information in diverse ways, while the former concentrates on stressing particular parts of a problem. The function of framing in digital media has also been studied recently; Borah (2011) noted how social media platforms could reinforce particular frames and produce echo chambers. Van Gorp (2007) also presents the idea of cultural resonance in framing, arguing that frames work best when they are consistent with larger cultural narratives and ideals. Recent advancements in framing theory offer a more sophisticated comprehension of the ways in which the media influences public opinion and conversation.

There is an inevitable connection between framing theory and agenda-setting theory. This is because the "construct of agenda-setting theory is the use of cognitive structures that automatically lead the individual to what should be noticed" the latter also forms the foundation of framing theory (Goffman, 1974). This is why McCombs (2005) makes the claim that framing is second-level agenda-setting or an extension of agenda-setting. Although similar a distinction can be made between the respective theories. Agenda-setting, according to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), is the attention and salience given by the mass media to particular news events thus setting the discourse agenda, whilst framing seeks to influence the perception of a

subject matter. For Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), framing is distinct from agenda-setting in that it concentrates on how topics are presented in media stories and the influence they have on the public's perception. This distinction is important as it allows for a clearer understanding of two often interlinking concepts. For this research, framing will be the anchoring theory.

How framing works

Scheufele (1999:106) as cited in Davies-Laubscher (2014:47) asserts that framing is a macro- and micro-level construct. As a macro-level construct, framing is the presenting of information in a way that appeals to viewers' underlying pre-existing schemas. Meanwhile, framing as a micro-level construct describes how issues are presented to produce impressions (Scheufele, 1999:106; Davis-Laubscher, 2014:47).

In order to understand how framing works, it is important to revert to the earlier discussion on the functions of framing as explained by Entman (1993), specifically that frames are used to (a) define a problem, (b) understand the cause of the problem, (c) understand how moral issues are evaluated and (d) find possible remedial action. In reality, in crafting news frames journalists use the process of discarding elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights certain aspects and then draws connections among them (Entman, 1993). The latter allows “the process of introducing salience of certain ideas that encourage the audience to think, feel, and decide in a particular way” (Entman, 2007:164). Thus, framing changes and modifies audiences' interpretations and preferences (Davies-Laubscher, 2014:47). Journalists use frames in order to help the reader create an opinion about an event or a person's moral character (Davis-Laubscher, 2014:47). As such, Van Gorp (2007:73) posits that frames are an invitation or stimulant to read a news piece in a specific way.

The latter may seem contrary to media ethics of being unbiased; however, the reality is that journalists do not work in a vacuum; they construct their own social reality based on expectations informed by past, present and future occurrences (Johnson-Cartee, 2005:1). Therefore, believing that facts can be discovered through unbiased observation is “hopelessly foolish” (Johnson-Cartee, 2005:2). Furthermore, journalist often work for news publications or frame sponsors which often have an influence on the content being produced, thus further adding to the complexities of framing (Johnson-Cartee, 2005).

This study proposes to examine the frames used in the coverage of the 55th ANC national conference. To this end, the framing theory will be useful as it would enable the research to examine the data in respect of the two foundational aspects of framing theory namely, selection

and salience or presentation. This is because at the centre of framing theory is the act of emphasising certain aspects of a perceived reality in a written or spoken document, with the purpose of advocating for a certain definition of a problem, interpretation of its causes, moral evaluation, and/or recommendations for resolving the issue (Entman, 1993).

Frames and frame sponsors

The preceding section examined the concept of framing as a construct. Understanding the significance of frames is essential as it enables a comprehensive understanding of the underlying principles that govern the building of frames (Wichgers and van Spanje, 2021). The influence on journalists reporting on issues stems from a multitude of factors, encompassing organisational culture and ideology (Shoemaker and Reese, 2013). In a similar vein, the framing of political events can involve the participation of both political and non-political actors, encompassing political institutions as well as non-institutional participants who possess differing levels of power and influence. All of the authors demonstrate a common interest in the construction of the frame, as they guide readers towards specific features of the issue by employing techniques such as highlighting certain elements and employing quotes or subtly suggestive wording (Hänggli, 2012; Wichgers and van Spanje, 2021). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) assert that news content should be seen as media packages that employ symbolic or framing strategies to promote a particular perspective. According to Msiza (2017), the influence of media owners on the editorial direction of newspapers is typically aligned with their economic and/or political objectives. Therefore, it is crucial to ascertain the specific economic or cultural resources utilised by sponsors in order to promote specific frames. This is because, as stated by Chiumbu, Reddy, Bohler-Muller, Gumede and Mtshengu (2018:963), frames serve as indicators of power that reflect the identity of actors or interests vying for dominance within the discourse.

Frame Typology

News makers utilise several news frames in their coverage as such there is an abundance of constructs of news frames. However, de Vreese (2005) puts forward a typology to analyse the nature and content of frames. Arguing that some frames are an issue or problem-specific frames as they deal with a particular issue. These frames are often constructed as journalists “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (de Vreese, 2005:55). Whilst other frames are generic as they “transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different

topics even over time and in different cultural contexts” (de Vreese, 2005:55). Entman, Matthes and Pellicano (2009:197) supported by de Vreese (2005) opine that analysing issue-specific frames allows researchers “to draw clearer measurements and inferences that distinguish framing from themes, arguments, assertions, and other under-theorised concepts”. A deeply precise level of precision and information pertinent to the event or subject under study is possible when studying news frames from an issue-specific perspective. However, this benefit may also come with a built-in drawback. Scholar de Vreese (2005:55) explains that this is due to the high degree of problem sensitivity, and that it is challenging to generalise, compare and utilise analyses based on issue-specific frames as empirical data for theory development (de Vreese, 2005:55). According to Hertog and McLeod (2001:150–151), the lack of comparability has caused researchers to “find evidence for what they are looking for too easily”. In contrast, scholar Kozman (2017:779) postulates that generic frames allow for systematic comparison “across issues, frames and topics”.

The media plays a critical role in covering political events because often decisions taken at political events, such as the ANC’s 55th elective conference, have a bearing on national policy directions. Accordingly, during such political events the media forms an integral part of aiding public discourse and informing the citizenry of the occurrences which could impact their lives.

According to studies on how the media covers elections, there are two news frames that are frequently used that are associated with politics (Aalberg, Strömbäck and de Vreese, 2012). Typically, the focus of the campaign is on a strategic game frame, which tends to show politics and the electoral process as a strategy game and varied political techniques used by candidates, political parties, or rulers to increase their chances of victory (Dimitrova and Kostadinova, 2013). The usage of issue frames, which tend to emphasise the debate about problems and information suggestions related to the players that make them, allows news stories to provide a thematic or issue-centred approach in the face of this coverage (Rhee, 1997).

When attempting to analyse how the media presents the news, there are primarily two paradigms that are accepted. First, there is a school of thought championed by Entman (1993) which contends that there are four mainframes that are typically employed, namely, frames to describe an issue, diagnose a problem, make a judgement regarding the detected problem and recommend a plan of action. Secondly, by examining information sources, such as the speaker’s message and the embedded visuals, it is possible to identify these frames (Entman, 1993). The latter pertains to the typology of frames. Manifest frames are utilised to highlight issues or information that are readily apparent (Rosas-Moreno and Joyce, 2017:67).

In the field of political communication study, the strategic game frame notion has emerged as one of the most crucial concepts (Aalberg et al., 2012; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). Strategic game framing is the process of moving political news reporting away from issue-oriented reporting and toward reporting that strongly emphasizes political performance, winning and losing, and game-theory concerns (Patterson, 1993). Many academics from all around the world have found this continuous trend to be concerning, especially in light of the potential detrimental impact that game framing may have on how modern democracies function. Numerous studies illustrate exposure to game frames. In fact, a wealth of research shows that exposure to strategic game frames can promote political cynicism and reduce political efficacy (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997).

As discussed above, framing focuses on the manner in which the media presents information in order to influence or shape the public's perception. However, it is important for this study to acknowledge that there is an inherent interconnectedness in the realm of media influence, specifically as it relates to framing, agenda-setting, and priming. Thus, it is critical to examine the interplay, not exhaustively, between agenda setting and priming related to framing and public influence.

Agenda setting

Agenda-setting theory was developed in 1974 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw as they sought to understand the role the media played in determining what people thought about it (McCombs and Shaw, 1974). Central to agenda-setting is the media's ability to shape public discourse and thought by highlighting certain aspects. As Cohen (1963) opined that "the press may not be successful all the time in telling people what to think, but it is successful in telling its readers what to think about". This is why Moy, Tewksbury and Rinke (2016) postulate that agenda setting is the ability to guide the public to what you think is important. Agenda-setting utilised primarily during election campaigns and political communications when the media informs the public of the changes a party has made or will make (Janani, 2021). The agenda-setting theory has two integral components referred to as level one and level two. Level one, also known as the media agenda, focuses on the media's ability to highlight certain aspects in their coverage thus allowing for public discourse. The second level deals with how issues covered in the media resonate and impact the audience (Moy, Tewksbury and Rinke, 2016). Of significance is that although the theory may shape people's perceptions and beliefs it does not take into consideration the cultural, personal and cognitive aspects which may contribute to how people respond to messages.

Priming

The fundamental process of media priming comprises a dual-step procedure. During the initial stage, the transmission of information through a media channel, commonly referred to as the “media prime”, triggers the activation of previous knowledge in the recipient's mind, namely the cognitive units or concepts that are readily accessible. The process of activation enhances the accessibility of cognitive units, resulting in an increased likelihood of their utilisation by the recipient when interpreting and assessing a future target stimulus, sometimes referred to as the attitude object (Moy et al., 2016:5). The phenomenon of media priming is observed when, during the subsequent stage, the recipient incorporates the primed concept, which has become more readily accessible, to a specific stimulus, a behaviour that would not have occurred otherwise. The initial stage involves the priming procedure, whereas the subsequent stage pertains to its outcomes (Moy, Tewksbury and Rinke, 2016:5).

The concept of priming is often regarded as closely linked to the concept of agenda-setting. Both results can be accounted for by mnemonic theories of information processing, which propose that individuals build attitudes based on the most salient and readily available thoughts and information during decision-making (Moy, Tewksbury and Rinke, 2016:5). Moreover, priming is commonly seen to be an outcome of the media process, particularly agenda-setting (Brosius, 1994). The mass media have the capacity to enhance the salience of particular subjects inside the consciousness of individuals through the mechanism of agenda-setting. As a result, this can have an impact on the variables that individuals take into account when making evaluations pertaining to political candidates or other subjects that are being primed by this action. The connection between agenda setting and priming was initially established by Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007). They proposed that the media's capacity to highlight specific issues, thereby shaping the agenda, has a subsequent effect on an individual's judgement formation regarding political candidates or issues, leading to the priming of people's perceptions. Weaver (2007) explains the similarities and differences between second-level agenda setting and framing. The author argues that both theories prioritise how issues are portrayed in the media rather than focusing on their prominence in media coverage. However, framing encompasses a wider array of cognitive processes, including moral assessments, causal reasoning, appeals to principles and suggestions for issue resolution, compared to second-level agenda setting, which primarily focuses on the prominence of specific features of an object.

Conclusion

This chapter explored theory with a specific focus on framing theory. There are several important concepts to understand, including agenda setting, priming and framing. While these three frameworks share some similarities and connections, they are each distinct. In recent years, framing studies have become increasingly popular, eclipsing both agenda setting and priming in terms of attention and focus. However, it is worth noting that framing is still the least well-defined of these three frameworks, both conceptually and in terms of how it is operationalised in research. The chapter began with an explanation of the origins of framing, highlighting its root from the sociological and psychological spheres. Frames and frame sponsors were discussed to give a deeper understanding of what contributes or impacts framing. Lastly, the chapter discussed the typologies of framing and how they could be used in answering the research question of this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and research design

This chapter introduces the methodology used in this research study and the reasons thereof. Research methodology, importantly, refers to and serves as a guide outlining the research philosophy that guides this study, its method of data collection, processing, and interpretation, as well as the design and how various components are organised to answer the research question. In short, the methodology section acts as a framework that details the techniques used to locate, analyse, and interpret data to answer a research question and ensure that research results are trusted (Muring, 2019). This study's methodology refers to the systematic process used to conduct and analyse the research. Importantly, this section ought to be viewed as the spine of the study, providing structure and support to other sections of this work whilst enabling the researcher to answer the main research question.

The chapter begins by discussing the research paradigm, which assists in locating the research within the theoretical and methodological parameters. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the techniques utilised to help answer the main research question and the sub questions. Specifically, the sections below will explain the data collection process, the sample, coding, and data analysis. The limitations of this study will also be explained. First, however, this study explains its research methodological philosophical grounding.

Qualitative content analysis

This study is a qualitative content analysis. This research method is adopted here because it is a method that uses and analyses qualitative data such as texts and images, which is what this study does as it analyses the framing of the ANC's 55th conference. Additionally, this method is adopted here because it is useful in the systematic examination of content of the data in terms of identifying themes, patterns and meanings (Krippendorff, 1989). The method is relevant in this study as it seeks to examine how international online newspapers, in their content, framed the ANC's 55th National Conference, Cyril Ramaphosa and Zweli Mkhize as contenders.

In short, content analysis is used in this study with the intended aim of examining the framing of the 55th ANC national conference. Lasswell (1948), for example and as far back as 1948, proposed a conventional framework for content analysis, which involves the examination of the following elements: the source of the message, the message itself, the channel through

which it is sent, the intended audience and the resulting impact (Lasswell, 1948:117). Therefore, it is frequently used to collect and analyse data to comprehend the meanings associated with a specific topic in a specific context by identifying patterns, frequency, and interpretations (Krippendorf, 1989: 403).

The primary focus of content analysis is to uncover latent patterns within a text, rather than presenting a straightforward depiction of its content. This analytical approach can be used to a wide range of content categories, as highlighted by Krippendorf (1989). Textual document analysis is a widely used method of content analysis that involves the examination of various written materials, including newspapers, magazines, letters, books, testimony, government documents and statutes (Krippendorf, 1989).

In view of the above, content analysis was used in this research to explore the framing of the ANC 55th conference. It is the content of articles produced by the selected international online publications that were focused on. The application of content analysis would have assisted the research in identifying dominant frames that are noticeable across the sampled data. These dominant frames could be interpreted through of critical discourse analysis.

Critical Discourse analysis

In this study, the data collected and analysed using content analysis was interpreted through critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is applied here to examine the use of language and framing by international online newspapers. This is within the context of “social, power, dominance and inequality” in these newspaper articles as texts (van Dijk, 1988:1). CDA is equally useful here because it examines texts with the intended purpose of exploring the social, political, and ideological meaning embedded within the text (van Dijk, 1988). The CDA scholar Dijk (1988:1) posits that central to discourse analysis is the inherent relationship between knowledge and power influenced by social structure and interaction. Thus, CDA aids researchers in determining the social meanings communicated through frames (Gitlin, 1980:303).

Discourse analysis is an organised method of studying language. According to Potter and Wetherell (1987), the first step in the process is usually data collection, which can entail compiling texts or any other language data that is pertinent to the study subject. According to Fairclough (2003), the following stage is closely examining and categorising the data in order to pinpoint important themes, trends, and discursive elements. Analysing word choices, grammatical constructions, rhetorical devices, and intertextual references are some examples of

this process. Gee (2011) highlights the significance of the latter, pointing out that it makes it possible to take into account the sociocultural context in which the conversation takes place by conducting this preliminary study. This allows for a multi-layered analysis that examines not only what is said but also how it is said as well as the broader social implications.

Critical discourse analysis is a specialised subset of discourse analysis that focuses on the significance of language in the operation of society and political mechanisms. Critical discourse analysis emerged from the field of critical linguistics during the latter part of the 1970s and considers language as a means of social practice. This perspective posits that language is employed to validate, sustain, and normalise various manifestations of social power dynamics and inequalities (Fairclough, 1989:20).

Within this framework, the concept of power encompasses more than just the ability to enforce compliance through military, legal or penal mechanisms. It also encompasses the ability to exert influence over the ideologies and principles that create our societies (Fairclough, 1989). Critical discourse analysis seeks to extract meaning embedded in language and discourse that contributes to influencing social and political norms and reinforces ideological beliefs and existing power dominance. In particular, CDA seeks to understand the social and political context in which language is used. As discussed in the previous chapter, news frames are not neutral: they have inherent narratives, biases and ideologies entrenched in them. Thus, in seeking to study frames and the intended use or meaning within them, CDA is beneficial as it allows for the unearthing of ideology and bias by analysing the use and choice of language, metaphors and narratives. Through CDA, this study identifies how media institutions, as politically situated entities and parties, are able to shape public discourses, set narratives, and frame political agendas. Furthermore, CDA allows here for the examination of newspaper frames within a social context in order to examine if frames were constructed to maintain social norms, stereotypes and inequalities. This is far more in the context of international news media have framed Africa, as explained above.

The comparison between content analysis and critical discourse analysis often revolves around their ontological and epistemological perspectives. Although both approaches involve the examination of textual sources, content analysis aims to understand reality as it exists, while critical discourse analysis aims to understand reality as it is constructed (Hardy, Harley, and Phillips, 2004). Although content analysis is applied here as within a qualitative paradigm, it tends to be characterised by a positivist approach, emphasising objectivity and employing quantitative methods. In contrast, discourse analysis adopts an interpretivist perspective,

emphasising inter subjectivity and utilising qualitative methods. In the field of material analysis, it is often acknowledged that the process commences by recognising the ability to quantify and encode meaning. The researcher employs a codebook containing a pre-existing classification scheme, enabling the systematic analysis of data patterns and their associated meanings, thereby facilitating the derivation of inferences (Saraisky, 2016).

Using online versions of traditional print newspapers

Given the status of the media in the modern day, it is especially appropriate to concentrate on online versions of conventional print newspapers while analysing media framing. This method will enable a detailed investigation of how well-known news organisations modify their narratives and framing techniques for online audiences while preserving their credibility and conventional journalistic methods (Boczkowski, 2004). Online versions of print newspapers can provide a distinctive perspective for studying media framing because of their intrinsic hybrid character, which allows them to combine digital-specific aspects that can impact framing with the editorial standards and depth of conventional print journalism. Real-time updates, multimedia material, hyperlinks, and interactive components are some of these aspects that can change how news stories are displayed and understood (Steensen, 2011). In his seminal work *Online News* (2006), Stuart Allan explores how online platforms changed newsroom procedures, journalistic standards, and audience engagement in light of the shift to digital journalism. It is necessary to take into account that online newspapers use algorithms that have an explicit influence on how news is framed and distributed. From content selection to personalisation to audience targeting, these algorithms are essential (Napoli, 2014). Examples of filter bubbles or echo chambers that may reinforce some frames while limiting others are news feeds and recommendation algorithms (Pariser, 2011). According to Cherubini and Nielsen (2016), the utilisation of analytics in newsrooms also affects editorial choices, which may affect how particular stories are framed and given emphasis based on metrics like engagement and click-through rates.

Data Collection

The first idea of this work was to explore how international news media framed ANC's 55th conference. The second part was about how data that answered the first part could be collected. So, the research used a combination of an open Google search and an electronic repository, Press Reader, with the understanding that the articles would not be readily available in large

amounts or might not accurately represent the population that was being targeted (Smith, 2000). The sourcing of data was surprisingly difficult for two reasons. Firstly, three months had passed since the conference and data collection only started (in March 2023). The news cycle is fast paced as such a three-month time lapse is a long time in the context of a 24-hour coverage of a news cycle.

Secondly, the researcher used personally generated keywords to retrieve data. However, the first challenge the researcher faced was using the Press Reader electronic repository. The personally generated keywords of ‘ANC 55th Conference, CR22, Zweli Mkhize, NASREC22 and ANC leadership contestation’ did not generate large datasets. In fact, the data was limited, with articles spread out throughout publications and often irrelevant to the study or too short for analysis. It ought to be noted that the first search on Press Reader was not categorised, tailored or refined in any way. It was an open general search on the platform. A similar sourcing method was used with Google, and similar limited results were retrieved.

The researcher refined the search on Press Reader and categorised it by country, daily publications, topic (keywords: of ‘ANC 55th Conference, CR22, Cyril Ramaphosa, Zweli Mkhize, NASREC22’ and time period 1 January 2022 to 20 December 2022). This was to ensure consistency, and that the measurements were comparing the same units. The latter was useful but produced limited datasets; often, the same articles written by the same foreign correspondent were posted in various publications. The researcher kept relevant retrieved data but disregarded duplicates. Subsequently, the researcher conducted a general Google search, specifically searching ‘international media news articles on the ANC Conference 2022’. This search yielded data different from that retrieved from the Press Reader. The data from the refined Google search included journal articles, editorial pieces, research articles and opinion pieces. The researcher decided to include these in the dataset. The inclusion of these articles was because these would provide an in-built analysis and perspective.

The new sourcing method allowed for the increased harvest of data from various publications namely: Australian Guardian, Bangkok Post, BBC, Biznews, Deccan Chronicle, Glasgow Times, Gulf News, Hindustan Post, Korean Times, Kuwait Times, Qatar Tribune, Republic World, Reuters, Santa Fe New Mexican, The Asian Age, Boston Globe, The Cairns Post, The Courier and Advertiser, The Denver Post, The National (Scotland), Times of Eswatini and the Washington Post. Though there is no official list of top influential publications, the latter three are media outlets that have entrenched regional desks as well as editorial operations (Brewster, 2022).

Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling is the collection of smaller data that represents a larger population. According to Brink (2006), this is done because it may be impossible to collect an exhaustive sample of the entire population, as it would be laborious and time-consuming. To this end, this study's population consisted of articles sourced from print newspapers that were published online from 1 January to 20 December 2022.

The time period chosen was done so illustrate the framing of the conference over a 12 months with the understanding of the significance of the conference as it was understood that the conference would garner media attention from the beginning of the year to a few days after the conference.

Therefore, the researcher collected relevant and related news stories, editorials, analyses, commentary, and opinion pieces for this study. This is because according to Chambwera (2016: 65) news producers and editors generally publish content that aligns with their prevailing and dominant acceptable perspectives. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, any story that contained any information regarding the ANC 55th conference and the political leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa and Zweek Mkhize in the stipulated period was considered irrespective of it being an editorial, analysis, or news, it was regarded as a useful sample. The decision to view the entire story or aspects of it as a sample was based on the premise made by Van Gorp and Vercruyse that "various framing devices are present throughout a story, which collectively contribute to the formation of the frames" (2012: 1274). The latter, which is used with CDA, seeks to extract meaning embedded in language and discourse that contributes to influencing social and political norms and reinforces ideological beliefs and existing power dominance, will be best suited to answering the research question.

Three levels of sampling were employed, namely newspapers, topics or dates, and articles published during the selected timeframe. The stratified sampling strategy was determined to be advantageous for the study as it allowed for the subgroups within the population to be adequately examined, given the use of content analysis and critical discourse analysis.

With the aim to promote the inclusion of many media outlets, a selection of newspapers from diverse sources was made to ensure a diversified sample. The inclusion of these publications was crucial in facilitating the comparison-based analysis (Muringa, 2019; Khuluse, 2014). In this analysis, factors such as publication frequency, demography and content pertaining to the subject matter were considered. To this end, the researcher used a planned sampling procedure

specific to newspapers to ensure the selection of appropriate sources (Khuluse, 2014). Despite the limited sample size, the researcher successfully identified thematic patterns and frames for analysis, as the sample size was set based on the availability of articles. The publications were chosen and used in the study as they represented a diverse sample of international media. The accessibility of articles from the selected publications was also a determining factor. The chosen articles were retrieved using the predetermined coding, specifically Google search for the search string ‘international media news articles on the ANC Conference 2022’.

All articles used were found in the World section – this is the section where international news articles are featured – and the articles were all found in the Africa section. The articles were situated in the middle section of newspapers and varied in length and placement. The topic was regularly covered with an increased coverage from 1 December 2023 to 20 December 2022. The sampled articles were mainly news stories except for one opinion piece. This was done to ensure that the research was analysing the same units. Importantly, once the data was retrieved, it was categorised into publication, date, author, section in publication, and date. This was deemed important as it would assist in data analysis (see Table 1). It bears noting that the rationale for using online newspapers was that it would have been costly and time-consuming for the researcher to source print media, given that the research was dealing with international media. Thus online media was chosen as a medium that would have the repositories that are cost effective as the research accessed the paid Press Reader via the university library portal. A comprehensive dataset of 59 news articles was compiled for the purpose of analysis and articles were sourced from a selection of 22 prominent worldwide online daily newspapers (Table 1). The number of articles sourced per publication were informed by availability. The more articles available in a publication the more articles were sourced. As such publications had varying number of articles that were retrieved. The sample size is thought to be reasonable noting the scope of examination of the research and having seen previous scholars use no less than 50 articles (Muringa, 2019).

Table 1: Study Dataset

Name of Publication	Number of Articles	Location of Article in Publication	Country Origin
Australian Guardian	5	World section- Africa	Australia
Bangkok Post	1	World section- Africa	Thailand
BBC	4	World section- Africa	United Kingdom of Great Britain
Biznews	1	World section- Africa	Internet
Deccan Chronicle	2	World section- Africa	India
Glasgow Times	1	World section- Africa	Scotland
Gulf News	2	World section- Africa	United Arab Emirates
Hindustan Post	1	World section- Africa	India
Korean Times	1	World section- Africa	Korea
Kuwait Times	1	World section- Africa	Kuwait
Qatar Tribune	1	World section- Africa	Qatar
Republic World	1	World section- Africa	India
Reuters	15	World section- Africa	Internet
Santa Fe New Mexican	1	World section- Africa	Mexico
The Asian Age	1	World section- Africa	India
Boston Globe	1	World section- Africa	United States of America
The Carins Post	1	World section- Africa	Australia
The Courier and Advertiser	1	World section- Africa	Scotland
The Denver Post	1	World section- Africa	United States of America
The National (Scotland)	1	World section- Africa	Scotland
Times of Eswatini	3	World section- Africa	Swaziland
Washington Post	5	World section- Africa	United States of America

Generating a data set

The process of coding in its binary form is the processing of categorising data and can be used to derive themes and/or patterns (Khuluse, 2014). An initial 70 articles were retrieved. The

the researcher read all 70 articles to determine if the articles were relevant to the study. The relevance was determined by whether the article was about the 55th ANC conference or the political leadership qualities of Cyril Ramaphosa or Zweli Mkhize. This resulted in 10 articles being disregarded. The researcher re-read all 60 remaining articles to streamline and ensure that the data was relevant to the study. This resulted with 1 additional article being disregarded as it was a duplication. The retrieved article was copied onto a Microsoft word document and saved according to publication in individual folders.

Coding

Following the generation of a data set, the researcher started the processes of coding. Coding is a process of identifying and assigning labels such as themes, words or phrases (Bailey, 2007). This process is important as it allows for ease of analysis. Alozie (2005:66) proposes a coding process and posits that the initial stage is reading the articles repeatedly and making descriptive notes on the content. In the second step, a second reading is conducted to find repeating frames, while the third part is dedicated to the comprehensive interpretation of the articles. As such, all articles were analysed on the computer. No articles were printed. This was because the researcher used Microsoft word and the review functions in Microsoft word to analysis and make notes, highlight and comment.

The coding process was twofold. First, initial coding followed by line-by-line coding. In the initial coding process, the researcher read through the articles to get a general overview of the content using descriptive coding by summering extracts and, in some cases, phrases. It also allowed for the first draft of codes to emerge (Muringa, 2019). All the summaries were made using a Microsoft Word document. As the articles were being read, the researcher identified and wrote on the articles the identified themes, patterns or frames. These ultimately were streamlined into the 5 theme frames discussed in the upcoming chapter. This initial coding was followed by line-by-line coding to get useful specifics and details that would aid in an in-depth analysis.

This process assisted in ensuring that the analysis of the study was valid and that other scholars could review it. To this end, the research used an inductive approach which meant that themes and patterns were derived from the research; in essence the codes emerged from the data reviewed based on repetition, frequency and salience (Khuluse, 2014).

Data Analysis

According to Cohen (1963, cited in Eadie, 2009:8), the media has the ability to influence both what we think about and how we think about it. As such, the purpose of this analysis is to examine the framing of the 55th ANC conference by international media. As stated by Lacey and Luff (2009), data lacks inherent meaning and requires thorough scrutiny and interpretation. To this end, the study used the thematic analysis approach, which allowed for the identification of themes and patterns within the selected articles, which, combined with the theory, will allow for in-depth analysis to gain insight into underlying meaning and patterns. Braun and Clarke (2006:89) opine that thematic analysis gives meaning to the collected data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the process of thematic analysis involves the identification of themes or patterns within data, which can be accomplished using one or two major methods (Muringa, 2019).

The researcher further used a combination of inductive and deductive methods, as the literature acknowledges two methodologies for framing analysis. Scholars labelled these methodologies as inductive, also known as bottom-up and deductive top-down approaches. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the themes identified in the inductive method are tightly linked to the data itself; Hayes (1997) also noted this. The deductive approach pertains to an analytical approach that is guided by pre-existing theories. The combination of both allowed for the study to start with the inductive approach to explore and generate themes and patterns prior to using the deductive approach to apply existing theory to answer the research question.

From the literature review in chapter two, it was ascertained that framing, as defined by Entman (1993), is the deliberate act of highlighting particular aspects of perceived reality in communication with the aim to underscore a specific depiction of a problem, interpretation of its causes, moral evaluation, and/or recommended course of action. Thus in seeking to answer the guiding research question by analysing the retrieved datasets, Reul et al. (2016:903) postulations were helpful as it states that media frames can be recognised by examining the constant utilisation of framing methods, specifically the use of language or metaphors, essentially the presentation.

Gamson (1989) posit that the process of identifying frames involves examining symbolic devices or distinguishing elements inside news reports. The use of rhetorical and technical aspects helps organise a specific event or narrative. Rhetorical devices (technique or word

construction) consist of several approaches, including the deliberate choice of words, utilisation of metaphors, and incorporation of exemplars (Linström & Marais, 2012:31). These devices employ intentional utilisation as such, form an inherent part of the frame. It was against this understanding that the researcher, having analysed the data, crafted a list of five frames, namely,

- A weak factionalised declining ANC
- Ramaphosa, the redeemer: the one who influences the rand and markets
- Phala-Phala farm gate scandal as a political ploy
- Winners and Losers: Game framing the leadership contestation
- The scandal-tainted Former Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize

Limitations of Research

The research has set out to collect data mainly from the Press Reader repository accessed from the University of Cape Town's library portal. The research aimed to collect 100 articles. However, there was a paucity of relevant data. Furthermore, the data retrieved often had insufficient content to analyse. The research also aimed to collect data from January 2022 until December 2022; however, data on the actual conference was concentrated in the last quarter of 2022. Some data did not have enough content to be analysed, which affected the sample size and, ultimately, the analysis. The researcher should have also started gathering data earlier, as this may have helped with the number of articles used. Also, the use of other data repositories may have yielded a better result.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research methodological approach used by the researcher for this study. The chapter explained the rationale for the chosen approaches and the relevance of the study. Furthermore, the chapter explored the methods used for the collection of data, as well as the sampling and analysis techniques. The chapter details that the researcher would use a combination of inductive and deductive approaches to analyse all data in order to draw patterns and themes and apply theory to the sampled data in order to answer the research question. Thus the analyses in the next chapter are done using the methodological approach explained in this chapter.

it's the qualitative methodology helped with creating coding schemes and categorisation which were ultimately helpful when analysing as identification of patterns and repetitions was easier. As in this study the methodology entails the process of ascertaining the significance of attitudes, symbols, cultures and institutions in order to draw conclusions about them. It was in the context of the afore that a qualitative approach chosen for the study used with content analysis and critical discourse analysis. As it allows for texts, language and communication to be analysed in the context of larger social processes. It is inclusive of literature, theory-based literature and published newspaper articles from the identified online daily publications (Krippendorf, 1989).

In essence, for this study, the use of both content analysis and critical discourse analysis will be helpful in answering the research questions. This is because content analysis aims to describe explicit elements of the content whilst critical discourse analysis aims to unearth the deeper social, cultural and ideological meanings that are embedded within language challenging narratives and power dynamics.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

In the proceeding chapter, the methodological approach for this study was discussed. Regard was given to ensuring that the methods would aid in answering the primary research question, specifically, how online daily international newspapers framed the ANC's 55th National Conference? To supplement the main research question, the study, using sub research questions, sought to investigate how (a) Cyril Ramaphosa, as nominated party presidential candidate, were framed in the coverage of the conference and (b) how Zweli Mkhize, as nominated party presidential candidates, were framed in the coverage of the conference

- To this end, the researcher synthesised and analysed all data collected applying the above mentioned coding process. Subsequently, the following themes, resulting from coding to process and data arrangement emerged. In general, the international online newspapers framed the conference other related matters in the following way: *A weak factionalised declining ANC*
- *Ramaphosa the redeemer: the one who influences the rand and markets*
- *Phala-Phala farm gate scandal as a political ploy*
- *Winners and Losers: Game framing the leadership contestation*
- *The scandal-tainted Former Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize*

Findings, analysis, and discussion

In the theory chapter, it was concluded that framing theory (Entman, 1993; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Matthes, 2011) is the most effective approach for analysing how the media portrays political events. Framing refers to the active process of constructing, selecting and creating frames (Matthes, 2011:251). Chiumbu et al. (2018), citing Entman (1993), explain that framing involves selecting aspects of daily life and making them visible to promote a particular problem, define it, make a moral evaluation and recommend a treatment.

When analysing news media, it's important to recall the widely accepted framing theory discussed in chapter three by scholar Entman (1993). The framing theory works as a framework that identifies four primary frames used in news reporting: issue description, problem diagnosis, problem judgment, and action plan recommendation. These frames can be identified by examining sources such as speakers and visuals (Entman, 1993).

News makers use several news frames in their coverage, resulting in a variety of constructs of news frames. However, de Vreese (2005) proposes a typology to analyse the nature and content of frames. Some frames are issue, or problem-specific frames, dealing with a particular issue. These frames are constructed as journalists select some aspects of a perceived reality and communicate them in a way that promotes a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or treatment recommendation (Kozman, 2017:779).

Other frames are generic and transcend thematic limitations, identified in relation to different topics even over time and in different cultural contexts (de Vreese, 2005:55). Analysing issue-specific frames enables researchers to draw clearer measurements and inferences that distinguish framing from themes, arguments, assertions and other under-theorised concepts. However, this benefit may also come with a drawback due to the high degree of problem sensitivity, making it challenging to generalise, compare and utilise analyses based on issue-specific frames for theory development (de Vreese, 2005:55).

Manifest frames draw attention to immediate problems or easily noticeable information (Rosas-Moreno and Joyce, 2017:67). Latent frames, on the other hand, require closer examination to identify trends, themes, unintended meanings, and omissions. These frames offer opinions that highlight approaches, sentiments, or understandings of situations, shape people's thoughts, and elicit emotional responses (Rosas-Moreno and Joyce, 2017).

The media has the power to set the agenda for political discourse by drawing attention to political figures, issues, and institutions. In addition, the media shapes the way events are perceived (Muringa, 2019). Therefore, when analysing the dataset, the researcher looked for the problem's definition, the moral evaluation presented and the treatment recommendation the journalist wanted to provide (Chiumbu et al., 2018:4).

Based on the analysis of framing theory and its application in analysing news media, it can be argued that the selection and construction of frames by newsmakers can have a significant impact on the way in which political events are portrayed to the public (Rosas-Moreno and Joyce, 2017). The use of specific frames such as issue-specific frames or manifest frames can shape people's thoughts and elicit emotional responses towards a particular issue or event. By recognising the various frames used and analysing their nature and content, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of political events and make informed decisions based on a more complete picture of the issues at hand (Rosas-Moreno and Joyce, 2017).

The data revealed that all identified frames were a mixture of problem-specific frames which aimed to highlight a particular issue. These frames were constructed as journalists selected some aspects of a perceived reality and communicate them in a way that promotes a particular problem (Rosas-Moreno and Joyce, 2017).

Frame one: A weak, factionalised, declining ANC

In the sampled data and as it can be seen in the examples below, the ANC is was framed as a morally declining political party. Reference is made by several newspaper articles to the party as being a shadow of its former status as a liberation movement that used to have ethical leaders who served the interests of the people and not themselves. The sample reveals that the ‘factionalised’ and ‘disorderly’ party frame was evident in the reports of the conference. This frame had a two-pronged approach mirroring the framing theory.

The frame first intended to demonstrate that the infighting was motivated by self-serving leadership ambitions, resulting in the ANC and its members lacking unity and decorum. This was framed as a problem. Secondly, the frame subtly draws the reader to a moral judgement, essentially asking the reader to question from a moral or idealistic perspective whether South Africa could still be governed by such a factionalised and unruly organisation. This frame wanted the reader to see that the party was in disarray and could not be trusted to govern the nation. The presentation of the findings is integrated with the researchers writing. As such, the presentation style is done to best illustrate the findings and demonstrate key issues from the data. Critically and in terms of the conceptual background to this work in relation to how Africa is normally framed, this tended to be in with negative framing of Africa, the idealisation of Mandela notwithstanding. The fact that the ANC was framed negatively can be seen in the following international online articles.

Kuwait Times, no author, 18 December 2022

*“after 28 years in power, the party shaped by Nelson Mandela into the main weapon that ended apartheid faces **deep rifts and declining support**. Its image has been stained by **corruption, cronyism, nepotism, and a lacklustre economic record**”.*

Australian Guardian, Jason Burke, 5 December 2022

*“the ANC’s **historic popularity has been battered** by soaring unemployment, continuing violent crime, rolling nationwide power outages and **allegations of endemic corruption**”.*

Bangkok Post, unspecified author, 17 December 2022

*“Mr Ramaphosa was bidding to retain the reins of the African National Congress (ANC) as the storied **party struggles with rifts and declining support after 28 long years in power**”.*

BBC News, Andrew Harding, 19 December 2022

*“for almost three decades now, the country has been governed by the former liberation movement, the ANC, which is **now consumed by fratricidal power struggles driven not by policy or personality issues, but by rival attitudes to corruption and looting, and the desire of powerful figures to avoid accountability and prison**” adding that “the party is **tired and broken, and, in the eyes of many, badly needs a spell in opposition**”.*

Glasgow Times, specified author, 20 December 2022

*“the crucial ANC conference was marked by **bitter divisions and scandals** surrounding Ramaphosa, Mkhize, and other leaders.*

FOX 59, Mogomotsi Magome wrote on 16 December 2022

*“debates on policies are expected to be overshadowed by the **angry factional battles within the ANC** which will see Ramaphosa challenged by his political rivals”.*

Reuters, Tim Cocks and Alexander Winning, 18 December 2022

*“The ANC's five-day conference in Johannesburg has exacerbated a **rancorous divide** between its **two main rival power blocs, one coalescing around the incumbent Ramaphosa and the other around former President Jacob Zuma.**”*

The frame also highlighted that the ANC members lacked unity and decorum. This frame subtly introduces moral evaluation as it framed ANC delegates as unruly and lacking decorum thus subtly bringing to the reader's awareness that leaders do not behave in such a manner and that such behaviour is viewed in disdain. This was illustrated in the articles below:

Kuwait Times, unspecified author, 18 December 2022

*“Dozens of delegates largely supporters of corruption-tainted former president Jacob Zuma who was forced out by Ramaphosa - **heckled** Ramaphosa, chanting “Change! Change!” **and banging on their tables**”.*

Kuwait Times, unspecified author, 18 December 2022

Framed as an ethical leader, Ramaphosa is framed as seeking to restore and discipline to the ANC as captured in the *“Let us exercise discipline, let us exercise political consciousness,” Ramaphosa said, urging attendees **to debate issues instead of “shouting” and “howling at each other”*** These call on the readers to doubt the ANC and any other leader’s abilities.

Initially, it was evident from the data that the media portrayed the ANC as a political party beset by internal factional conflicts. The drafters intended to demonstrate to the electorate that the essence of the intraparty conflict stemmed from self-serving leadership ambitions, as opposed to the concerns and struggles of ordinary South Africans of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The bolded and italicised phrases indicated that the selection of words was a component of the framing. This is because selection and salience are fundamental aspects of framing theory. The use of descriptive and suggestive language subtly brought in the other aspects of framing theory, namely moral judgement and recommendation. This prompted the reader to view the ANC as a dysfunctional party which is unable to deal with its own internal party affairs, let alone the country.

The utilisation of this nuanced persuasion tactic directed the reader's attention towards the internal conflicts within the ANC, specifically emphasising the promotion of various interpretations of the ANC's credibility and ability to govern, as highlighted by Entman (1993; 2007). The assertion was corroborated by a discovery made in a preceding investigation conducted by Maseng, Koosentse and Ani (2018). Although their study focused on the South African media, the finding remains pertinent to the present study, as it revealed that the media, using framing techniques, exerted influence and placed emphasis on societal standards, values and principles. Consequently, South Africans raised their expectations regarding the qualities expected of a political leader and voiced their dissatisfaction with those who failed to match these criteria (Muringa, 2019). The discrediting and delegitimisation of Jacob Zuma's political leadership occurred because of this narrative. This statement highlights the significant role

played by news frames in shaping cognitive processes and exerting influence over human behaviour. that through framing the media was able to delegitimise a political candidate.

Frame two: Ramaphosa the redeemer: the one who influences the rand and markets

Throughout and in terms of first sub question of this study, the newspapers tended to framing of Ramaphosa's leadership positively as the redeemer. Ramaphosa took up leadership in 2017 in the aftermath of the Zuma Presidency which was hallmarked by corruption and maladministration. In the backdrop of Zuma's downfall, Ramaphosa was framed as the preferred leader and the answer to South Africa's problems. This frame was two-pronged. Firstly, the frame used persuasion techniques to highlight and emphasise for the reader Ramaphosa's leadership qualities as a leader with integrity who will rebuild South Africa with his anti-corruption stance. Secondly, the frame indicated the rand and market performance depended on Ramaphosa being the leader of the ANC and by extension South Africa. By doing this the media placed the blame of the rand's poor performance on the possibility of a leadership change, which did not include Ramaphosa, but rather Zweli Mkhize who was viewed as part of Zuma's faction. This illustrated that the markets favoured Ramaphosa. The redeemer fame was evident as follows:

BBC News, Andrew Harding 19 December 2022

“there was a time, some five years back, when many South Africans flirted, earnestly, with the belief that their country had found its saviour - and that Mr Ramaphosa, a sober man of obvious integrity and experience, would put a stop to a grim decade of corruption and economic decline”.

Similarly, in an

piece in the Kuwait Times on 18 December 2022 it was said that Ramaphosa *“Portrayed himself as a graft-busting champion, Ramaphosa took control of the ANC in 2017 after his then boss Zuma became mired in corruption”.*

Australian Guardian, Jason Burke, 15 December,

“wrote in the lead-up to the ANC conference and in the wake of the uncertainty of Ramaphosa's possible impeachment following the report to Parliament that the “South African rand has fallen sharply with fears growing of a protracted period of political instability” that will hold back reforms to boost the country's flagging economy... Most ANC officials recognise that

the party will suffer massive losses if Ramaphosa, who is popular among voters, does not lead its campaign into the 2024 general elections”.

Hindustan Times, no author, 3 December 2022

“support for South Africa’s ruling African National Congress (ANC) would likely collapse if President Cyril Ramaphosa leaves office”.

Reuters, Tim Cocks and Alexander Winning, December 18 2022

link Ramaphosa’s redemptive frame with global markets. Swaying the reader that the reason Ramaphosa is needed is that he brings investor confidence which is needed to grow the economy. This is illustrated by the journalist writing that *“investors fear a return of Zuma’s power bloc could threaten reforms Ramaphosa has made to try to clean up grand corruption associated with his predecessor... the rand currency and government bonds weakened sharply last week after the report was made public and rumours that Ramaphosa was to resign followed”.*

Reuters, Anait Miridzhanian and Bhargav Acharya, 20 December 2022,

writing for reinforced the redemptive frame by writing *“South Africa’s rand held on to gains against the dollar on Tuesday after President Cyril Ramaphosa was re-elected as leader of the governing African National Congress (ANC) party on Monday... the local currency jumped on Monday as Ramaphosa beat former health minister Zweli Mkhize to secure a second five-year term as ANC leader, clearing the way for him to contest the presidency again at 2024 elections. ETM Analytics said in a note that the news of Ramaphosa’s re-election relieved investors”.*

Reuters, no author, 19 December 2022

“the re-election of President Cyril Ramaphosa as leader of South Africa’s governing African National Congress (ANC) party suggests continuity in economic policy, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana told reporters”.

“There has been some worry from the South African people about the economic part, and we have been trying to tell people that what matters in the ANC is economic policy. The good thing about (the election outcome) is that it suggests continuity in economic policy,” Godongwana said.

Australian Guardian, Jason Burke, December 19 2022

Ramaphosa’s *“re-election as party leader will reassure many moderate voters in South Africa as well as investors”*.

This rand and market frame is not new, it was used previously by two South African publications, namely News24 and IOL in their reporting of the 54th ANC conference. Muringa (2019:143) found that the respective publications had used this frame to emphasise and legitimise Ramaphosa’s ability to positively impact the rand performance whilst downplaying Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma’s leadership abilities. Put together these findings affirm the observations of earlier studies (Chambwera 2016, Davies-Laubscher 2014; Muringa 2019:198) that found that frames used in the coverage of political contestations are often linked to a larger social construct as the frames have traces of inherent cultural values; thus making the frame relatable to the readership and calling on their moral judgement to find a solution to the stated or framed problem (Muringa 2019).

The framing technique used in the data sampled proved Chong and Drunkman's (2007) assertions correct that during election periods, the media and their respective reports are arguably a campaign instrument and part of the democratic process. Thus, how news stories depict certain candidates can influence election results and shape the perspectives of the general public. The veracity of this statement has been substantiated by research conducted by Lui and Scheufele (2016) and Chambwera (2016). Their respective studies have demonstrated that the utilisation of negative framing when portraying politicians has historically exerted a detrimental influence on election results. This can be attributed to the fact that voters often rely on news and news frames to inform their decision-making process, which may also be applicable in the present scenario (Muringa, 2019). Therefore, within the context of this research, the acclaim and exaltation of Ramaphosa's leadership qualities and redemptive position led to the production of publications that undermined Zweli Mkhize's capabilities and neglected any potential alterations or suggestions he might have presented.

Furthermore, it has been noted by scholars that media coverage during election periods is strategically designed to legitimise candidate by employing framing techniques (Muringa, 2019). This study provides more support for the findings and establishes a connection with the research conducted by Chambwera (2016). Chambwera's (2016) investigation focused on the utilisation of frames by the Herald and Daily News, two prominent Zimbabwean daily newspapers, in order to legitimise or delegitimise politicians during the pre-election period. The research employed the framing theory to illustrate how the media incorporated cultural values and ideologies to construct a narrative around politicians, resulting in a feeling of historical nostalgia among the people of Zimbabwe (Muringa, 2019). Significantly, the incorporation of this frame served as a manifestation of the media's agenda-setting role aimed at solidifying a politician's position and cultivating public backing for this candidate. This statement holds true in the context of the present study, since the incorporation of the frame facilitated the initiation of public discussions regarding Ramaphosa's candidature and subsequent endorsement.

Frame Three: Phala-Phala a political ploy

The media had already framed Ramaphosa as the preferred candidate from the beginning of 2022. This is seen in Tim Cocks and Oliva Kumwenda-Mtambo's article in Reuters on 7 December 2022 where they wrote "***Ramaphosa has been the favourite to lead the party into elections in 2024***". However, the emergence of the alleged robbery at the Phala Phala farm brought into question Ramaphosa's integrity. This would have been problematic given that Ramaphosa had already been set apart as the only leader for the ANC presidency. As such, the Phala Phala farm theft was framed as a political ploy to discredit Ramaphosa's leadership to circumvent the tainting of his integrity and legitimacy as seen below:

Reuters, Tim Cocks and Alexander Winning, 18 December 2022

The journalist stated that "***some analysts say Farmgate (Phala Phala theft raises concerns only over his private business dealings: there has been no suspicion of the kind of public sector corruption that tainted Zuma***".

Reuters, Tim Cocks and Olivia Kumwenda-Mtambo, 20 December 2022

“battered as his reputation maybe by the "Farmgate" affair, Ramaphosa remains the most popular figure in the African National Congress (ANC) and the best placed to reverse last year's municipal polls that saw the party's share of the vote drop below half for the first time”.

Asian Age, no author, 20 December 2022

*“South Africa’s ruling ANC party on Monday re-elected **President Cyril Ramaphosa as its leader for a second five-year term, despite a brewing scandal over a huge cash theft at his farm”.***

Australian Guardian, Jason Burke, 19 December 2022

“Ramaphosa has cancelled all official engagements and was reported on Thursday night to be close to resigning over what has become known as “Farmgate”. Aides later told local media that the 70-year-old veteran politician and businessman was persuaded instead to “fight, fight, fight” by close supporters within the ANC. He denies any wrongdoing”. gain a softer tone on the wrongdoing and the author downplays the wrong. It is a felony in South Africa to 1) hold foreign currency; all foreign currency ought to be declared to the Reserve Bank (central bank); 2) the theft ought to have been reported to the police. This frames Ramaphosa as a leader who wants to be held accountable and do the right thing, even to the extent of considering resigning.

Australian Guardian, Jason Burke, 5 December 2022

“The sharks are circling [around Ramaphosa] and there is blood in the water already”.

The Korea Times, no author, 20 December 2022

*“**Ramaphosa, 70, is expected to be confirmed in the role** that would open the way to his being head of state for a second term, **despite a damaging cash-heist scandal** and vociferous internal opposition”*

Kuwait Times, no author, 15 December 2022

“South Africa’s ruling ANC was due to elect a new leader this weekend after the country’s embattled president Cyril Ramaphosa pitched to steer the graft-tainted party for a second term. **Despite a tarnishing cash-heist scandal and vociferous internal opposition,** Ramaphosa, 70, is tipped to win re-election as the head of the African National Congress (ANC)”.

Frame Four: Winners and Losers-Game framing the leadership contestation

The previous frame illustrated that in the lead-up to the ANC conference the political strategies were many and competing. The Phala Phala theft, and the subsequent parliamentary inquiry by the Speaker of Parliament in December 2022 to determine if the President had contravened his oath of office, created the backdrop for the game frame that was used in the build-up to the election. The game frame is when elections are reported as competitions similar to a sport. The frame narrows in on a particular candidate highlighting the preferred candidate’s competencies against the weakness of the other candidate. Thus, game framing allows the media to create a storyline around the preferred candidate setting them apart. This personalisation makes the candidate more relatable to the audience. The use of competitive language and comparison was very apparent in this frame. An inherent aspect of this frame is the use of direct and indirect focus on horse race polls, in other words, much focus was given to polling data, the candidate and the fact that there would be winners and losers. The game frame, although strategic in nature, takes away from the coverage of the enriched political content.

The data sampled and analysis showed that the election campaign was framed as a victory frame linked with game framing. In other words, Ramaphosa’s candidacy was framed as a victorious warrior who against all odds won the tightly contested race against his rival. As evidenced by the following:

An article in the Boston Globe on 20 December 2022

*“President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa prevailed Monday in **his bid to win** a second term as leader of the governing African National Congress, overcoming attacks from within his highly factionalized party and an embarrassing scandal involving the theft of what he said was more than half a million dollars in cash stuffed in a sofa on his farm”.*

Deccan Chronicle, no author, 19 December 2022

*“Voting to elect a new leader of South Africa's ruling party was to get underway late Sunday afternoon, with **the race tightening** between President Cyril Ramaphosa and his former health minister Zweli Mkhize”. Reuter’s Tim Cocks and Kopano Gumbi used the same frame in an article on December 20, 2022 stating that “He defeated former health minister Zweli Mkhize in a **two-horse race** on Monday and his **allies won** many of the party's "Top 7" seats, strengthening his hand after having **shared the spoils** with a **rival faction** in the previous vote in 2017”.*

Reuters, Nqobile Dlodla, 18 December 18 2022

*“South Africa's ruling African National Congress delegates were engaged in last minute **horse-trading** as voting for a new party leader **pitting** President Cyril Ramaphosa **against** former health minister Zweli Mkhize began on Sunday”.*

Times of Eswatini, no author, 20 Dec 2022

*“**His chief rival** at this weekend’s conference was former Health Minister and KZN premier Zweli Mkhize.*

*“Ramaphosa, who had been widely **tipped to** secure a second five-year term as ANC leader at a party gathering in Johannesburg, beat former Health Minister Zweli Mkhize in a **two-horse race**”.*

Australian guardian, Jason Burke, 19 December 2022

*“The South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa, is **fighting** for his political life as **rivals** and supporters face off in a **divisive battle** for control of the **ruling party**, the African National Congress”.*

The use of the term “battle” shows how a democratic process has been framed as a battle or clash and not a legitimate democratic process. The use of term “battle” brings forth the following matters to the reader: Firstly, African democratic processes have to disintegrate into battles showing the need for western help. This is supported by the latter part of the sentence

where the author refers to “control of the ruling party”. Secondly, African leaders are framed as wanting to fight for leadership to control the ruling party. The choice of words depicts African leaders as power-hungry figures who want to rule over people and hence the use of “ruling party”. The reality is that the ANC governs and does not rule over South Africa. But the choice of words reinforced the battle frame.

While it may be economically and journalistically beneficial to depict politics as a game and extensively cover horse race polls, there are critics who contend that such coverage runs the risk of suppressing reporting on crucial political matters (Patterson, 1993) and adversely impacting the news audience (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). This assertion holds special validity when examining the African context, where democratic processes frequently encounter challenges characterised by conflict and lack of cohesion.

The Gulf News, no author, 20 December 2022

*“Ramaphosa **beat** former health minister Zweli Mkhize in a ballot at a party gathering in Johannesburg. He won **around 57 per cent of the votes against Mkhize’s 43 per cent**”.*

The Korea Times, no author, 20 December 2022

*“voting to elect a new leader of South Africa’s ruling party got underway late Sunday, with **the race tightening** between President Cyril Ramaphosa and his former health minister Zweli Mkhize”.*

Qatar Tribune, no author, 20 December 2022

*“delegates at an ANC leadership conference voted on Monday to keep Ramaphosa as head of the party with 2,476 voting for him and 1,897 selecting **his rival**, former Health Minister Zweli Mkhize”.*

Reuters, Tim Cocks and Kopano Gumbi, 20 December 2022 *“He **defeated** former health minister Zweli Mkhize in **a two-horse race** on Monday and his allies won many of the party’s “Top 7” seats, strengthening his hand after having shared the spoils with a **rival faction** in the previous vote in 2017”.*

Frame Five: The scandal-tainted Former Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize

In terms of sub question two, Zweli Mkhize is framed as a corrupt, disgraced contender for the leadership position whose close associate allegedly misused funds intended to fight Covid-

19. This framed Mkhize as a leader who was not interested in helping people but was interested in leadership for his own political gain. This frame sought to discredit Mkhize and his leadership ambitions for the ANC. The frame also reminded the reader that Mkhize was closely associated with the radical economic transformation (RET) faction of former President Zuma and who is also framed as a corrupt leader.

Australian Guardian, Jason Burke, 19 December 2022

“Mkhize was put on special leave last year over allegations that funds for fighting the Covid-19 pandemic were improperly diverted for his personal gain. He has denied wrongdoing”.

Bangkok Post, no author, 17 December 2022

“His rival is his former health minister Zweli Mkhize, who has corruption allegations linked to Covid-19 funds hanging over his head. ANC members can be dishonest, but they are not idiots – they know that Zweli Mkhize is not a bankable star”

Bangkok Post, no author, 17 December 2022

“Mr Mkhize was the health minister in Mr Ramaphosa's government until he was forced to resign last year over allegations of misspending funds set aside to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.”

BBC, Farouk Chothia, 19 December 2022

“He too has denied any wrongdoing, and his supporters saw the allegations as an attempt to discredit him.”

Biznews, Linda van Tilburg, 18 December 2022

“Zweli Mkhize himself should not be seen in black and white terms as a RET candidate, per se. But in order to have won this election, if that is what happens, then he will only have won because of the support of the RET faction, and inevitably, therefore he will be somewhat beholden towards them. Inevitably he is going to be nodding his head in the direction of the Zuma camp, It's going to be very tricky to convince anyone, least of all the markets and the business community, that this is going to be a president of the ANC who will be market

friendly and who will be able to confront the deep crisis that the country is facing, which is holding back any hope of sustainable growth”.

Kuwait Times, no author, December 2022

*“**Ramaphosa’s rival** is his former health minister Zweli Mkhize, who is **facing corruption allegations linked to COVID-19 funds.**”*

Qatar Tribune, no author, 20 December 2022

*“**Mkhize resigned as health minister last year over a scandal** in which his family was found to have benefitted from a government contract.”*

*“**Investors fear a return of Zuma's power bloc** could threaten reforms Ramaphosa has made to try to clean up grand corruption associated with his predecessor, already under strain because of the farm money scandal.”*

Reuters, no author, 16 December 2022

*“**Mkhize was always the strongest challenger from Zuma's camp** -- the other main ones” Tim Cocks and Alexander Winning 16 December 2022 Reuters. **“Ramaphosa's closest rival is Zweli Mkhize, allied to Zuma's faction.** Mkhize was the minister of health until **Ramaphosa put him on special leave last year in the wake of allegations that his department irregularly awarded COVID-19-related contracts** to a communications company controlled by his former associates.”*

Reuters, Tim Cocks, 15 December 2022

*“They include **ex-health minister Zweli Mkhize, whom Ramaphosa removed from cabinet in June last year over allegations of corruption concerning COVID-19-related contracts** to a communications company controlled by former associates.”*

In answering the research question, the following was revealed from the sampled datasets.

Question one: How was the ANC’s 55th National Conference in 2022 framed in the identified daily online international newspapers?

The ANC conference in and of itself and the leadership contestation as it related to critical debates and information about political policy of leadership reform envisioned by each

candidate was not covered by the international media in detail. In other words, key debates emanating from the conference on developmental and policy issues were not covered. The coverage of the conference was influenced by societal discourses about the factional battles of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa's Phala Phala farm theft, as well as the associated matters. The data revealed that these frames dominated all publications with similarities in content, issues, and matters highlighted and downplayed. Conversely the framing of the conference was about legitimising Ramaphosa as a candidate despite his political woes or the political ploy against him. Across all datasets there was a unifying frame that the ANC needed Ramaphosa to survive the 2024 general election and lead South Africa.

Initially, it was evident from the sampled data that the media portrayed the ANC as a political party beset by internal factionalism. The framers intended to demonstrate to the electorate that the root of intraparty conflict was self-serving leadership ambitions, as opposed to the concerns and struggles of the average South African or substantive policy issues. As such, the ANC's 55th National Conference was not the main focus in the coverage by international publications but rather the politics of the ANC were the main frame.

Cushion and Jackson's (2019) postulation, as discussed in chapter three, that the media indeed plays two pivotal roles in the framing of the conference. It firstly informed readers of the conference through its reporting and shaped public discourse through what was being given salience in the articles; in this way discourse was of the conference and the salient points were because of the media's influence on people. Another way of understanding is through Norris, Kern and Just's (2003:11) perspective that international online daily publications "prioritised some facts and developments over others there by promoting a particular interpretation of events over another". In linking the literature view and theory to the findings the research begins to reveal that there is a thread that remains in the representation of Africa and its political events and contestation. In chapter two, this study noted through its literature view that representation of Africa in post-colonial times tends to be oversimplified, ignorant and stereotypical (Behnke, 2019:6). This is why Stevenson (1988:124–125) posits that this manner of reporting can be seen as imperialistic for two reasons. Firstly, the western media avoids covering developmental issues that illustrate nationhood and the industriousness of Africa. Secondly, the coverage of African countries tends to ignore the progress and nuances that are coupled with a developing nation but rather favour the disruptive unruly conflict and factional battles as evidenced by the reporting of the ANC conference.

Question two: How were leadership qualities of Cyril Ramaphosa and Zweli Mkhize framed in the coverage of the conference?

The research revealed that the frames used to show the leadership contestation between Cyril Ramaphosa and Zweli Mkhize were intended to legitimise one over another. This was mainly done through the game frame. Game framing enabled the media to construct a narrative that distinguishes the preferred candidate. This makes the candidate more approachable to the target audience. In this frame, the use of competitive language and comparison was very evident. In other words, polling data, the candidate and the fact that there would be victors and losers were given substantial attention. The strategic nature of the game's framework detracted from the coverage of the enriched political content. Thus, reporting of the two candidates was simplistic and focused on the rivalry and scandal and not on political policy or leadership debates.

In all sampled data there was an overly romanticised framing of Ramaphosa's leadership as the saviour. Ramaphosa was portrayed as South Africa's favoured leader and the solution to its problems. This frame had two points. The frame used persuasive techniques to emphasise and emphasise Ramaphosa's leadership qualities as an honest, anti-corruption leader who will rebuild South Africa. The frame also indicated that the rand and market performance were dependent on Ramaphosa's leadership. By doing so, the media attributed the rand's poor performance to the prospect of a change in leadership thus indicating that the markets supported Ramaphosa.

In contrast, Zweli Mkhize was portrayed as a tainted, disgraced leader whose close associates purportedly misappropriated funds intended to combat Covid-19. This portrayed Mkhize as a leader concerned with his own political gain rather than helping people. This frame aimed to undermine Mkhize's leadership ambitions within the ANC. The frame also reminded the reader that Mkhize had close ties to the radical economic transformation (RET) faction and former President Zuma, who was also portrayed as a corrupt leader.

Conclusion

The chapter presented, analysed and discussed the identified frames in an effort to answer specific research questions. The research identified five overarching themes. The study found that the coverage of the conference was influenced by societal discourses associated with ANC factionalism, Ramaphosa's Phala Phala farm theft and related issues. As a result, the conference itself was not the principal focus of coverage in international publications. In presentation of these frames the study provided an integrated analysis and discussion drawing from the

literature review and theory. Frames from this chapter were identified using Entman's (1993) framing theory whilst the analysis was done using CDA.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter will conclude the study by summarising the most significant research findings in relation to the research objectives and research questions, as well as their significance and contribution. The chapter will also discuss the study's limitations and potential avenues for future research.

The primary purpose of the research was to examine how the ANC's 55th National Conference was framed in daily online international newspapers and if the framing of the leadership characteristics induced media influence on African democratic practices. This aim was informed by the fact that the media plays a crucial role in providing the public with knowledge as it serves as a public forum or conduit for meaningful public participation on the matters of political, economic and social significance. The latter being more pronounced within the African context as previously coverage of Africa and its democratic processes was myopic, one sided, lacking context and often a poor illustration of the reality. The result of which contributed to a lack of understanding and in some cases Afro-pessimism.

From the onset the study set out to explore all existing literature which was relevant to the study. Thus the chapter two was dedicated to reviewing literature. The goal of this chapter was to conduct a review of two different types of literary works. Firstly, a literature review was conducted on how the media framed African countries. Secondly, a literature review was conducted on how the media framed political party contestations, campaigns, and elections in Africa and South Africa. The inclusion of this section was to gain a better understanding of the existing literature by looking at past research. More specifically, the study looked at what scholars examined in terms of research focus, the various methodological techniques used, as well as identifying the key findings and recommendations. This examination highlighted the gaps in the literature as well as opportunities for further investigation. It was also through this exploration that the researcher was able to identify the research gaps and how the intended study would contribute to the growing body of work that has been done.

In answering the guiding questions, the research set out a theoretical framework for the study in chapter three. This framework underpinned the study as it acted as a prism to understand framing and its use. The theoretical discussions in chapter three were integral in answering the

research question and they provided a perspective for understanding the findings but also grounded the research.

Chapter four presented the research approach that was adopted as well as the reasoning behind the choices that were made. This was important as the research methodology determined the best possible approach and design of the study to answer the research questions adequately. In addition, this section details all the processes and procedures used to locate, analyse, and interpret data to answer a research question and ensure that study results are reliable. The latter was integral because this study is adding to a growing body of literature. In addition, it was important that the study is reliable and replicable so as to advance scholarship. As a direct result of this, the first part of the chapter was devoted to a discussion on the research paradigm, which assists in placing the research within theoretical and methodological parameters. Thereafter the sections discussed the many techniques of investigation and evaluation that were applied in the process of assisting in the provision of answers to the research questions.

Chapter five was used to present, analyse and discuss the identified frames in an effort to answer the research questions.

Overall findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate how the media portrayed the ANC's 55th elective conference. The framing theory and literature discussed in previous chapters formed the basis for answering the research questions. By using the framing theory, the data collected was analysed through the identification of frames, patterns, words, and social context. The analysis uncovered that framing involves several frame elements, such as problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Content analysis and CDA were used to identify relevant actors in the problem definition and evaluate different frames that were positive, negative or neutral. The frames identified were not predetermined or coded, but variables that indicate single frame elements are grouped together, and these clusters were identified as frames.

The data revealed that there were five frames that were identifiable: A weak, fictionalised, declining ANC; Ramaphosa the Redeemer: the one who influences the rand and markets; PhalaPhala as a political ploy; Winners and Losers: Game framing the leadership contestation and The scandal-tainted Former Minister of Health Zweli Mkhize. These frames were present in all analysed datasets.

The study's key finding was that the ANC itself was not the primary focus, but rather the political aspects that could influence the leadership election at the conference were framed. The ANC was framed as weak, factionalised and declining, which demonstrated that the infighting was motivated by self-serving leadership ambitions, resulting in the ANC and its members lacking unity and decorum. The latter was framed as a problem, drawing the reader to a moral judgment, essentially asking if South Africa could still be governed by a corrupt organisation synonymous with corrupt leaders who were not focused on solving the reality challenges faced by South Africans on a daily basis.

The use of subtle persuasion found in all the frames focused on elements that were given salience. The utilisation of this approach had been previously employed by the media in South Africa. It had successfully achieved the desired outcomes, as evidenced by a study conducted by Maseng, Koosentse and Ani (2018). The study revealed that the media, using framing, exerted influence and placed emphasis on matters pertaining to societal norms, values and ethical principles. Consequently, the citizens of South Africa raised their standards for political leadership and voiced dissatisfaction towards those who failed to fulfil these criteria (Muringa, 2019).

The framing of the ANC was compared to the framing of Ramaphosa as the redeemer. The redemptive leader frame used persuasion techniques to highlight Ramaphosa's leadership qualities as a leader with integrity, no tolerance for corruption and intent on rebuilding South Africa. This frame was supported by the rand and market frame, which itself was not new. The frame was previously used by two South African publications, News24 and IOL, in their reporting of the 54th ANC National Conference. In his study, Muringa (2019:143) found that these publications had used this frame to emphasize Ramaphosa's ability to positively impact the rand performance while downplaying Dlamini-Zuma's ability.

Another key finding was that the media had already framed Ramaphosa as the preferred candidate with evidence of this from the beginning of 2022. However, the alleged robbery at the Phala Phala farm brought into question Ramaphosa's integrity but was quickly reframed as a political ploy to discredit him in his leadership candidacy. The data sampled and analysed showed that the election campaigns of Ramaphosa and Mkhize were framed as a strategic game. This allowed the media to create a storyline around the preferred candidate, setting them apart, as was found to be the case with Ramaphosa. Lastly, Mkhize was framed as a corrupt and disgraced contender for the leadership position, whose close associates allegedly misused

funds intended to fight Covid-19. Furthermore, there was also a subtle but present undertone that reminded readers that leaders such as Mkhize unwanted. This framed Mkhize as a leader who was not interested in helping people but was interested in leadership for his own political gain.

Additionally, the study found that the framing of the ANC conference and leadership contestation between Ramaphosa and Mkhize induced media influence through the use of media frames. In this study, media influence is understood as the framing of events and issues in a particular way that can impact public opinion (de Vreese, 2005:51).

To this end, the articles in the dataset promoted specific concepts to influence the audience's thoughts, emotions and decision-making in a particular manner (Entman, 2007:164). Journalists use frames to help the reader create an opinion about an event or a person's moral character (Davies-Laubscher, 2014:47). This, according to Van Gorp (2007:73), is an invitation or stimulant to read a news piece in a specific way. The latter may seem contrary to media ethics of being unbiased; however, the reality is that journalists do not work in a vacuum they construct their own social reality based on expectations informed by past, present and future occurrences (Johnson-Cartee, 2005:1). Although media influence was not the main analysis or research focus, however, the inclusion of this finding was important as it points out areas for future studies to explore and advance scholarship.

The research contributed to the growing body of work specifically in understanding how the international media frame African political events. The research helped show that pre-existing stereotypes and perceptions of Africa remain largely intact and impact the frames used in present day. Further research should focus on the impact such framing has on regional political dynamics given the changing geopolitical landscape.

Conclusion

In concluding the study and charting a way forward, it bears stating that representation matters. The way African stories are told matters. The latter is not stated as a catchphrase or slogan but rather a demand for African stories to be acknowledged as African. This means that the way African stories are frames should actively try to decolonise the representation and debunk the myths and stereotypes. This is because imperialism continues to take root and multiplies through values, representation, thoughts and the way we see things. Thus, the continued misrepresentation of Africa affects its place in history.

Word Count: 24470

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Appendix A: Dataset Articles

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APPENDIX 2.

Table: Summary of dataset used.

Article: Headlines	Date	Author and Publication	Where the Story was found in the publication
<i>South Africa's Ramaphosa seeks re-election as ruling party boss</i>	18 December 2022	Kuwait Times- Africa Foreign Correspondent	World section – Africa. A routine cover story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa president to mount legal action in face of impeachment threat</i>	5 December 2022	Jason Burke, Australian Guardian	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Ramaphosa re-elected as ANC leader following 'farmgate' scandal</i>	19 December 2022	Jason Burke, Australian Guardian	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Cyril Ramaphosa fighting for political life amid battle for control of ANC</i>	2 December 2022	Jason Burke, Australian Guardian	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Ramaphosa delays parliament appearance over 'Farmgate' corruption scandal</i>	2 December 2022	Jason Burke, Australian Guardian	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa's parliament votes against motion to impeach Cyril Ramaphosa</i>	13 December 2022	Jason Burke, Australian Guardian	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Ramaphosa on track for re-election as ANC leader</i>	16 December 2022	France24 Correspondent/ unauthored	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC conference: Cyril Ramaphosa wins as uncertainty beckons for South Africa</i>	19 December 2022	Andrew Harding BBC News, Johannesburg	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC conference: South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa defies scandal to win party vote</i>	19 December 2022	Farouk Chothia BBC News	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC conference: South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa heckled</i>	16 December 2022	Pumza Fihlani and Damian Zane BBC News, Johannesburg and London	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC conference: Mkhize rivals Ramaphosa in tight ANC party race</i>	18 December 2022	Dickens Olewe BBC News	ANC conference: Mkhize rivals Ramaphosa in tight ANC party race

<i>Nail biting race between Ramaphosa and Mkhize for ANC top spot – Richard Calland</i>	18 December 2022	Linda van Tilburg Biznews	Opinion Piece
<i>ANC meets to elect Ramaphosa, or Mkhize in tight election race</i>	19 December 2022	Deccan Chronicle/ Correspondent/ unauthored	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Ramaphosa heckling flayed in S. Africa's ANC</i>	18 December 2022	Deccan Chronicle/ Correspondent/ unauthored	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC leader re- elected in tight contest</i>	20 December 2022	Glasgow Times	In the World Today
<i>Ramaphosa in battle for ruling party leadership</i>	19 December 2022	Gulf News	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Ramaphosa re-elected as leader of South Africa's ANC</i>	20 December 2022	Gulf News	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Support for ruling party might collapse if Ramaphosa quits: survey</i>	3 December 2022	Hindustan Times (Noida)	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>S. Africa's ANC votes on new leader</i>	20 December 2022	The Korea times	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa's Ramaphosa seeks re-election as ruling party boss</i>	18 December 2022	Kuwait Times	World section
<i>S Africa's Ramaphosa re-elected as leader of ruling ANC</i>	20 December 2022	Qatar Tribune	World section
<i>South Africa's ANC party opens key conference amid scandal</i>	16 December 2022	Associated Press television news Republic world	Opinion piece
<i>Contest for South Africa's ANC leadership a two-horse race</i>	18 December 2022	Tim Cocks and Alexander Winning Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Analysis: South Africa's Ramaphosa still ANC's best hope despite scandal</i>	7 December 2022	Tim Cocks and Olivia Kumwenda-Mtambo Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa's Ramaphosa says ANC executive to decide his fate</i>	4 December 2022	Nqobile Dlodla Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Protesters shout down South Africa's Ramaphosa at ANC congress</i>	16 December 2022	Kopano Gumbi Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.

<i>South Africa's Ramaphosa eyes 2024 election with call to revamp ANC</i>	20 December 2022	Tim Cocks and Kopano Gumbi Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa's Ramaphosa: wounded president re-elected to party helm</i>	19 December 2022	Siphiwe Sibeko Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South African rand gains as Ramaphosa's ANC win calms markets</i>	20 December 2022	Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Ramaphosa re-elected as leader of South Africa's governing African National Congress</i>	19 December 2022	Siphiwe Sibeko Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Ramaphosa's power base boosted, but South Africa's reform path still rocky</i>	23 December 2022	Tim Cocks Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>S. Africa finmin: Ramaphosa re-election suggests policy continuity</i>	19 December 2022	Kopano Gumbi, Writing by Alexander Winning, Editing by James Macharia Chege Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa's Ramaphosa guns for party leadership after 'Farmgate' scandal</i>	15 December 2022	Tim Cocks Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa's ANC gathers to vote on new leader</i>	18 December 2022	Nqobile Dlodla Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South African rand jumps after Ramaphosa re-elected ANC leader</i>	19 December 2022	Anait Miridzhanian and Bhargav Acharya, Editing by David Goodman, James Macharia Chege and Susan Fenton Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South Africa's president to lead African National Congress again</i>	20 December 2022	Santa Fe New Mexican Reuters	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC re-elects Ramaphosa as party chief</i>	20 December 2022	The Asian Age	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.

<i>Despite scandal, South Africa's president wins battle to lead ANC</i>	20 December 2022	The Boston Globe	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC sticks with Cyril and his sofa</i>	21 December 2022	The Cairns Post	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South African president re-elected leader of ANC</i>	20 December 2022	The Courier and Advertiser (Perth and Perthshire Edition)	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>Political leader wins a crucial ANC battle</i>	23 November 2022	The Denver Post	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>ANC leader re-elected in tight contest</i>	20 December 2022	The National (Scotland)	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>And the winner is ... Cyril Ramaphosa</i>	20 December 2022	Times of Eswatini	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South African president survives party vote amid cash-in-couch revelations</i>	19 December 2022	Katharine Houreld and Lesley Wroughton, The Washington Post	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>'Farmgate' leaves Ramaphosa in peril</i>	2 December 2022	The Washington Post	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>S. African president's future uncertain amid cash-in-couch scandal</i>	3 December 2022	The Washington Post	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.
<i>South African Survives vote despite damage over cash-in-couch scandal</i>	20 December 2022	The Washington Post	World section – Africa. A story on development in the world.