

**Land Expropriation in South Africa.
Analysis and Opinion on the Issue in Online News Media**

**By
Simbarashe Honde**

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of the University of Witwatersrand's Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in Journalism and Media Studies.



**UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG**

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in the Department of Journalism, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction, Aim and Rationale

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 4: Methodology

Chapter 5: Research Findings

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Bibliography

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This thesis is dedicated to my late grandmother, Alice Dube. One who always believed in me from the start and the value of hard work and of education. I miss you every day.

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Ngiyabonga mina.

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

2013 was the centenary of South Africa's infamous Natives Land Act, which saw black indigenous South Africans expropriated and dispossessed of their land by white settlers. The Act essentially formalized the restriction of ownership of land by black indigenous people, opening the doors for 87% of white ownership of land and leaving the remaining for black people (South African Government, 2013). Those effects, arguably, are still evident in the country's socio-economic disparities and deeply racialized inequalities.

The land debate, on one hand, touches on racial and economic imbalances in land ownership, which have their roots in colonial and apartheid-era South Africa. The issue of land to some flags the privileging of white South Africans over the other ethnic groups, including the indigenous majority, hence the growing and impatient calls to redress those injustices of the past. On the other hand, there are those who allege that the "biggest historic fallacy is that whites stole the land" (Roets, 2018;4) and that land was never taken away from the native black people; instead white settlers took advantage of unutilized land. This debate, therefore, seems to have become polarized and divisive. There are other range of views alongside these positions, which include concerns about property rights and traditional land.

Land expropriation in South Africa today symbolizes a much broader demand for change, as Friedman argues, it is "a rallying cry for many who have no interest in farming but who feel that a quarter century of democracy has not ended white privilege and inequality" (2018;12). Deliberation on this matter is then of utmost importance and the media provides the space for that engagement, in an ideally inclusive and rational manner.

At the core of South Africa's land policy are three different but related concepts/tenets, namely, restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. The three concepts are considered mutually exclusive but at the same time mutually reinforcing. Restitution involves people claiming back land taken away from them after June 1913, or compensating them for their loss. Land redistribution involves acquiring and transferring land from white farmers to black farmers, for a variety of purposes, which include farming and settlement. Lastly, tenure reform aims to secure the land rights of those whose rights are in question and are unprotected as a result of past discrimination (Hull and Whittal, 2018).

South Africa's governing party, the African National Congress (ANC), responded to the growing calls for land redistribution by the opposition party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), who have land expropriation as one of its main policies, and took a resolution to expropriate land without compensation at the ANC national elective conference in December 2017. The National Assembly, in February 2018, set in motion a process to amend Section 25 of the Constitution so as to legally and constitutionally allow for the expropriation of land without compensation. Part of this process has been to open the subject for public comment through public hearings as is required by the Constitution. However, the issue of land reform (be it land tenure, land redistribution, or land restitution) comes with many implementation and administration challenges, varied opinions, proposed suggestions and strategies on how the land should be expropriated or redistributed.

The land issue is contentious because the process suggests the world of land ownership, management and control will be turned upside down, resulting in losers and beneficiaries. Some of those who stand to lose have threatened to do whatever it takes to protect and defend their properties, including using unsanctioned violence, as been the case in neighboring Zimbabwe (see Ndlela, 2005;74). At the same time certain groupings have threatened to (and have) occupy land illegally (see Malema quoted in September 2018).

It is important to note that the land issue question has had international repercussions, especially because of lobbying by white South African farmers' groups to white right wing constituencies in other countries. Australia, for instance, is reportedly considering offering white South African farmers fast track visas allegedly on humanitarian grounds after claims of "white genocide" on South African farms (Haden, 2018). Locally, the matter has also undoubtedly polarized citizens and continues to inspire various reactions based on racial lines. Some white farmers have approached the media and other social media platforms showing images of property destruction, torture, injury and dead bodies of white people, feeding into the "white genocide" narrative and claim.

In this age of misinformation and fake news, it is essential that the media, in its opinion pages, carries responsible and factual commentary on this complex issue of land. American President Donald Trump is an example of someone who fell for fake news and misinformation by tweeting incorrect information on South African land seizures and alleged white farmer killings (Akin, 2018;para 1). Trump tweeted, "The South African Government is now seizing land from white farmers" and alleged, "large scale killing of farmers" in the country" (Trump, 2018). Another example is the AfriForum's "list" of 192 farms that are, according to the Afrikaner lobby group, the target of expropriation without compensation (Basson 2018; para 10).

Due to the highly emotive nature of the land reform issue, there have been, and continue to be, countless debates in various forums, such as Parliament, social media and the mainstream media. Whatever may happen in other arenas, the media, in a functional and healthy democracy, is expected to provide space for the exchange and sharing of divergent opinions on issues of the day. In particular, through news articles and opinion and analysis, the media shapes public discourse and opinion.

This research report, thus, looked at how debate around the land issue is being facilitated in established media, specifically by examining what appears in opinion and analysis sections and how the issue is handled. In this study, I analyzed opinion pages from five leading online news platforms, namely, *Sowetan*, *the Daily Maverick*, *The*

Conversation, Isolezwe and *News 24*, in order to review the prominent narratives and arguments, as this in turn sheds light on who is speaking and to whom, and ascertain if there is an agenda being pushed. These questions hopefully contribute to understanding better the role of the media in facilitating public debate and social cohesion in relation to a fundamental and highly conflicted issue in South Africa.

1.2 Aim and Rationale

The land issue, like all redistributive policies, continues to be a highly contentious, complex and divisive issue. Zikode (2018), former President of Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement, echoes this point stating that the discussion about expropriation of land without compensation must be that access to land has been denied to the majority of black people. Therefore, there have been growing calls for the redistribution of land by way of expropriating it without compensation from the haves (i.e. the white minority) and fairly and justly redistribute it to the have-nots (i.e. landless majority black indigenous South Africans).

The land question is, arguably, a socio-political, economic and cultural issue with inequality at its root. The report, chaired by former South African President, Kgalema Motlanthe, (High Level Panel, 2018) entitled '*Report of the High Level Panel on the Assessment of Key Legislation and Acceleration of Fundamental Change*', pointed out that land redistribution was crucial in the reduction of wealth inequality. One school of thought is of the view that land reform holds out some promise to promote economic inclusion, to grow rural economies and to help develop a new generation of farmers (Corrigan, 2018).

Another school of thought is that the motion to expropriate property without compensation is based on a flawed state-driven land audit, which is soaked with fabrications and methodical errors (Chawane, 2018; para 9). Again, some are of the view that land expropriation without compensation is nothing but an attempt to

centralize as much power as possible in the State, and that the leaders of this policy had no respect for the pleas of poor South Africans (Greef, 2018). Yet others are of the view that the adoption of it as official party policy by the ruling ANC is merely an election tactic for a party in decline (Moosa, 2018).

Land, to some, is understood, as Kenneth (2015) posits, to embrace the ecological, cultural, cosmological, social and the spiritual as seen through the juridical considerations which are ingrained in social systems reflected in values, norms and observances that protect natural resources, the environment and wildlife. It was, therefore, crucial in this research report to look at whether the arguments being made for the redistribution of land are discussed through the lens of these identified themes from my pilot study, namely cultural, economic and social capital.

Until now, little scientific academic inquiry has been conducted to examine how news media table and frame the issue of land, and establish the dominant narratives, debates and themes on land expropriation without compensation. Many studies conducted on land question in South Africa focused only on the expropriation of it without compensation, its restitution, reclamation, tenure and or redistribution, not the public response to and debate around the issue.

However, news media, according to Combs (2018), sets the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms. Media also facilitate and orchestrate how debates take place, and select what issues are debated, who speaks on them and in what ways. It is thus important to understand what the South African media is doing as it has an important societal responsibility to shape and lead the debate on the deliberations on land. This serves to enable the public to inform their democratic choices through the clarification of complex issues, particularly in an age when information is the driving force of economic advancement and international events impact on people's daily lives as never before (Shea, 1998) also allowing political pluralism to express itself by advancing different views or ideological approaches to certain concerns.

Despite a progressive Constitution that guarantees a range of socio-economic and related rights, redistributive fiscal policies, and an extensive social safety net, poverty, unemployment and inequality (the triple challenge) remain deeply etched in South African society and hence the argument that land redistribution would resolve some of those issues (Motlanthe, 2018). The ANC has argued the land question is the most pressing social issue in the country. Others disagree arguing that the triple-time bomb of poverty-unemployment-inequality, and crime and corruption are the five things that keep most South Africans awake at night (Basson, 2018). The sharp contrast in the positioning of the land as a priority seems to be influenced by race, culture, political, social and economic backgrounds of South Africans and this research report aimed to analyze if this is reflected in the framing of the opinion on land expropriation without compensation in the five selected media platforms

Pursuant to the foregoing, this study is an attempt to fill this scholarly gap, thereby contributing to knowledge in the fields of both land restitution and journalism. The findings of this study are of use to the practitioners, policy makers, academics and many other stakeholders, such as the news organisations, government, the journalism community and civil society interested in land issues in South Africa and elsewhere.

The research report attempted to identify how the debate is being framed by assessing what narratives and arguments are being advanced or ignored, and how they link to more complex issues of socio-political, economic and cultural disparities. Cowling and Hamilton note that "Agenda Setting provides the concept of 'framing', in other words, the ways in which the media set up the terms by which a particular issue is perceived" (2011;49). Framing, according to Ndlela (2005), is also the manner in which an issue is presented and this influences the way in which issues or problems can be understood. In this instance, for example, the different agendas by the online media spaces would be revealed. The use of words like 'land grabs' in the context of land redistribution can be noted. What this means is that the research report noted the possible interests that necessitate or inform the choice of such strong and derogatory

terms as land grab, land seizures etc instead of such lighter ones such as land redistribution, land reform, land restitution or land tenure.

Framing and Agenda setting theories make it possible to use thematic and content analysis methodology for this research project. This is key as it unlocks how the narratives, arguments and themes on land reform are being presented in the media and also how the issue is being framed in relation to the complex issue of socio-political, economic and cultural historical discrepancies, as an example.

This research report ultimately sought to assess if the contributions being carried by the selected media were skewed in certain directions and whether certain issues and themes predominated, as manifested in the narratives and terminologies which may have been used to influence and set the issue on the public agenda.

As seen from the above examples, the ongoing debate on land redistribution is both complex and sensitive, hence it is of utmost importance to objectively and rationally write about. It is too important for people to be irresponsible and give misinformation. The manner in which the opinions are framed is also important to note as the assumption is that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006), which can be both negative and positive.

1.3 Research Questions

As established, the land issue is arguably one of the most pressing political questions to be resolved twenty four years since the fall of the minority apartheid rule.

Therefore, this research sought to contribute to the land debate by exploring the following questions:

- How is land expropriation without compensation being discussed in the five media platforms under study?
- What are the dominant narratives and arguments which can be discerned from the content?
- Do the debates, narratives, and themes on land expropriation without compensation in South African media link historical possession and current disparities?
- From which sectors of the society do the commentators appear to be drawn, and is there a link between their perceived stances on land expropriation without compensation in regard to their racial, gender and societal position?

1.4 Historical Context

It is important at this point to note that the dispossession of African people from their land did not start in 1913, but was preceded by about two hundred and fifty years of colonial conquest. Kotze and Basson (1993), writing about land reform in South Africa, trace the beginnings of dispossession to the 1600s, when Europeans migrated to the continent. As colonists they believed that their victory entitled them to annexation of contested land, a claim which the indigenous black people have always questioned and rejected. Wars of conquest continued in this fashion, Kotze and Basson (1993) write, bringing about alienation of black land by a succession of Dutch, English, Voortrekker and Afrikaner, culminating in the British consolidating many Southern African territories into one colonial enterprise after the Boer Wars.

This eventually led to the Union of South Africa being established in 1910, and by this point, most of the land was in the hands of the white farmers with blacks reduced to laborers or tenants (Kotze, Basson, 1993; 190). This, ultimately, paved the path to the enactment of the exclusionary Native Act of 1913. While often depicted as a relatively simple morality tale, Walker warns that, although the colonial period was also characterized by heroic resistance on the part of the colonized versus savage dispossession on the part of the colonizers, more ambiguous themes of accommodation, assimilation, stratification, and innovation thread themselves through this extended encounter as well (Walker; 2018).

History of Land Acts in SA

After the Union, a number of exclusionary Acts were adopted by either the colonial authorities or white settlers, further reinforcing racial discrimination and segregation.

1913 Native Land Act

In 1913, the colonizers engaged in legal but illegitimate expropriation of land without compensation through reinforcing the exclusion of blacks from accessing land by introducing the 1913 Land Act, which prohibited natives from owning, renting or acquiring land outside the scheduled black areas. Black Africans were confined to inadequate and arid land. This law officially became the first segregation act which ensured division of agricultural land on racial lines and the introduction of compulsory separation by placing legal restrictions on the acquisition of land by blacks outside certain areas (Kotze and Basson, 1993; 192).

Sol Plaatje (see Ndebele, 2016) articulated this well when he wrote on the distressing effects of this law, asserting that, “awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth.” Plaatje details in his works how the law created, overnight, a floating landless proletariat whose labor could be used and manipulated at will, and ensured that ownership of the land had finally and securely passed into the hands of the ruling white

race (Head, 1982). On it rest pass laws, the migratory labor system, influx control and a thousand other evils which affect the lives of black people in South Africa today (Head, 1982).

1936 Natives Trust and Land Act

This legislation began a government programme of forced removals. Prior to this legislation, Black Africans were allowed to buy land legally in freehold areas which were regarded as white South Africa. These areas were called, Black spots and therefore, the removal of black spots meant that land that was owned and/or occupied by blacks outside the scheduled or released areas was confiscated by the state without recompense. The Act further entrenched racial discrimination (Kotze and Basson, 1993).

1950 Group Areas Act

The year 1950 saw the passing of the Group Areas Act, which basically further divided the country into racially defined residential areas and forbade ownership of property across racial lines. The Indian and the colored communities were affected the most and were forced to sell their properties in areas deemed white, and moved to proclaimed group areas. This law came with the policy known as "separate political development", which created six autonomous self-governing states and four independent states effectively turning South Africa into a black and white country (Kotze and Basson, 1993;191).

Ingonyama Trust

The Constitution of South Africa provided for the establishment of the Ingonyama Trust, which was created to manage and take charge of the land historically belonging to the Zulus (Ingonyama Trust, 2018). The trust has been in the news and in the spotlight in recent times, after it was suggested that the Zulu King would incite violence should the State take the land from the Trust and even suggested KwaZulu-Natal should become a separate State removed from the republic (EWN, 2018).

The Ingonyama Trust was established in 1994 by the erstwhile Kwa-Zulu homeland Government in terms of the Kwa-Zulu Ingonyama Trust Act, (Act No 3KZ of 1994) to hold all the land that was hitherto owned or belonged to the KwaZulu Government. The mandate of the Trust was to hold land for “the benefit, material welfare and social well-being of the members of the tribes and communities” living on the land (Ingonyama Trust, 2018). The trust holds 30% of the land in South Africa, with King Goodwill Zwelithini, as the sole Trustee. When the democratic government came into existence, initially in terms of the Interim Constitution of 1993, the original enabling Act creating Ingonyama Trust was reviewed comprehensively such that the final product was a new Act albeit called the Amendment Act. This Amendment Act had to meet all the constitutional requirements both in terms of the Interim Constitution and the final Constitution of 1996 (Ingonyama Trust, 2018).

Home Land System

It is crucial to note that Ingonyama Trust is not the only land held by traditional leaders. Other traditional leaders have control over tribal lands: the Royal Bafokeng in North West, the VhaVenda in Limpopo and the Xhosa Royal Council in the Eastern Cape to mention some. These traditional homelands or Bantustans make up only 13% of the land with 17-million blacks, mostly subsistence farmers, working tiny plots. Tribal councils control these areas, often determining who gets to farm or where cattle is grazed but also access to resources like water and minerals (Stoddard, 2018). Twenty four years after independence, legislation to secure the tenure rights of the South Africans living in the former Bantustans is not yet in place, despite the fact that they bore the brunt of forced removals and the discriminatory Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 (Classens, 2014).

The Post-Apartheid Era

While securing white property rights was a key concern for the National Party, in the turbulent period leading to the adoption of the interim Constitution of South Africa Act (Act 200) in 1993, Walker notes that the ANC entered the negotiations with a general

presumption among its members that it would insist on a radical redistribution program (2018). However, she goes on to claim that “its leadership soon abandoned calls for the nationalization of land in favour of a more moderate set of minimum demands” (2018;18).

The outcome of the constitutional negotiations, Walker asserts, was a property clause that is widely acknowledged as a compromise, a judicious compromise for some and a betrayal of the liberation struggle for others. “No one may be deprived of property except in terms of law of general application, and no law may permit arbitrary deprivation of property” (Walker, 2008;17). However, Section 25(2) of the Constitution has a provision for land reform by stating that expropriation can take place, “for a public purpose or in the public interest,” with land reform specifically identified in section 25(4) as in the public interest (Walker, 2008;18).

The Economic Freedom Fighters' Commander in Chief, Julius Malema, speaking before the voting of the motion in Parliament, declared that the time for reconciliation was over, and it was now time for justice (Whittles, 2018). The EFF originally brought up the motion of land expropriation without compensation and offered its 6% representation in Parliament to the ANC to secure the two-thirds majority needed to amend the Constitution to expropriate land. The party further stated that the EFF believes all land, whether owned by black or white people, should be nationalised.

Some sectors of the society, however, are of a different view. AfriForum, a civil rights group, which purports to support the rights of the white minority, in reaction to the issue believes that the ANC's plan to amend the Constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation boils down to theft (Daniels, 2017) and vowed to react if properties are taken by force. The Institute of Race Relations has echoed the same displeasure, asserting that, “the question to be asked is whether South Africa wants land reform – or whether this is merely a name it wants to give to its frustrations, its sorrows and ideological impulses (2018;para 2).

The National Development Plan, on the one side, has set out as one of its objectives that a minimum of 30% of land ought to be distributed by 2030 (Human, 2017). Initially, the ruling party, the ANC, had set for itself a deadline that, by 2014, it would have redistributed 30% of commercial agricultural land back into black ownership, a target it failed to meet (Human, 2017).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Since the transition to democracy in 1994, Walker (2018) argues, the post-apartheid state has struggled to develop an effective land reform programme that can address the cross-cutting demands for land redistribution, local development, and representative government that apartheid and colonial history has bequeathed the country. As a result, according to Walker, many people are of the opinion that land redistribution remains unresolved, while some are of the view that the question itself needs reformulation.

This research project broadly concerned itself with the relationship between the media and how it facilitates public debate, particularly through the production of opinion and analysis. It is generally agreed upon that the media, in a healthy democracy, are expected to facilitate public debate, making it possible for the public to engage with matters of concern in the society (see Cowling and Hamilton, 2011; Kenichi, 2010; Gurevitch et al, 2005). It was imperative in this context to examine the debates and arguments around land expropriation without compensation being presented in order to have a solid background to ascertain how there are being reflected in the media coverage.

Land redistribution without compensation has acquired a relatively high degree of political attention as a result of the ANC adopting it as a policy, with renewed calls from across the political spectrum for the speeding up of land redistribution and land restitution, to avoid a Zimbabwe-type scenario (Breytenbach, 2004). In Zimbabwe, restoration of land, turned into forced restitution through the eviction of private owners and the subsequent confiscation of land without compensation (Hunter, 2004).

Klaus Deininger, asserts that while, “land reform has long been the subject of policy debate, the motivation for addressing land issues has shifted over time” (1998; 2) from a commitment to land redistribution for political reasons to a switch to economic goals (Breytenbach, 2004). This has led to policy rethink, with changes in emphasis which have been hoped would speed up the redistribution of land, provide more back-up to those resettled, and prioritize future grants for more productive agricultural land (Cliff; 2000).

The land issue, according Ruth Hall, “has the potential to form a center piece of a programme of rural restructuring, to transform social and economic relations and provide structural basis for broad based pro- poor development” (2004; 214). This is in line with the argument which presupposes that the land would be an answer to economic challenges faced by the mostly rural population. Deininger drives this point home when he posits that redistribution of land from large to small farms can increase productivity if the relationship between farm size and productivity is considered, linking supervision costs and hired labour (1998;2). It can also enable beneficiaries to access capital assets, including finance, land, natural resources and social capital, which can then determine how and how far livelihoods can be enhanced. This goes beyond financial capital but can also be seen in terms of social capital which can provide the basis for a range of livelihood opportunities, including customary access to land and natural resources and opportunities for the poor to sell their labour.

This difference of opinion, Breytenbach explains, comes from the legacies of colonialism which complicate two arguments of equity versus production (2004). He goes on to explain that this often translates into equity for the mostly poor black people and goals of production for the mostly commercial white farmers (2004; 49). In this sense, the production debate speaks to economic benefits of large scale commercial farming hence driving the concerns and debates of food security in the country. On the other hand, the equity debate, bases itself on the reversal of the unfair dispossession and exclusion.

However, some argue that the rural poor actually do not want the land but jobs, security and social services (see Cliff, 2000) therefore land redistribution is a futile exercise only used to appease the masses for lack of service delivery. Pigou, concurs arguing that poverty, unemployment and inequality remain the greatest threats to South Africa's long term stability and economy (2018).

On the other end of the spectrum, one has to concede that land reform is not only about redistribution of rural and agricultural land, as many South Africans have migrated from the former Bantustans to urban cities to seek economic emancipation. Breytenbach ascertains that a major issue has been the failure to integrate land reform policies into land tenure reforms, resettlement programmes and meaningful land use policies to cover all the land, not just the rural land but urban land as well (2004; 47). Walker (2017), states that by 2015, almost two thirds of the population was classified as urban.

In all this, Walker notes, "at the individual and community level land is imbued with cultural and emotional meaning that is based on more than its purely utilitarian value" (2001; 10). As indicated earlier, ownership of land is also about social identity and standing, the dignity of the human person and the possibilities of economic transformation deriving from its ownership.

However, the issue of land ownership is contested. Breytenbach states that the state is the largest land owner in South Africa, owning about 25% of all land, excluding the land owned by parastatals (2004). This brings into light, the issue of underutilized land which is argued can be used for redistribution purposes. Political parties like the EFF, are of the view that expropriation without compensation should only apply to rural land and commercial farm land, rather than to communal land (Hall, 2018).

Adams, Sibanda and Turner (1999) suggest that one of the major dividing issues on land expropriation in South Africa has been what is seen as the relative merit of

indigenous customary tenure systems and those based on western concepts involving the registration of individual ownership. Rights to land in communal areas are held by traditional leaders who have been vehemently opposed to their land being used for distribution and granting inhabitants title deeds. This has drawn criticism from the likes of former President, Kgalema Montlante who has found himself at logger heads with the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini, for accusing the ANC and the EFF for "pandering" to the interests of traditional leaders above communities (Niselow, 2018) in order to garner votes. However, Adams, Sibanda and Turner (1999) also note that that traditional tenure systems can be flexible and responsive to changing economic circumstances with population pressure and commercialization, individualization has occurred autonomously.

Gender disparities on the land debate have been noted and raised. Walker (2004) suggests that in theory, the policies on land give prominence to gender equity as a major societal goal and key outcome of land reform policies. Yngstrom (2010), also affirms that gender relations are central to the organization and transformation of landholding systems. Women have faced different forms of tenure insecurity, both as wives and in their relations with wider kin, as landholding systems have been integrated into wider markets. In as much as women play a decisive role in the development of their community, their access to economic power is not commensurate with their numbers, needs and contributions (Walker, 2004). Leadership it is argued, especially, in traditional areas, is dominated by men who assert that they are the custodians of their traditions and culture and therefore do not need the advice of government to handle their affairs. This ultimately causes tension and friction on how the gender issue is handled between the government and traditional leaders.

There are those who demand that land should be expropriated from those who own vast quantities of it and it should therefore be given free to the landless (Walker, 2001). Also, there is the view that land should be distributed only to those who can prove that they can utilize it and guarantee food security (Cliff, 2000). The latter, Sherbourne (2004), argues, would give rise to hobby farmers, as black farmers are given the impression that it would be an inherently profitable adventure which would relieve them

of poverty. It has to be noted that funding and skills development for the majority of black farmers are limited and Sherbourne, posits, are set to fail (2004; 17). Cliff concurs, "the fixation of commercialization which translates into large scale and high tech farming seeks to promote the interests of would be black agrarian entrepreneurial class, rather than those property less and hence Walker suggesting that expropriation could be the answer for the latter (2004).

The willing buyer, willing seller approach has also not worked according to Breytenbach and Hall (2004; 57; 2004; 2018) for various reasons: farm owners selling land at inflated prices (Breytenbach, 2004) and current owners refusing to sale (Hall, 2004). The state has therefore relied on negotiated sales and where that has failed, offered claimants money instead. This enormous undertaking has inadvertently failed, according to Hall, as the state simply cannot afford such an endeavor (2004, 219). In terms of budget, Walker, notes that the state did not grant land reform project enough budget, and as it stood, "it was positioned as a minor programme of government , albeit one imbued with a powerful political charge" (Walker, 2017; 19). According to Hall, the budget for land reform has been so limited and has remained at or below 0.5% of the national budget (2004; 219).

Other reasons for the failed land project Walker mentions are poor policy choices, inadequate budgets (see Hall, 2004), weak capacities in the new state institutions established to manage the process and ambitious time frames. All these, have contributed to the growing impatience around the issue.

According to Walker (2015), almost two-thirds of the population (65%) in 2015 was classified as urban, mostly living in cities and towns in the 87% of the country formerly designated as "white." This is indicative of the associated shift in household priorities, some 64 percent of a nationally representative survey conducted in 2012 agreed with the proposition that land redistribution was a necessary form of redress, but most respondents did not place land reform among the top challenges that they thought the country faced (2017).

As seen above, the dispossession of land by the then settler governments was a fundamental factor in the uneven distribution of political power and wealth in South Africa. Lameez Omarjee (2018) writing for *News 24* quoting Ramaphosa on his party's stance on land, supposes that economic freedom means that the land that was taken from black South Africans needs to be returned as a means of economic emancipation for the black man. Deputy President David Mabuza (Herman, 2018) in his maiden speech in Parliament reiterated the same view, affirming that the land ought to be returned to its rightful owners.

ANC chair and mineral resources minister, Gwede Mantashe, also stated that nobody should own more than 12 000 hectares of agricultural land whereas there is already existing legislation to that effect that proposes capping land ownership in certain districts for example (Basson, 2018 ;para 7).

Cloete (1992) is of the view that the traditional attachment of Afrikaners and blacks to land, linked to the current racially skewed tenure patterns in favor of whites, increasing demands from blacks for dramatic redistribution of land all contribute to the potentially explosive situation.

Finally, the contestation on the amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation in the public interest, has further divided people. Hall (2018) believes the Constitution already has a provision to do so and therefore, the Constitutional amendment is not needed as it is allowed under the existing property clause. There are some, for de Rebus (2018) for example, who are asserting that an amendment to section 25 will be catastrophic as Section 25 protects property with Section 25(4)(b) making it clear that property is not limited to land. This therefore, means that the state can be empowered to expropriate not just land without incurring a concomitant obligation to pay compensation.

Those who are against land expropriation without compensation point out that it is not land redistribution they are against but are questioning expropriation without compensation as a mechanism of acquiring land. Section (5) however allows for redistribution but this has not yet been utilised because the Government has been reliant on the provision of Land and Assistance Act of 1993 instead (Breytenbach, 2004) which is based on the willing buyer, willing seller approach.

This gives the backdrop of the current discussions taking place in the news space on land expropriation without compensation. This paints the landscape of where the opinion comes from and the current arguments being given for land expropriation without compensation and how these are presented and spoken about in the media's opinion pages and analysis.

2.2 Media

It is crucial to highlight the media's role as a space where debate occurs and citizenry participates in dialogue (Engelbrecht, 2011) in the Habermasian understanding of public sphere. Jurgen Harbermas, a highly influential social and political thinker proposes the public sphere to be a realm within social life in which public opinion can be formed and is accessible to all. However, one can argue that citizenship engagement is not based ideally on an equal footing as the public sphere theory would envisage it. South Africa with its history of racial segregation and the exclusion of the majority from the national public sphere, still carries some of this legacy twenty four years into democracy.

For example, Hassim notes that despite the new inclusive constitution, "attempts to thoughtfully mediate the terrain between unity and cultural particularity", but "in everyday politics these anxieties remain unresolved, and are frequently expressed in new forms of group closure" (Hassim, 2009; 349) hence the continuing exclusion of certain communities. These exclusions, according to Hassim (2009), are generated by

poverty and have fuelled new assertions of identity that interpret the values of the constitution as applying only to a narrowly defined band of citizens.

2.3 Opinion Pieces

As indicated earlier, the calls for the redistribution of land, primarily with the aim of restoring the rights of the black majority, have been a hot topic in communities and similarly on the media platforms. The mainstream media, as a place for public engagement and discourse, continues to take centre stage in the debates on land expropriation without compensation, although debates are also taking place on social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook etc. This research concerns itself with the opinion pieces carried by established media platforms. Opinion or columns in the media, according to Duff, play a crucial political public sphere role as they raise pertinent issues and are, “instrumental in the development of public knowledge and they help determine the ethical and political calibre of the societies in which we live” (Duff, 2008; 230).

Former *Sunday Times* editor, Mondli Makhanya, concurs: “Opinions allow us, the newspaper, to give direction to our readership and hopefully the country on the way we believe the country and the world should be going” (Serino, 2010; 105). Their use of socio-political, economic and cultural discrepancies would significantly provide an insight into the possible biases and interests.

For the purposes of this project, I make a distinction between an opinion piece and hard news. An opinion piece is an article which is published which reflects the author’s opinion on an issue, and is often strongly worded. According to Hamilton and Cowling (2011), opinion is conscientiously stripped from news reports, allocated to pages set aside for commentary and signalled as such to readers so that the readers will be able to get the facts from the news section and uncontaminated by the subjective opinions of reporters and editors. Opinion articles are often linked to topical news stories and

reflect the writer's own perspective influenced by his or her background and expertise. In South Africa, this can mean the issue is addressed from a place of class, language or race.

Unlike news stories, which are intended to be 'objective' and reflect an unwashed, but perhaps neaten, version of reality, articles on the opinion page are supposed to be a reflection of the writer's personae or position (Serino, 2010). He continues to describe the other differences outlining how the physical separation of news from opinion is part of that professional ethos. Items that are considered news, 'hard facts' are presented to the reader in a section which the informed newspaper reader expects to contain only news. Opinion pieces are confined to a few pages inside the newspaper solely reserved for opinion. This physical separation is not only a professional ethos but also what the informed reader understands to be a separation of what will be news and opinion (Serino, 2011).

The internet, however, has revolutionized the opinion sphere through blogging. Duff declares that bloggers represent the information society's most tangible threat to newspaper columnists, adding that what has emerged is "a fully-fledged alternative wing of the opinion industry, challenging the primacy of newspaper commentators" (235). The internet, de Lanerolle (2016) concurs, has created new publics for new voices in South Africa and has enabled the growth in the number of people who can claim to have a public voice without solely relying on the mass communication networks of television, radio and print.

The success of the internet lies in the fact that it has given voices to those shunned by mainstream media. Ying Chang has noted that the digital media has improved and enlarged the space for debate on sensitive topics that have little exposure in the mainstream media, like class frustrations, racial tensions, gender-based discrimination, and violence (Chang, 2014). There are more texts and thus more publics, but in many cases these are also counter-publics, explicitly marking themselves off against a dominant wider public and recognizing their own marginality (de Lanerolle, 2016). However, there is still place for traditional journalism, which still operates according to a set of standards and processes and thus is still significant

player in the broader public discourse. In fact, the mainstream media is now using social media sites to share and circulate their reports and opinion pieces for the public to engage and interact with the content online.

The internet, because of its unregulated and its “free for all” nature, can unfortunately be, “a hothouse for rumours, distortions, and fabrications” (Anderson, Bell and Shirky: 55). Journalism is a profession that prides itself in providing news that is truthful, fair, accurate and balanced; hence the values of verification, accuracy and neutrality come as standard practice. Hence, it is imperative that the discussions on land are scrutinized in order to separate fact from fiction and most importantly provide balanced and nuanced breakdown of the issue. In the age of fake news and alternative facts, people upload or share stories which are false and misleading. However, the media is still seen as a privileged site for public discourse where ideas perceived to be important are discussed (1).

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The media, in a functioning democracy, makes the exercise of freedom of expression and information a concrete reality. It carries a multiplicity of voices with divergent opinions on various issues of world, national and community interest. As Engelbrecht notes, “free and open debate, in which one can dissent, criticize, agree or disagree, is the engine for democracy and development” (2011: 8). Dahlgren (2005) also shares the same opinion, adding the crucial point that the online journalism sector is a core element of the public sphere.

Media are not necessarily immune from having agendas, and can be seen to be advancing certain interests, whether political, capitalist or racial, to name a few. In social and political spaces there have been constant accusations of the media, for instance, of protecting and advancing white monopoly capital. According to Serino (2009), “the media are not an open and unlimited space for all voices and all ideas in society” (5). The information and the message that is eventually put out is consciously decided and approved for a particular agenda and purpose.

The question of Land Expropriation without Compensation, as discussed previously, is polarizing and has taken on racial, class and political divides. Hence, it was pertinent for this research to analyze the dominant narratives, arguments and themes in opinion and analysis pieces on the issue. To address this, I used the Public Sphere theory as the basis for the idea of public debate, where I employed the concept of orchestration. I also used Agenda-setting and Framing theories.

At the centre of public sphere theory lies a concern with civic engagement and participation. Normative views of the media in a democracy assume that the media provides a space for discussion and that this discussion is important for the participants of a democracy (Serino, 2009:9). As with the land issue, the media is central in giving the platform to politicians, public intellectuals, different stakeholders and ordinary citizens to engage presumably on the same footing on the issue.

Agenda-setting on the one hand, details how the media selects certain topics they believe to be important and amplifies them, influencing public perception and setting the borders for debate. On the other hand, Orchestration, describes the dynamics of debate in the media, how media producers select issues and commentators and also how they structure the discussion, both in broadcast and print.

3.2 Public Sphere Theory

Jurgen Habermas, one of the most important German critical thinkers, is celebrated for his contributions to social criticism and public debate. His idea of the public sphere as a space for political interaction, where society discusses topics that it is interested in towards the solution of common problems (Jacobbsen, 2015), feeds into this research. He envisages a space where social problems are debated and where public opinion can be formed. "Habermas identified active public citizenship in the emergence of what he termed the public sphere, an imagined space between the people and the state, in which the state is held accountable to public opinion"(Cowling and Hamilton, 2010;86).

The assumption is that everyone is given equal opportunity to deliberate and the media provide a forum where public intellectuals and popular opinion can meet and collide. "Quality news media is expected to facilitate public debate, and is considered vital for democracies in making it possible for citizens to engage with matters of common concern in society" (Cowling and Hamilton 2011: 45).

Through direct and indirect encounters, print and electronic media, members of society gather to discuss issues in which they are interested (Jacobsen, 2015) to find solutions to issues of the day. Topics that were initially considered private and confined to the family, home, or social group, in Habermasian theory, may get the attention of broader society, allowing for deliberation that may lead to consensus and ultimately provide a

foundation for a democratic government. “The concept of the public sphere that he [Habermas] put forward involved the assembling of private persons to debate, on equal terms and in a rational-critical manner, matters of common concern” (Cowling and Hamilton, 2010: 86).

The public sphere is envisaged by Habermas as the recognition of different opinions and thought, claims and arguments. It is essential to note that this diversity of voices and opinions does not exclude conflict. As a matter of fact, it is in the diversity of voices under the constant possibility of dissension, of being able to say no, that the possibility of genuine agreements also arises which are not established by coercion, but through the communicative practice of expounding and contrasting arguments (Jacobson, 2015).

However, it has to be noted that there is discontent with the media being a public sphere, as observed by Cowling and Hamilton. They point out that some scholars have argued that, “the media are not the public sphere, but only organs of it (as Habermas described their role) and that there are other forums in which public deliberation can (and does) take place” (2010;86). It is not representative of everyone in the society and more so, the online platforms are only accessible to those with internet, smart phones and computers, leaving out the majority of South Africans. The point though remains that the media does contribute to public discussions and engagements of issues of social concern and in the process help in shaping opinions on matters.

3.2.1 Criticism of Public Sphere Theory

The Habermasian theory of the public sphere has been criticized for being exclusionary and not including certain people in the society, for instance, women. Nancy Fraser, a critic of the Habermasian concept of the public sphere, makes the assertion that, “despite the rhetoric of publicity and accessibility, the official public sphere rested on, and indeed was importantly constituted by a number of significant

exclusions"(1990, 60). In fact, she continues, "exclusionary operations were essential to liberal public spheres not only in France, but also in England and Germany, and that in all these countries gender exclusions were linked to other exclusions rooted in processes of class formation" (61), hence, it is crucial to create more inclusive spaces.

Fraser further asserts on the point of exclusion by mentioning that women of all classes and ethnicities were excluded from official political participation precisely on the basis of ascribed gender status, while plebeian men were formally excluded by property qualifications and on racial grounds (1990). The public sphere in this sense was dominated by affluent white men, which cancels out the idea of equality. The premise that everyone comes to the public sphere on an equal footing to discuss and deliberate is thus misleading. Kampourakis, in a review of Fraser's highly influential essay, suggests that power relations can never be fully dissolved in any given society and therefore the idea that transparent communication can perform such a task is only a utopia (2016). Jacobsen (2015), describing democracy, calls it a consented-to form of dominion, basically meaning that the public entrusts some to take the lead or govern in the society as a result of political agreement.

However, it has to be noted that the internet has created alternative spaces where different perspectives and opinions can be shared. This has created niche groups, for example, The Conversation, an online publication focusing on academics that this research will study. This pluralisation, according to Dahlgreen (2005), not only extends but also disperses the relatively clustered public sphere of the mass media.

Cowling and Hamilton state that in an unequal society like South Africa, due to the history of black people being excluded from the economy, there have been concerns that the media's dependence on advertising for revenue leads them to target affluent audiences (historically white and advantaged) over poorer audiences (Cowling and Hamilton, 2004). As a result, the media is not representative of the society it seeks to represent, and this research report sought to ascertain which voices were being given prominence on speaking about the land issue.

Fraser makes the argument that women and other groups who find themselves in the minority, even if given the space to air their views, are not really listened to and are condescended to. She goes on to assert, that deliberation can actually be used as a form of control, "Subordinate groups sometimes cannot find the right voice or words to express their thoughts, and when they do, they discover they are not heard, they are silenced, encouraged to keep their wants inchoate, and heard to say 'yes' when what they have said is 'no.'" (1990;64). Fraser concludes that line of argument by adding that these alert us to the ways in which social inequalities can infect deliberation, even in the absence of any formal exclusions (64) and therefore, the marginalized voice and communities of interest converge and make up what she terms, subaltern counter publics.

3.2.2 Counter Publics

In her critique of Habermas's account of the bourgeoisie conception of the public as discussed above, Fraser argues that the very idea of open access, participatory parity and social equality was not realized (Fraser, 1990;118) as women, workers, black people and gays and lesbians, for instance, were excluded. This gives rise to what Fraser attributes as subaltern counter publics in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs (Fraser, 1990;122). These according to Fraser are formed as a direct response to the exclusion of some people into the public sphere.

Subaltern counter publics provide the spaces which represent an alternative public entity where those marginalized can converge and find common meaning. She argues asserting this is, "where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1990;67) thereby widening the field of discursive contestation.

Blogs, for instance, have made it possible to have a niche specialist avenue which attracts a particular crowd and these sites provide a wide range, depth and accuracy of data that simply cannot be matched by general news outlets (Anderson, Bell, Shirky; 2014). There are a number of South African blogs that cover minority sexualities, including links to other sites and gay communities. Other sites are personal blogs about living as a homosexual in South Africa. In a society that is flooded with information dispersed by authoritative voices, the internet has provided platforms which encourage dialogue and participation hence giving the minority alternative voices where mainstream media is failing.

These counter publics, Fraser concedes, have emerged in response to exclusions within dominant publics, hence expanding the discursive space (Fraser, 1992), and also enable, “to offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies (125). They bring to the fore issues that might have been overlooked, purposely ignored, or suppressed by dominant publics.

Under the same breath, Fraser does contend that counter publics are not an answer in achieving a full blown inclusive participatory democracy. There can be a breeding ground for extremism, and right wing insurgences suggesting that they can be according to Murphy (2017) explicitly anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian. There are numerous examples he cites which include anti-abortion campaigns, death penalty activists and pro-gun lobby groups in United States.

In this research, the importance of the discussion of counter publics and subaltern publics is that the rural poor, who may be the most affected by land restitution and most keen for it to happen, could be considered excluded from the public sphere and their voices not heard. This research therefore, sought to establish whether their voices and interests were reflected in the opinion.

3.2.3 Public Sphere in the South African Context

The South African Public sphere comes from the backdrop of years of oppression and exclusion of the Black people from all spheres of life namely, economic, social and political. This manifested itself in structural racism perpetrated by the then apartheid government policies. Since the dawn of independence, the ANC-led government has created democratic institutions, systems and laws to ensure the accountability of the government and a democratic media. In this sense, the media is envisaged as a voice for a more inclusive and participatory citizenship, which is reflective of the Habermasian concept of the public sphere. The pre-1994 media was characterized by a heavily censored, white male-dominated media which reflected the views of the minority. However, Milton, Wasserman and Garman note that, “as the meanings and practices of citizenship, rights and belonging continue to be renegotiated, legacies of marginalization still persist, and new forms of exclusion are created” (2013;405).

The media as a place for public discourse faces criticism for not being representative of the majority of the citizens, but serving elites, and also has made it a mission to overly criticize the government. The discontent about the media in the ANC was prominently voiced in its 2010 December policy papers on Media Transformation, Ownership and Diversity, that the current mainstream media’s ideological outlook which is a neoliberalism, a weak and passive state and an over emphasis on individual rights and market fundamentalism (ANC, 2010;7). It then went as far as proposing the Protection of Information Bill, which threatens to undermine the laudable Promotion of Access to Information legislation, by blocking access to information that could expose negligence, corruption by government officials (Pillay; 342) effectively accelerating attacks on journalistic freedom and freedom of expression.

Accusations of irresponsible news reporting have bogged down the media. Its alleged fixation on popular culture that insists on hyper stereotyping groups, and sensationalist media coverage geared towards moral panics hinder the media’s ability to fulfil its

mandate of being the 4th estate of the government on behalf of the public and also as a facilitator of open and critical debate in the public sphere (Milton, Wasserman & Garman, 2013; 406). Examples include recent closures of the Gupta media houses, which were accused of bias amongst other things and the Sunday Times of intentionally publishing inaccurate information.

This research ultimately sought to address how the media engages with the land issue through its column writers and how it is conveyed in the opinion pieces of the media and as it can reveal much about perceptions and politics around land expropriation without compensation debates. To this end, the research further employed Priming Theory, Agenda Setting and Framing Theories to analyse how the media under review address issues of economic, socio-political and cultural aspects of land expropriation without compensation.

3.3 Agenda Setting

The media plays a significant role in setting and driving public debate and ultimately shapes public opinion. McCombs (2004) has demonstrated in his research that not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. Simply put, the media sets up the agenda, ranking the important issues of the day, and the agenda affects what the public think of as important. Agenda-setting theory “has as its explicit focus the ways in which news media can set the agenda for public discussion, thus policy” (Cowling and Hamilton, 2011;49). Agenda-setting research also examines how the media agenda is set and by whom (Cowling and Hamilton 2011).

McCombs (2004) states that the media also influence the next step of the communication process, which is our understanding and perspective on the topics in the news. This can be extended to popular issues, land expropriation being one of

them. Agenda-setting has two basic assumptions. The first is that the media does not reflect reality. Reality as being projected in the media is filtered and shaped. Secondly, the media's concentration on a few issues it deems are important tends to in turn influence the public to perceive them as important. This directly speaks of how the media chooses what topics it considers important out of a whole lot, and amplifies them directly influencing people's interaction in the public sphere.

According to Curran (2000), the idea of a free market allows anyone in the media to publish an opinion for example, and this ensures that all significant points of view are aired, and that information is made available from varied sources (128). In this way, participation of the public debate is inclusive, however, Curran, also notes that this participation is also restricted. It generates what he calls the, "information – rich media for elites, and information poor for the general public "(2000; 128).

3.4 Framing Theory

The third theoretical approach this research looked at was related to the concept of Framing. Framing is linked to the agenda-setting tradition, but takes a step further to focus on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on a particular topic. Its basis lies in the belief that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning (Fairhurst & Star, 1996). Cowling and Hamilton echo the same sentiments also mentioning how the media set up the terms by which a particular issue is perceived (Cowling and Hamilton, 2011;49). In this sense, a frame refers to the way media and media gatekeepers, who pick and choose issues, organize and present the events and issues and the way audiences interpret what they are provided.

Frames, therefore, can be described as notions that serve to organize or structure social meanings. They influence the perception of the news of the audience, this form of agenda-setting not only tells what to think about, but also how to think about it.

In other words, framing is how the media defines or presents a topic, in how the story is being told, its narrative, and perspective and word choice. It also involves who is being quoted and what to quote. It is also the manner in which an issue is presented and this influences the way in which issues or problems can be understood (Ndlela, 2005). It implies the active work of selecting, and presenting, structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of already existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean' (73).

Some schools of thought have challenged the idea that agenda setting on one hand, and framing on another, are based on the same theoretical premises and are therefore all extensions of a larger agenda-setting construct (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). They highlight the distinctions, arguing that agenda setting looks at story selection as a determinant of public perceptions of issue importance and, indirectly through priming, evaluations of political leaders. Framing, on the other hand, focuses not on which topics or issues are selected for coverage by the news media, but instead on the particular ways those issues are presented (2007).

Framing Theory according to Smith (2011), the use of metaphor, spin, story telling, jargon, word choice, and other narrative elements. It also involves an exercise in power and who gets to break the news story and the manipulation of audiences. For example, through initial reporting, the media may present the facts of a story in such a way that the audience is given a particular point of view or frame of reference and interpretation.

For instance "Land debate in South Africa is about dignity and equality - not the constitution" (Friedman, 2018), South Africa's land debate is clouded by misrepresentation and lack of data (Cousins, 2018). With such headlines, a tone and context has already been set for the consumer of the media. This also serves, and sets the baseline for future reporting on the issue. Funkhouser (1973) has argued that framing is simply a more refined version of agenda setting, which McCombs (2004) labels as, "second level agenda setting". He says it refines the original agenda setting

hypothesis, which has been criticized for being somewhat simplistic in its focus on broad issues and for overestimating rank order, and coefficients between broad issue categories in the media coverage and public opinion surveys.

3.5 Orchestration

A central aspect of the media is its ability to be a platform for robust debate. Editors and senior journalists, according to Cowling and Hamilton, understand this responsibility and take it seriously (2011). Cowling (2007) adds further that, “the day-to-day demands of producing news restrict who is chosen to comment and what issues are discussed” (62). This places the gatekeepers right in the middle of picking and choosing what topics need to be addressed and by whom. Cowling and Hamilton (2011) name this process as “orchestration” and argue that the shape that the debate takes depends on the level and type of “orchestration” employed.

Serino’s (2010) research on the Sunday Times revealed that there was a strong link between news and opinion. Most columnists tend to write pieces that are topical and in the news spotlight. The Daily Maverick, for example, has, “land” as one of the trending topics for the past year and News 24, has a special section on discussions on land. As Serino’s research points out, columnists who have the freedom to choose what to write about also seem only to rarely write about issues unrelated to news, but like media gatekeepers, focus on the day’s news and events (Cowling & Hamilton, 2011; 53).

Even though there been accusations of media bias in the nature of the debates and positions taken in the opinion, (see Pillay; 2010), Cowling and Hamilton note that this is not always the case. They suggest that gatekeepers “are as much, concerned with the dynamics of the debate than with specific positions taken” and therefore, understand the nature of their responsibility in ensuring debate unfolds in a constructive manner. Serino (2010) notes, when he discusses the issue of a columnist

who was fired after being accused of racism verging on hate speech (Cowling & Hamilton, 2011), that in as much as editors often give the columnists a free reign, certain lines, like the one mentioned, cannot be crossed.

In essence, after the various research on AM Live, Sunday Times newspapers, Cowling and Hamilton conclude that it is necessary for journalists to orchestrate, "in order to fashion public deliberation that can provide for an engaged national conversation and bring publics into being (2011; 58). However, they also note that it is "crucial for journalists to make explicit the processes involved in the production of opinion", (58) in order to examine critically the practice and implications of public discussion emanating from that.

3.6 Summary

As highlighted above, media are essential in advancing democracy in any society, providing a platform to educate, inform and most importantly, a space to debate issues of importance. However, the media, are not devoid of any agendas and in South Africa this has been one of the biggest issues of discontention. It has been accused of bias when it comes to the ANC government, and lack of racial, class and gender representation. This has been one of the major criticisms of the Public Sphere theory which presupposes equal civic engagement and participation.

Secondly, in providing a place for debate, media, actively through agenda setting choose which issues of the day are important and place emphasis on them. Land expropriation without compensation is one such issue. As this research will further reveal, the matter's coverage increased with time in relation to political developments in parliament and in the news and opinion. The content of the coverage was analyzed through looking at which frames were used in presenting land expropriation in the media and finally, orchestration used to ascertain how the media houses control the narrative on land expropriation without compensation by who they give the platform to. All these theories, helped in giving a holistic view on how land expropriation without compensation was being tabled and presented in the media and to what ends.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In trying to answer the research questions, this study adopted qualitative research analysis to generate and analyze data. As previously discussed in detail, this study aimed to examine how land expropriation without compensation was being discussed in the opinion sections of certain media platforms. Central to the question is to identify what dominant narratives, themes, and arguments were emerging in public discourse and how they were being framed. Secondly, I looked at who speaks and whose interests are being served, by analyzing the narratives, and how they may be influencing the framing of the opinions. Lastly, I established, whether land expropriation without compensation, as an issue, is being linked to the socio-political, economic and cultural factors, and the complexities of the context discussed in the opinion and analysis articles.

4.2 Research Approach

Qualitative research is exploratory, descriptive and explanatory in nature as it seeks to dig deeper, for the purposes of understanding the phenomenon under investigation, into the multiple realities, perceptions, views and opinions. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is normally undertaken when a problem or an issue needs to be explained in detail, in this case, to interrogate the manner in which the dominant narratives, frames, claims and themes on land expropriation without compensation in South Africa are framed and set on the agenda of the public by the media.

4.3 Selection of the Time Period

The need for land expropriation without compensation in South Africa has always and continues to be a contentious issue and topic of discussion post 1994 (Kloppers, Pienaar; 2014). In the past few years, these calls have grown louder especially after the emergence of the EFF, who have adopted land expropriation as one of its main policies, the ruling ANC adopting land expropriation as the official party policy on 13 December 2017, and subsequently the National Assembly passing the motion of land expropriation without compensation on 27 February 2018. I examined articles from this date until March 31st, to analyze the reaction in the media. Land expropriation, even though previously written about and debated, had finally become a possible reality, more so, with the alliance of the ANC, EFF and other minority parties, which gave them a two thirds majority. This has fueled discussion of the issue in the media.

4.4 Choice of Selected Media

As mentioned this research is not meant to be an exhaustive study of the coverage of all media in South Africa. The five media selected for this study, namely, *Isolezwe*,

Daily Maverick, *The Conversation*, *News 24* and *Sowetan* were selected as they operate to a lesser or great degree, as media organizations concerned with news and issues but also represent diverse approaches to opinion and serve different communities. These were chosen because they are easily accessible, have over the years engaged critically on land expropriation as they feature a diverse range of opinion makers. Taken together, these online media platforms are accessible to South Africans able to connect to the internet, so represent a range of opinions and ideas potentially available to online audiences.

4.4.1 *Isolezwe*

Another factor into the choice of these was the geographical consideration. Zulu-language publication, *Isolezwe* for instance is one of the most read media in South Africa. Launched in 2002 and the online version of the paper in 2011, by the Independent Newspaper Group, the daily has shown an average year-on-year growth of 21% (Tolsi, 2007;para1). In this research, I looked at the online platform only, as it to a large extent, reflects what is being read in the print publication. *Isolezwe* editor Thulani Mbatha at the launch of the newspaper said, the Zulu used is modernized Zulu, and described their readers someone who may go back home to the rural areas to slaughter a cow to the *amadlozi* [ancestors], but is as equally comfortable taking his family out for dinner and a movie in a shopping mall" (Tolsi, 2007;para 3).

The Ingonyama Trust, which manages land on behalf of the Zulu people, has also been at the centre of the land debate especially after it was alleged that Former President Motlanthe's report of the high level panel on the assessment of key legislation and the acceleration of fundamental change recommended that the government takes the land under the Ingonyama Trust, causing King Goodwill Zwelithini with his *amabutho* and intimated that violence or secession would follow unless threats to 'the land of the Zulu nation' were withdrawn. This was promptly followed by President Ramaphosa assuring the Zulu King that their land was safe (Claasens, 2018;para 1). It was paramount to note, following these developments, how

the Zulu newspaper engages with land expropriation and how the ordinary readers are reacting.

4.4.2 *The Daily Maverick*

The Daily Maverick (2018;para 1) on the other side, is a leading online news platform, which prides itself in critical and objective journalism. It describes itself as a unique blend of news, information, analysis and opinion delivered from their newsrooms in Cape Town and Johannesburg. It is run by an independently owned, private company with no affiliation to any other media group or political party or religious organization. It is funded mainly through advertising. *Daily Maverick* positions itself a space for quality, accuracy and building of an environment of confidence and responsible journalism in this age of fake news. It is these qualities which made me choose the online news platform and its diverse range of opinion makers from the civil community, politics, academics, journalists and news makers to name a few. It will be interesting to see how all these different views and opinions are addressed and reacted to.

4.4.3 *The Conversation*

The Conversation (2018; para 1), according to their website, started in the United States of America, arising out of deep-seated concerns for the fading quality of public discourse and recognition of the vital role that academic experts can play in the public arena. It is an independent and not-for-profit, also part of a global network of newsrooms first launched in Australia in 2011 and now operational in Canada, the UK, France, Indonesia, Africa, Spain as well as Australia. As stated on its website, academics play a major role as public intellectuals and their engagement and research on issues which affect the broader society is important hence my selection of it as one of the online platforms to study.

It has to be noted that even though *the Conversation* is not a news site per se, it however has the stated objective of contributing to information and opinion available

to the public by producing articles of topical interest. It does try to be relevant by producing articles of topical interest, and it does try to follow news events with in-depth articles. For example there has been a lot of discussion on prosperity churches in the news recently, and in *the Conversation*, there is an in-depth article about them, how they have come about, written by an anthropologist in clear reaction to recent news stories about these churches. The fact that this site is a South African and African version and that it does attempt to respond to what is in the news is part of the rationale for including them.

4.4.4 Sowetan

SowetanLIVE (2018;para 1) is the website of the *Sowetan*, the English-language South African daily newspaper that started in 1981 as a community publication and which serves a proudly South African readership who have earned the right to be in the know and on the move. The website carries content from the print edition of the *Sowetan*, along with unique online-only content throughout the day, all week long – general and political news; entertainment and celebrities; soccer and other sport; and much more. It is one of South Africa's largest online news publications, with more than 1.5-million readers per month, who spend on average nearly five minutes on each article. Through its historical background as a nation-building publication, the *Sowetan* reaches a considerable amount of middle class black people from the township. It will give insights to how they view the land issue and adding to the diversity of the voices and opinions.

4.4.5 News 24

Lastly, *News 24* positions itself in the South African media space as the largest news website reaching over 6 million South Africans. According to its website, *News 24* (2019) is an English-language online news publication created in October 1998 by the multinational media company. It is important to note here that Naspers' origins and

success lay in the rise of the National Party and its development as a segregationist political party. It was initially called *Nasionale Pers* or *National Press* in English underscoring its relationship with the National Party. During apartheid, the media house was an unashamedly and a dedicated supporter of the Nationalist party, however, maintaining that it remained financially and editorially independent from the National Party.

After the dawn of Independent, the party changed tune and positioned itself as South Africa's largest digital publisher, covering local and international news, politics, business, entertainment, technology and sport. I chose it for this research as it brings to the discussion on land expropriation without compensation diversity and divergent opinions. It carries opinion from its sister papers namely, *City Press*. Considering its roots to the Afrikaaner community, I thought, its stance on land expropriation without compensation would be worthwhile to study whether it would be for or against it.

4.5 Data Collection

This study employed content analysis as the method of data collection. According to Bengtsson (2016), content analysis can be used on all types of written texts. Downe-Wambolt (1992) suggests that it is a research method that provides a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual, or written data in order to describe and organize specific phenomena. This research, therefore, made inferences from text of the opinions on land expropriation without compensation to identify narratives and arguments and their relation to the socio-political, economic and cultural challenges.

All the opinions and analysis columns regarding land expropriation without compensation in the five purposively selected media were selected and analyzed. To this end, I used the following key words to search the media platforms of the selected platforms, "land", "land expropriation", "land reform" for the English language media platforms and "*umhlaba*" for *Isolezwe*. Next to the key words, I also added the months in question, for example, "land Dec 2017", and "*umhlaba* March 2018". This allowed

me to narrow down the search and identify only the opinions written during the period of study of this research.

The opinions were further categorized according to whether the opinion was against land expropriation without compensation, in favor or neutral. They were further categorized into themes related to socio-political, economic and cultural frames.

4.6 Categorizing

The next step after the collection of data was scanning the texts for themes and arguments and sorting them into categories. Coding is the process of organizing large quantities of text into fewer content categories (Vilakazi, 2018) or meaning units (Bengtsson, 2016). According to the latter, a meaning unit is, “the smallest unit that contains some of the insights the researcher needs, and it is a constellation of sentences or paragraphs containing aspects related to each other.” (Bengtsson, 2016;11). Codes are useful in understanding semiotics, defined as the study of signs which can be text, and their meaning in society. There are powerful tools for helping to understand and interpret how meaning is constructed and deconstructed in messages (Macnamara, 1999).

Texts were read and coded by the researcher, based on the manifest content. In other words, the articles were catalogued according to what the commentators specifically said about land expropriation, what arguments they used and what issues they explored. There was no attempt to decipher implicit meanings. In the analyzing process, codes facilitated the identification of concepts around which the data can be assembled into blocks and patterns (Bengtsson, 2016). Coloring was useful to distinguish the different concepts.

Coding was therefore used to provide insight to the first research question through the process of categorising the opinions to identify emerging narratives, arguments and

frames on the discussion of land expropriation without compensation against the following broad themes namely, socio-political, economic and cultural realities.

4.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the interpretation of data in order to draw conclusions so as to answer questions pertaining to the issue under study (Babbie, 2010;112). Data analysis for the purposes of this research used content and thematic analysis and this reflected the manifest themes. Common themes used to justify the opinion writers' stance on the land question and how these were presented and tabled.

4.7.1 Chronological Trajectory

Firstly, the number of articles collected was counted on each media platform and then I added the totals from the five media sites from the period of the 13th of December to 31 March 2018 to get a collective sense of the number of articles written during that period. This shows when there are more articles and when there are fewer articles. The chronological trajectory was important because it gives an indication of what led to the increase of opinion and what might have influenced it, for example if this was in relation to a particular comment by a politician, or developments in parliament or simply in response to other opinions.

Generally the authors of the opinion articles have biographies next to their articles and these were analysed to see if there was a link between the author's educational background, politics, race and expertise on the issue and if these influenced the tone and frame of their arguments and narratives.

4.7.2 Frames

The data collected sheds light on the dominant narratives and arguments. Frames were identified from using textual analysis, through choice of words, terms, phrases would determine where the argument might be leaning towards, whether pro land expropriation or against, alternatively neutral. This was relatively a simple exercise, as the writers tended to say very clearly whether they were for or against, even though some's overview was nuanced. The opinions were contrasted against others from the different publications to ascertain if there were any differences or similarities and whether any information can be derived from them. These helped to determine if there were any biases, agendas and vested interests from the narratives written about land expropriation without compensation which might have influenced the framing and discussion of the topic.

4.7.3 Themes

At the heart of the land issue are the following themes mentioned previously: socio-political, economic and cultural. An important part of this research was to scrutinize the manner in which land expropriation without compensation is portrayed in relation to these themes. As mentioned earlier, land to some represents hope against poverty and hunger. Land, like language, shapes identity. It is a major part of people's spirituality and a source of hope about the future free of inequality. To others it is restoring their heritage, identity and dignity. Some also believe land binds them with their ancestors, a source from which to draw life and transcend the physical.

All the above helped this study to determine the general views and discussions of land expropriation without compensation in the media. The media, as has been established, helps to shape and influence the public opinion, therefore the attempt to look into the coverage of such an important topic.

4.8 Limitations

The research was not meant to be an exhaustive study of the media, but a close look at the ways in which the land issue is being covered across a range of media. The research thus necessarily excluded a number of online news sources. One such exclusion was the Afrikaans-language media. The exclusion was due to the lack of understanding of the Afrikaans language. It was indeed a pity, since Afrikaans farmers are a big stakeholder in these discussions on land expropriation without compensation. Another limitation was also the reduced scope of study, the research covers a very short period of time, and since the 31st of March 2018, there have been major developments that could have been useful for the study. This then serves as an opportunity for further research.

Chapter 5

Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

Since the fall of apartheid, land has been a contentious issue, but with the ANC adopting land expropriation without compensation as its policy, public discussions on the issue have intensified. With an ANC majority in Parliament and the EFF lending its support, land expropriation without compensation has become a reality. This research sought to analyze opinion written in the online media space to get an idea of the kind of discussions the media were carrying on the issue. As previously stated, this research looked at discussions made in online opinion pieces soon after the adoption of land expropriation without compensation as a policy by the ruling ANC on 13 December 2017 until 31st of March 2018. This was a month after the National Assembly had passed the motion of land expropriation without compensation on 27 February 2018. It is this period in question that the research aimed to study.

In order to get a sense of what drives the discussions and what informs them, firstly, the profiles of opinion writers and analysts were scrutinized against race and expertise. Race is particularly identified because it is a key part of the debate, as land expropriation necessitates taking land from white people and possibly other minorities, to give to indigenous people. Also, the positions on the issue taken by different

commentators could be interpreted by others as related to the commentators own self-interest, depending on which side of the fence their argument sits on.

There is, already, deep rooted racial polarization around the land issue as seen in the literature review with some black people alleging that the white colonial settlers “stole” the land from them and drove them to dry arid lands, and some white people disputing that saying they have the right to the land as they occupied unused land to mention some of the arguments. The disparity in land ownership has also been taken to symbolize the socio-economic discrepancies in the country, with claims that white people have a great stake in the economy whereas the majority of the black people, even after the dawn of apartheid remain poor. There was also a keen interest to see whether the speakers tend to be overwhelmingly drawn from particular groups, and whether they appear to be drawn from elites.

Secondly, the themes in the opinion articles and commentary were identified, categorized and analyzed in order to discern the nature of the arguments people were making for or against land expropriation without compensation. The analysis also examined the basis, context and assumptions of the arguments they were advancing, whether based on historical evidence, stereotypes, researched data or fabrications. It was also crucial to look into what context or angle those arguments took in relation to the economic concerns, ongoing debates about social justice and inequality. In addition, this was to also see how extensive the debate was and whether it includes a whole range of related issues, rather than looking narrowly at the land question.

5.2 Coverage of Land Expropriation without Compensation in the selected media

The total number of articles written during the period under study, from the 20th of December 2017 to the 31st of March 2018, was 57. One article was removed which

was written on *News 24* without the author's details, which I thought did not make sense to include as, one of the areas of analysis would be analyzed against their expertise and racial background. Even though it can be pointed out that the article could still be considered when looking at themes, however, in the interest of having a consistent and uniform analysis of all articles in relation to all classifications of analysis, I decided to leave out the opinion. This, therefore, left the articles to be analyzed at 57.

The research methodology for the purposes of this study is content analysis. Reading through the finalized articles, and making inferences from the manifest content of the opinion, flow and direction of arguments, conclusions reached and some telling titles, I made a judgement on whether an article was positive or negative. An interesting observation made in this process was the lack of neutral opinions. All the opinions studied in this research were fiery, passionate either supporting land expropriation without compensation or not. However, it should be noted that others tried to be objective but at the end of the day, took a particular stance. I suppose, because the issue is becoming a reality, and those making opinion perhaps feel there is no point on being on the fence.

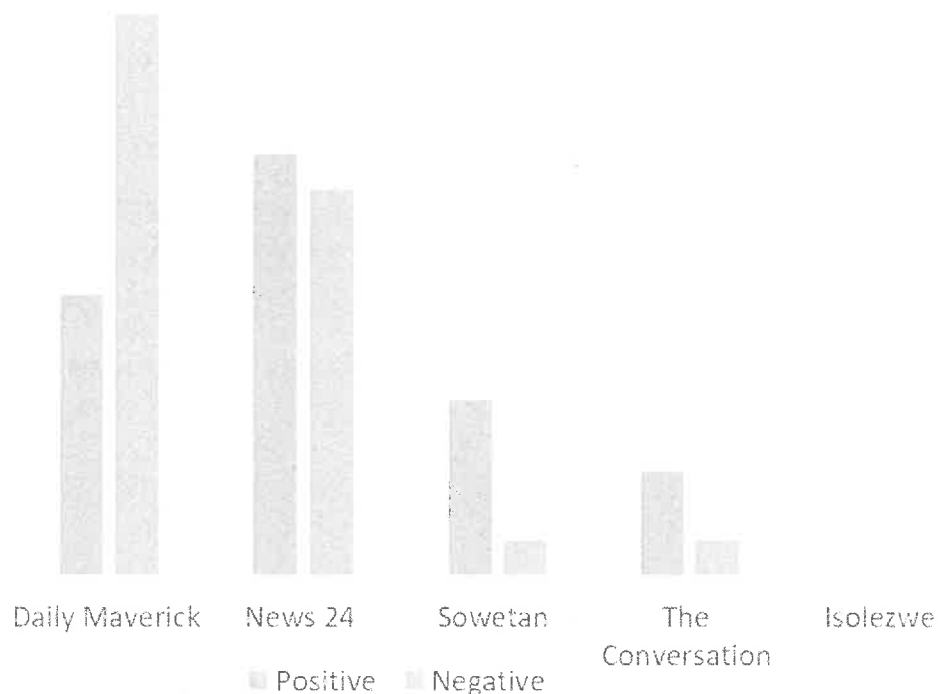
For instance, there was a lot of ambiguity around the constitutional amendment, with a general agreement that land needed to be expropriated, however, there was consternation around the how part. Some people saying it needed to be amended to allow for land expropriation without compensation, some arguing that this was not necessary as there was already a provision for it in the current constitution. In this case, I categorized all the articles which spoke on land under one category and then went through the supporting arguments which then reflected the overall view of whether the opinion writers thought it was a generally good idea or not in.

As a result, out of the 57 articles, 28 articles appeared to be broadly in favor of land expropriation without compensation, although some expressed concern about the ANC's ability to manage the process competently. The remaining 29 articles were negative, specifically concerned about amending the constitution, some arguing that there was no need to do so as the current constitution already has the clause to do

so, and others pointing out what the government was resolving to do went against the property clause of the constitution and inhumane amongst many other reasons which will be detailed later in the research. However, as noted above, the one that had ambiguous views when read in full leaned towards either affirming the need for the land expropriation without compensation or against it.

One of the interesting findings of the research is *Isolezwe's* silence on land expropriation without compensation in its opinion during the period under study, However, land expropriation without compensation was covered in news articles, mostly reporting on its development in the political sphere and utterances made by the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini. The King has been very vocal about the land issue to such an extent that he threatened cessation should land from the Ingonyama Trust, which he is the sole custodian, be expropriated. Part of the lack of commentary could also be due to the lack of established opinionisters in the paper's structure, instead it has something to the effect of, letters to the editor, however, in this section, during the period under study, there still was no commentary on land expropriation without compensation. The *Isolezwe* as notated previously has the Zulu people as its primary readers. However, one perhaps might argue that the majority of the *Isolezwe* readers, are urban based and removed from the land discussions and the ones who are affected are in the deep rural areas and are not being represented in the media.

Table 2: Positive and negative opinions



In the data analysis, following the ANC's adoption of land expropriation without compensation as a policy, it is noteworthy that in December, the month in which it was adopted, there was no analysis or opinion in the media under study. This could be due to the fact that it was adopted on the 20th of December, a time when most media houses are winding down for the festive season. Usually this period is a slow news period.

However, in January, a total of five opinion and analysis were published, three on the *Daily Maverick*, one on *News 24* and another one on *The Conversation*. These articles were in direct response to the previous month's ANC adoption of Land Expropriation without Compensation.

In February, there was an increase in two online publications, namely the *Daily Maverick* and *News 24*, with nine articles written. The majority of the articles were written after the 27th of February, directly reacting to Parliament adopting a motion to

expropriate land without compensation. Three articles were on *News 24*, and two on the *Daily Maverick*. The other four articles were published before the 27th of February.

March 2018 saw an increase in the articles, with a total of 43 opinion and analysis pieces. It is interesting to note that, in this month, political parties' heads felt it important to write articles clarifying their stance on Land Expropriation without Compensation. For instance, writing for the *Daily Maverick*, the following political leaders wrote on the following issues. Firstly, Jessie Duarte, Deputy Secretary General of the ANC tackled the issue of the ANC's ability to manage the land issue with an article titled, "The ANC will manage the land question sensibly." Secondly, Mmusi Maimane, the leader of the official opposition, the DA, wrote on why South Africa does not need a Constitutional amendment, "Land: We don't need a constitutional amendment, we need a total change in policy". Thirdly, Solly Msimanga, the then DA Mayor of Tshwane, focused on property rights; "Title Deeds: Local government's answer to land ownership provides meaningful access to opportunity". Fourthly, the EFF Student Command Leader, Sinawo Thambo, also weighed in on the discussions, with, "Land Expropriation, a Victory for Africa" praising the move.

On the *Sowetan* site, in the same month, Jerry Matebesi, EFF North West Provincial Spokesperson, penned an article titled, "EFF leads from the front in debate on expropriation of land", claiming that it is they who ought to be given credit.

Former ANC MP and SA ambassador to Ireland, Melanie Verwoed, in a different publication, *News 24*, wrote addressing conspiracy theories about the incumbent President, Cyril Ramaphosa, saying how he could have been set up for failure through the land expropriation without compensation policy. Secretary General of the EFF, Godrich Gardee, wrote an article in the same publication, "Land debate is about shifting power.". His article was in response to Ruth Hall's piece in the same month titled, "Land Expropriation without compensation: What does it mean?" essentially addressing the need for land expropriation without compensation. At this point in the

debate, it is being driven by political players, whereas earlier it was being driven by news events.

Table 3: Total Coverage

Publication	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Daily Maverick	0	3	4	16	23
News 24	0	1	5	17	23
Sowetan	0	0	0	6	6
The Conversation	0	1	0	3	4
Isolezwe	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	5	9	43	57

To sum up the total coverage of articles it is interesting to note that the disparities among the different titles. For instance the *Daily Maverick* as a single publication has a solid number of opinions over the months covered except for December. This possibly could be because it is essentially an online platform. As an online platform it carries commentary and opinion on all topical issues of the day discussed across the media space. *News 24* on the other hand, carries the same number of opinion pieces; however it carries articles from its other publications, namely *City Press* and *City Vision*.

It is surprising that *Sowetan*, as a predominately black publication and with black people constituting the majority of the beneficiaries of land expropriation without compensation, is not fully engaging on the land issue. This possibly could be attributed to that the majority of the indigenous people are in urban dwellings where agricultural land which is primarily under contention does not necessarily affect them. There is also the belief that the so called, “clever blacks” are removed on so many facets from the struggles of rural black people and therefore fail to identify or champion for their

cause. According to its website, Tiiso Blackstar (2018), “it is engaging with a proudly South African readership that has come to a place where they have truly earned the right to be – ‘in the know and on the move.’

5.3 Race

As been discussed earlier in the research, race in South Africa remains a polarizing and divisive issue. People often scrutinize and analyze whatever input is made on land expropriation without compensation through the lens of race. This results in certain judgements and affirmation of racial stereotypes: for example, a white man who writes affirmatively on Land Expropriation without Compensation would be frowned upon and considered, a “betrayal” and a “sellout”, by some white people, and looked at with suspicion by black people. A black person is expected to speak positively on it and should he/she not; they are labelled “anti-black” and a “puppet” of white monopoly. The mixed races voices seem to be clouded in the discussions around land expropriation without compensation.

The race of the authors of opinion and analysis is therefore important as it will shed light on whether the land expropriation without compensation arguments are correlated with race or not.

To determine the race of the opinion writers and analysts, I relied heavily on their photos, which are usually put up on the top left of their articles or on their profiles as seen below. This is because it is important to see whose voices generally appear in media debate and their contributions to the discussions on land expropriation without compensation. The photos ‘humanize’ the ideas presented by the writers or analysts, making them, the ideas, more believable and creating a connection with the readers as they can easily recognize the writers.

Image 1: Daily Maverick

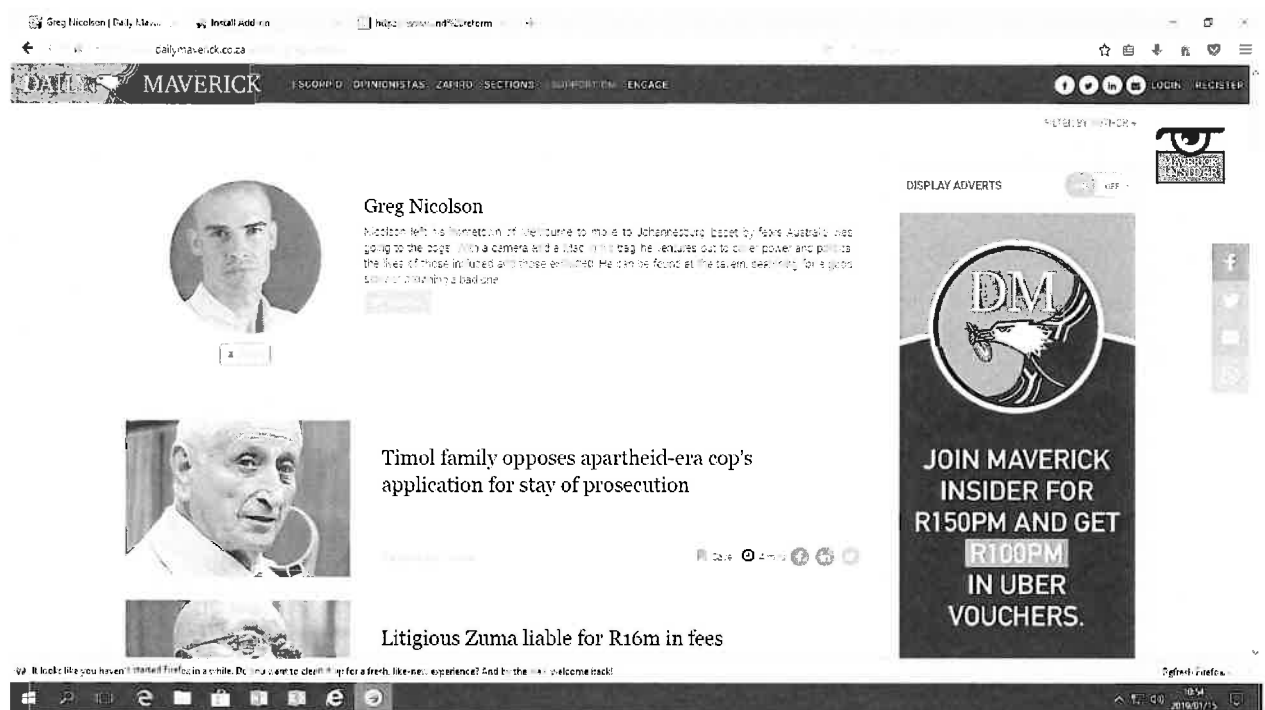


Image 2: News 24



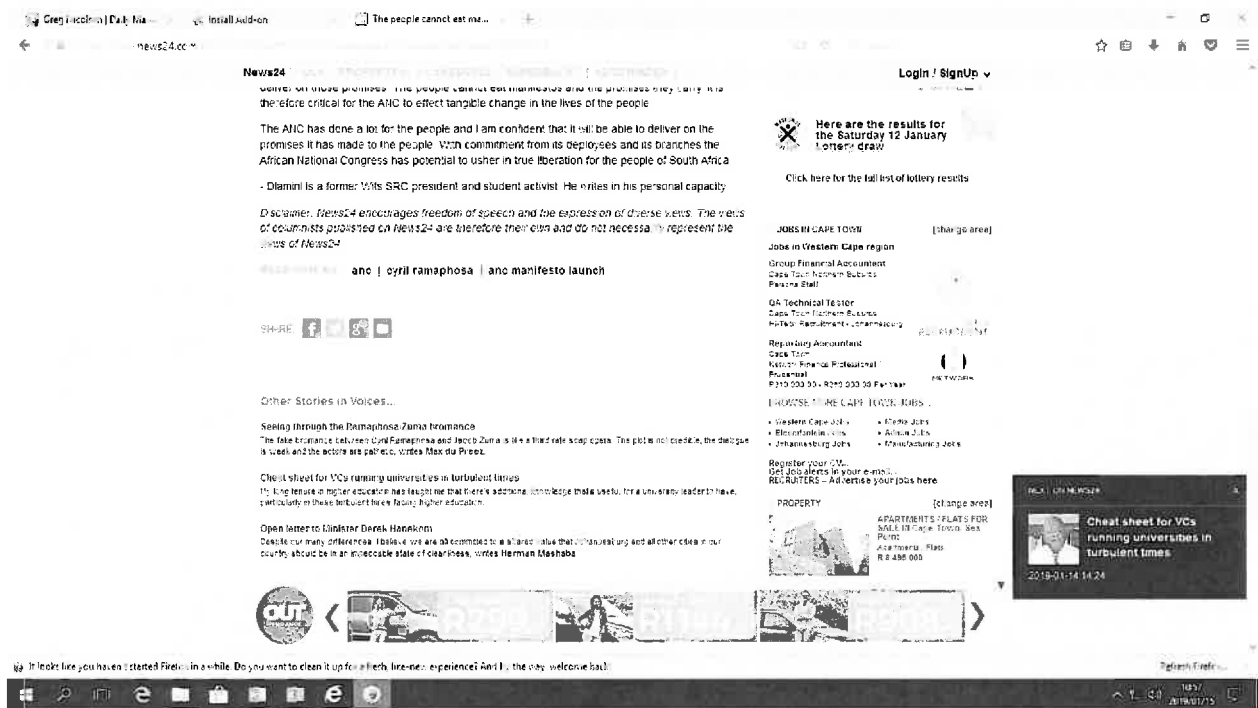


Image 3: Sowetan

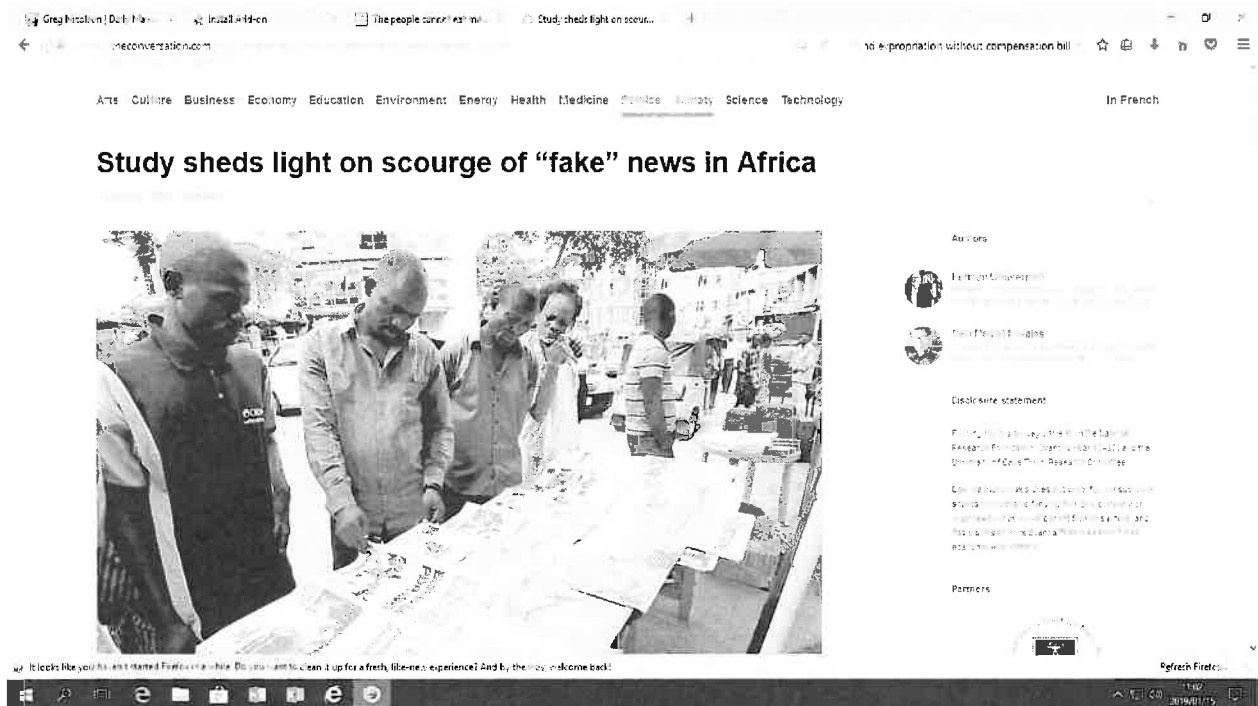
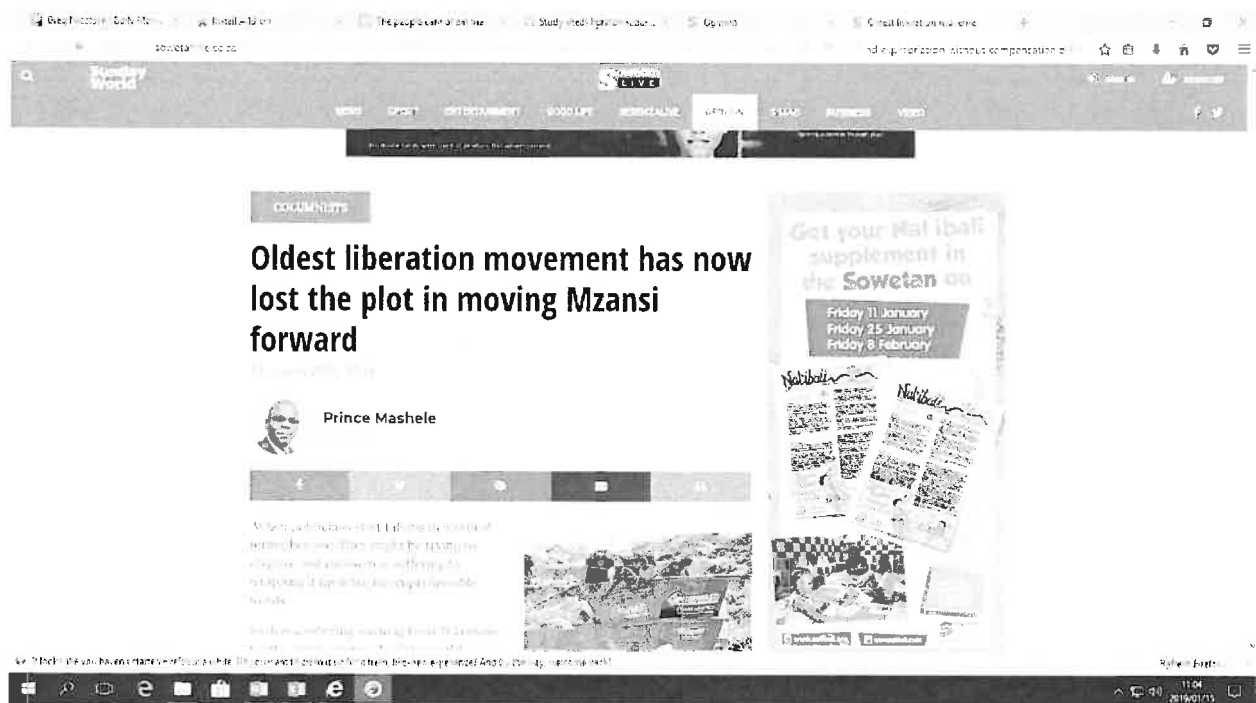
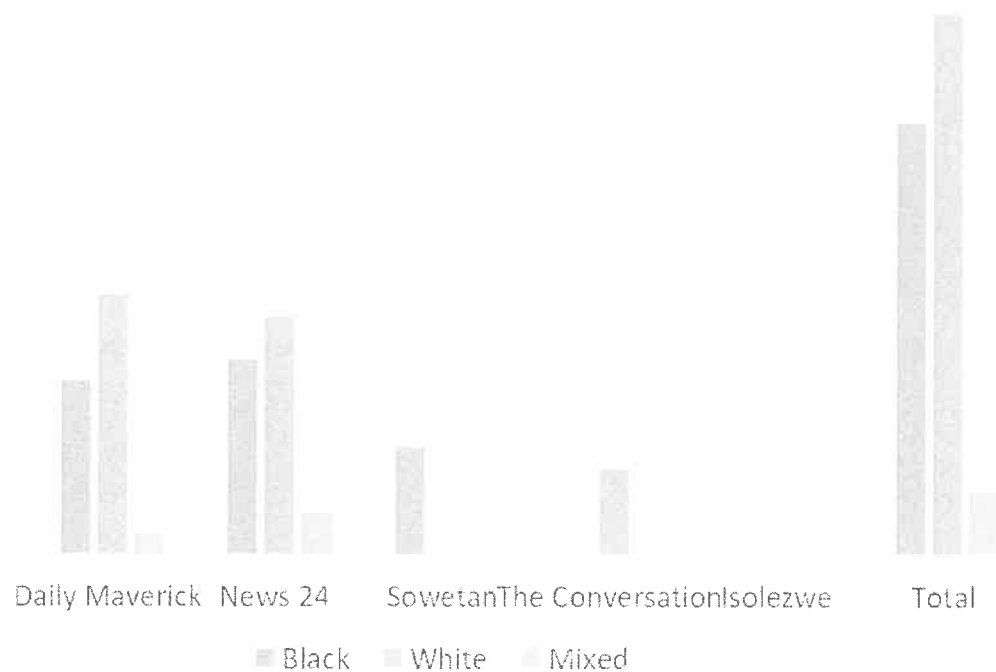


Image 4: The Sowetan



Upon scrutinizing the articles these are the results, which emerged below.

Table 4: Race in Opinion



5.4 Explanation on Categories

The racial categories used in this research, black, white, colored and Indians are selected as these were the categories used to profile people during the apartheid era. I used the apartheid racial profiling as the racial laws of the time determined who had access to what land and areas of occupation. Those apartheid effects still persist and hence influence the different attitudes and engagement on the land issue. It should also be noted that I do not endorse those categories but for the purposes of this research and in addressing the stereotypes and arguments on land, I believe it is necessary to use them.

These distinctions clarify racial contention around land ownership, its historical context and current consternation which has already been alluded to. Black people claiming that their land was stolen by white settlers, the white settlers in turn alleging they only

occupied unused land or bought it. The mixed people on the one hand, somewhat seem marginalized in the discussion, as their voices do not appear.

5.4.1 White South Africans

A total of 25 white South Africans out of 51 opinionistas and analysts contributed to the discussion on Land Reform in the period under study. The Daily Maverick and News 24 both had 11, with none writing for the *Sowetan* and *Isolezwe*. Four Academics, who are white, contributed to the discussion in the *Conversation*. For a country with a black majority, it seems disproportionate that more than half of the opinion writers are white especially on an issue of such importance to the black majority.

The reasons for this could be varied and can only speculate. Perhaps this is an indication of the racial and economic imbalances facing the country. A few reports mentioned earlier in the research indicate that generally, white South Africans are better educated than black people, with black South Africans still lagging behind in obtaining higher education qualifications than their white counterparts. This, therefore translates into the skill sets of the population. Most of the opinion writers use their background knowledge from their expertise to give opinion on topics, and in this case, on land expropriation without compensation. They have developed the critical thinking to write or comment on issues of the day.

It is surprising that black people who stand to benefit to gain are not as vocal but then it can be explained as indicated earlier, how those who could benefit from land expropriation without compensation, in the farms and rural areas, mostly illiterate are excluded from the conversation. Most of the opinion writers are speaking from a relatively privileged middle class position and therefore, represent views and opinions largely reflecting that particular world. It has to be noted that inspite of this, there are enough black people in the country to comment on the issue, and this shows that something was wrong with the selection of commentators.

5.4.2 Black South Africans

The overall number of black opinion writers and analysts who wrote on Land Expropriation without Compensation were 20, with the *Daily Maverick* hosting eight, *News 24* having nine, the *Sowetan* with five and none from the *Conversation* and *Isolezwe*. Given the history of colonization which subsequently paved way for apartheid and the loss of land amongst black people, it is noteworthy that there seems to be little engagement on the issue in the media's opinion. Given the loud calls in recent years of restitution, as one of the means of compensating black people of the loss incurred, which ultimately makes the black people benefactors, the discussion of land expropriation without compensation in the various media studied, seems to be low.

However, this could be due to some claims made by some opinion writers that black people are not interested in land, and farming, This argument runs a lot on *News 24* with five articles referring to that and also in the *Daily Maverick* but put out in a very subtle manner. Another argument broadly referenced to is that black people want jobs, improved access to social services and economic emancipation and not land. This comes up strongly on *News 24* with six articles indicating that as reasons for not supporting land expropriation without compensation and three articles on the *Daily Maverick* mentioning this in passing. These articles are written by white people with the exception of one, in the *Daily Maverick* written by the DA's Gwen Gwenya.

Another factor to be considered is domestic migration into cities. Many people have moved from the former Bantustans in search of employment in the cities. This entails that the land issue is not only about agricultural land for farming purposes but should be extended to involve tenure, resettlement programmes and policies to cover urban land. The *Daily Maverick* seems to have concerned itself more with urban land, and tenure reforms and most of the articles even though tenure reform was not necessarily the theme still made references. The race factor on the *Sowetan* came up along the lines of historical dispossession and how the land expropriation without compensation

could be an opportunity for economic empowerment of black people and to finally address the wrongs of the past.

5.4.3 Colored and Indian Heritage

There was a total of three mixed writers who are of mixed and Indian Heritage. Interestingly their arguments on land expropriation without compensation seem to be level headed and instead of blaming the one race over the other, they seem to be in agreement that it is a necessary exercise. However, they seem to differ on the execution of it.

Summary of Race

The results on the link between race and the opinion pieces show that white people generally are leading the conversation on land expropriation without compensation in the online media space under research. They dominate the *Daily Maverick*, *News 24* and the *Conversation*. It is interesting to note that, there is almost a balance between white and black opinion writers and analyst. One would expect that black people dominate the conversation as they are a majority, and also surprising to note that there are few women speaking on the land issue compared to men, and a total silence by those identifying as the Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex individuals in the opinion space. Black people dominate the opinion in the *Sowetan* as the data has revealed , due to the media's history as a black-readership publication press.

A worrying observation is the lack of black academics writing in *The Conversation* on the land issue. This could possibly be attributed to the fewer researchers and academics amongst black people than white people, which could be linked to a small percentage of black people who generally pursue post graduate degrees and ultimately become academic professionals. The reasons for the online space to be dominated by white people could be attributed to social media access. Many white people sit in positions of privilege socio-economically making it easy for them to

access the internet, resources, data and research. This therefore renders them more access to write on issues of the day and more so, on issues that could potentially threaten their livelihood.

Education also plays a big role, as previous research has indicated that white people in South Africa, are still better educated than black people. A report titled Educational Enrollment and Achievement of 2016 can be quoted as an example, and it showed that 12% of South Africans have some sort of post-secondary qualification while the country still produces more white graduates compared to other population groups. This is broadly true, but it does not necessarily mean that there are so few black academics and so few black graduates that there are none that can write for the *The Conversation*.

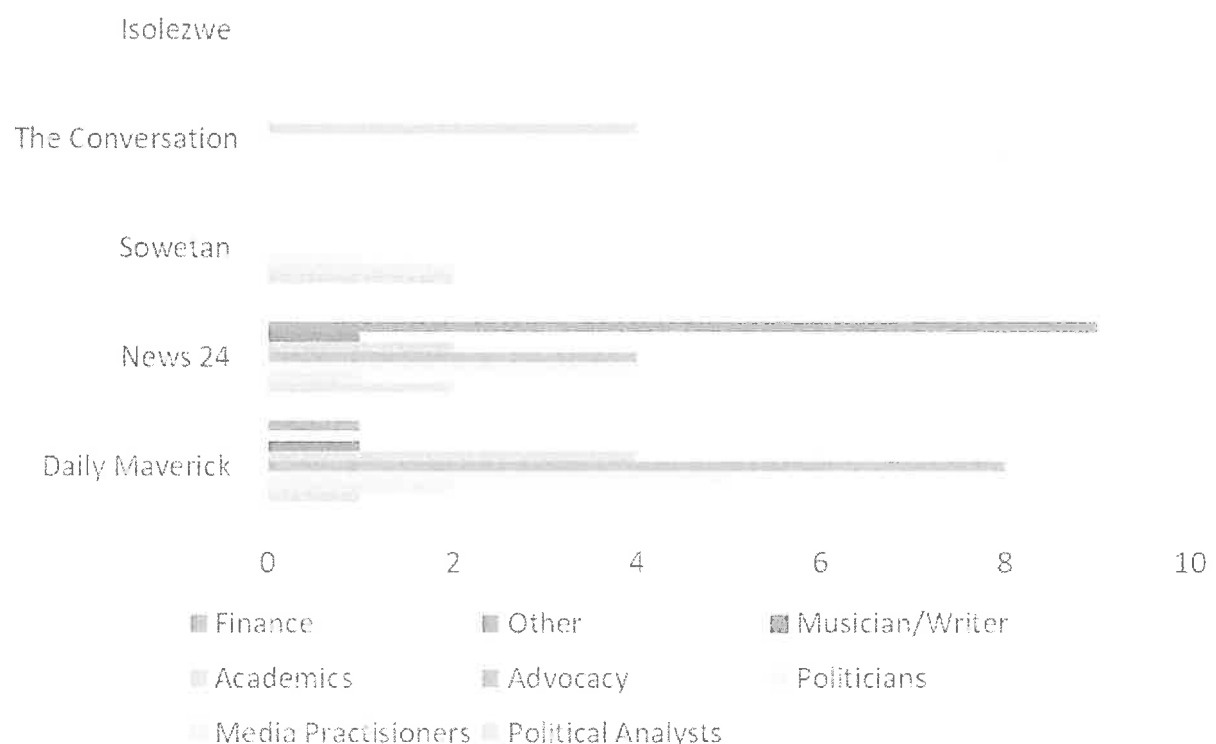
5.5 Expertise

The ideal that is implicit in the concept of the Public Sphere is that anyone in a society is free to engage and deliberate on issues of public interest. However, critics are of the view that the media spaces exclude certain voices and as a result some voices take prominence over others. Societal elites, who have influence, position and wealth, dominate public sphere spaces, and the debates to pursue their agenda. This research therefore aimed to ascertain the kind of people engaging in the topic of land expropriation without compensation and if their expertise seemed linked to their opinions.

The background of most opinionistas was that of political analysts, media practitioners, politicians, advocacy lobbyists, academics, finance, a little known musician and other. The ones categorized as other did not specify in their profiles what field of work they were in or who they were writing on behalf, other than themselves. I used google to help identify the four using their names, and the search identified four who initially did

not have their work or educational background on their profiles. Some writers classify themselves in multiple categories, for example, Ruth Hall identifies as an academic and a political analyst, Max du Preez, on the other end identifies as an author and political analyst.

Table 5: Expertise of Opinion Writers



5.6 Summary on Expertise

The results on expertise and educational background are indicative of the privileged position of middle class South Africans. They are the ones who mostly make up political analysts, researchers, politicians and writers, in the process claiming to speak for the rest of the people. The voices of the ordinary citizens on the farms or squatter camps are silent due to the socio-political realities.

It should also be considered that most opinion writers and analysts are established public intellectuals, senior journalists and media practitioners whose opinion holds a certain gravitas. These people's politics is not necessarily shaped by their expertise. For instance, there are lot of academic researchers who differ significantly on the land issue and dispute data given whether for or against land expropriation without compensation. However, for politicians, it is stark how their backgrounds directly influences their stance and also lobby groups like IRR, who are in clear support of Afriforum as an example. The EFF, the DA and the ANC opinion writers naturally reflect their parties' stance on the matter.

Senior academics also take precedence in opinion writing and this is shown clearly by the amount of opinion written and the academic's profiles. People who have established themselves in those fields and not junior academics are writing their analysis. This is a reflection of ongoing calls of the need for transformation in the academic space. Older academics are white and black academics are generally younger and still developing their academic profiles, so may be inclined to hang back from writing in public forums.

Generally, most of the white commentators opposed the amendment of the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation, with a few exceptions as noted early who attempted to be nuanced in their opinion. Most of the argument lay in the fact that the amendment would put ambiguity on property rights which would in turn affect citizens both in the farms and urban cities. The black commentators did not all support land expropriation without compensation with most supporting the principle and differing fundamentally on how it should be executed citing the ruling party's ineptitude and capacity of handling it.

Section 2

5.7 Intro

One of the key preoccupations of this research is ascertaining what kind of themes and arguments opinion writers and analysts are making in regard to land expropriation without compensation either for or against. To this end, I have identified seven major themes which seem to be running across all opinions and media sites and they are as follows:

i. Constitutional Amendment

There seems to be a difference of opinion regarding the amendment of Section 25 of the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation. In this category the articles focused and discussed the amendment to the constitution as proposed by the EFF and supported by the ANC. There is one school of thought that believes the amendment must happen as it will fast track the land reform process and redistribution, saying it has been long overdue. However, another school of thought is of the view that Section 25 of the constitution must not be amended as the current section has provision for land expropriation and if the amendment is successful, it will be unconstitutional and illegal. Some are also opposed to the amendment but not to land expropriation without compensation, with some opposed to both.

ii. Property Rights

Another theme that emerged strongly is around property rights, as land expropriation without compensation also raises concerns about private property. The articles collected under this category identified arguments that dealt with private property rights and whether expropriation without compensation would be extended to the cities or not and what would guide that decision.

iii. Historical Dispossession

In this section the criteria of selecting articles for this category was looking at how history was being used to advance and justify the argument brought forward for land expropriation without compensation. At the heart of the calls for land expropriation without compensation is historical dispossession and how it came about has largely been disputed.

iv. Skepticism of the ANC competency

Linked to the above theme, there were a number of articles concerned with the capability of the ruling, ANC, to execute land expropriation without compensation effectively. The ruling ANC, due to allegations of corruption, allegations of State Capture and inefficiency have cast doubt on them hence articles in reference to this were put together.

v. Land as a Political Move and the ANC Competency

Tied to the ruling party adopting land expropriation without compensation as an official party policy, there was a significant number of opinion writers alleging that the decision to amend the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation has largely been influenced by politics ahead of the oncoming presidential elections in 2019. This necessitated a category on how opinion writers argued on how they thought the land issue had been hijacked for political purposes.

Farming and Economic Policies

This section was particularly interested in identifying the arguments which spoke of how land expropriation without compensation would impact on farming and economic policies. Zimbabwe was notably linked to the two arguments used as an example of a failed state driven land reform programme which led to the demise and collapse of the country's farming and economy.

In summary, these identified themes speak to other sub themes which shall be discussed later. Most of them are intertwined and most opinion writers utilized many discussions from all of the themes to bring across their points. This means that some articles may fall into more than one category. However, I used key words which set the tone of the arguments and read through all the articles to get a sense of the line of argument and position. Although a few articles tried to provide a neutral stance on the issue, most were clearly either for or against land expropriation without compensation. The choice of using individual media publications to ascertain and classify the opinions on land expropriation without compensation was to track the direction each media publication was taking in responding to the land question.

5.7.1 Constitutional Amendment

The articles in this category mostly referred to the arguments pertained to the need to determine whether there was a need to amend the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation or as some argued there was no need for it. This was the biggest category with 11 articles directly tackling the constitutional amendment debate. The ambiguity with some opinion was that there was an agreement on land reform but not the amendment of the constitution

Daily Maverick

In *The Daily Maverick* there is a clear concern and disagreement with the proposal of amending Section 25 of the constitution to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation because most of the opinion writers believe the current one has provisions for it, if executed and adhered to correctly. There are five articles which directly speak on Section 25 of the Constitution on whether there is need for its amendment or not. Pierre de Vos, an academic who lectures constitutional law believes that to “allow for no compensation to be paid, or to oust the jurisdiction of the court to have a final say on the matter would require an amendment of other various

parts of section 25" (2018, para 3). This he argues would be a long, costly and unnecessary venture. Mmusi Maimane (2018), the leader of the official opposition, concurs, asserting that what South Africa needs is a total change in policy not a constitutional amendment.

In regard to the proposed amendment, most authors raised the issue of property rights, detailing how it will leave the property market exposed and the value of landholdings would be put at risk. Corrigan (2018), a research fellow at the Institute of Race Relations, argues that, at present, the country's farming debt is in excess of R160-billion, largely secured against the value of farms, and if farms are exposed to expropriation by the state, banks would be reluctant to give out loans, effectively making production impossible.

Oscar van Heerde (2018), an international relations scholar and trustee of the Motlanthe Foundation disagrees, stating that most people against the amendment of the constitution fail to see that the ruling party is saying that expropriation without compensation would be one option among others, such as buying on the market, negotiating, expropriation and paying compensation. Therefore, people should not panic as the ruling party has made assurances that this process would be transparent and open to all.

Van Heerde states that the ANC has committed to handling expropriation without compensation in such a manner that it will not affect food security, a guarantee to the agricultural sector that it would not be disrupted as a result and the economy.

On the other end of the spectrum are some who think that it is imperative that land expropriation without compensation is enshrined in the constitution, as, they argue, the "willing buyer, willing seller" policy has failed. They detail instances where property owners have inflated prices of their farms, and some simply not willing to cooperate with the government. Therefore they argue for this constitutional amendment not to be feared as it is a necessity needed to redress the inequalities that were brought about legislatively through the 1913 Natives' Land Act to dispossess black people of their land.

With regard to Tenure Act, four opinion writers and analysts believe the process should be transparent and open to all (See Bramt, F, 2018; Msimanga, S, 2018; Vegter, I, 2018; Speirs, K (2018) . This, they say, would avoid corruption and history repeating itself where rent-seeking bureaucrats post 1994 have been accused of preying on farmers who rely on them for leases.

News 24

There are five articles in this media publication which are against land expropriation without compensation, and three which were in favor of it. The ones not supporting the amendment dismiss the calls for a constitutional amendment arguing that it is a populist ploy to blame the constitution for political failure of the ruling ANC (Hall, 2018; para 4). This is with the upcoming elections in April 2019 in mind. There are however, two articles, which are against the amendment but support land reform as a principle.

There is also concern over the ideological difference between the ANC and the EFF on land expropriation without compensation, as some feel the two parties have fundamental differences when it comes to what it means for them. The EFF, it is argued, wants all land to be nationalized, which some opinion writers and analysts (see Crosby, 2018; para 13, Hall, 2018; para 7) have raised alarm bells about, noting that this is a direct violation of the Bill of Rights and United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in particular which safeguard individual property rights.

Ruth Hall (2018), a professor in the Institute for Poverty and Agrarian studies' main point of discontent is the state's custodianship of land, citing that it would be open to abuse and corruption. Godrich Gardee, the Secretary General of the EFF, in response to Hall's opinion article, concurs on the corruption and abuse part insofar as it is about the ruling ANC. He claims the ruling party has a corrosive history of abuse of power, which, should the EFF rule, would be a thing of the past. According to Gardee, land

expropriation without compensation would be done according to seven cardinal pillars namely, open, accountable, corrupt-free government and society without fear of victimization by state agencies.

Hall (2018) also raises questions of: “Which land would be affected? Would race play a role? Should it be expropriation without any compensation to everyone?” To which Gardee responds by saying land is common property and all of it must be expropriated and given over for productive use to the people, with preference to the previously excluded black majority.

Most opinionistas reviewed are of the position that the historical dispossession of land was wrong. However, there are differences over how this should be addressed. Some allege that current owners bought land with their hard-earned money, so it would be unjust to take it away from them. Others suggest that the owners of land are beneficiaries of apartheid, hence the glaring socio-economic imbalances the country faces are a result of that. Lionel Leew, somewhat offers an alternative solution to the land debacle by suggesting that, “since the current land owners did not receive the land free from the then government, it is the responsibility of the current government to fix the mistake of dispossessing black people and either compensate the original black land owners, alternatively compensate the current white land owners” (2018; para 6).

In essence, the opinion on News 24 engages robustly on the land question with a strong emphasis on the constitutional amendment and how it could have a ripple effect on private property and what it means to have the state as a custodian of land. This also saw a number of opinions by politicians addressing the very same issue and offering a reflection of their parties stance.

Sowetan

The only article *Sowetan* has addressing the proposed constitutional amendment to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation is one by Dikgosi Thokoane (2018), who explains that it is well within the powers of the constitution that, should it been seen fit, the state could take legislative action and other measures to achieve land, water and related reform, in order to redress the past racial injustices. He blames the apartheid legacy for perpetuating social economic inequalities. He gives farming as an example, alleging that, “the black man’s access to resources and land is being impeded by structures and attitudes inherited from the apartheid dark years” (2018; para 5).

Thokoane adds that it is important to treat the land issue with the due sensitivity it deserves so that South Africa can truly belong to all those who live in it regardless of race. To achieve that, he suggests no land should be expropriated for the sake of it. Young farmers must be beneficiaries and receive state support in the form of resources and skills, secured property rights and lastly, admitting it is a polarizing issue, cool heads, he says, must prevail and humanity take lead.

The significance of this lone article on the constitutional amendment on the *Sowetan* is that it reflects some nuance to it. The opinion writer is in agreement that land should be expropriated without compensation to address past wrong and give young black farmers an opportunity in the agricultural industry, however, most importantly he suggests that there should be rationale to this. Thokoane is against expropriation without compensation for political reasons and without a bigger picture in mind of improving the livelihood of the black people, which he said would result in failure.

Summary

The biggest bone of contention which came up in this category and was argued at length was the proposal for the amending of section 25 of the Constitution to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation. Six commentators believe it is pointless to amend the section as there already is a provision which stipulates that it must be done in a just and equitable manner. However in direct response to that,

EFF's Gardee (2018) refutes that premise, arguing, if the drafters of the constitution had wanted expropriation without compensation, they would have explicitly mentioned it in the clause, adding, that the section is clear that expropriation must be accompanied by compensation.

The DA's Maimane (2018) points out that Dikgang Moseneke, former Deputy Chief Justice, had previously mentioned that section 25 of the constitution had never been used fully and that there was never a case brought to it testing the meaning of, "just and equitable compensation", hence there was nothing in the current form of the constitution which hinders land reform. Others also concur arguing that section 25 is not a problem in itself but the issue lies with the ruling party's lack of political will, poor budgeting and implementation and corruption. Some refer directly to the Land Act of 1913 saying that since legislation was used to take land away from black people, the very same legislation must be used for redress.

The kind of opinion and analysis in this category showed a clear diverse range of arguments regarding land expropriation without compensation. It clearly showed that in the *Daily Maverick*, for one, there was preoccupation with the amendment of the question and how that would spill onto private property rights. There is space also for divergent views with others citing that people should not panic as the government had a firm plan that would not jeopardize the right to private property and but also highlighting failure of the willing buyer, willing seller approach.

The *Sowetan* brought a measured approach by warning against expropriation without compensation for the sake of it without a bigger plan to help open up the agricultural sector to black people. *News 24*, reflected similar sentiment but also carried articles about the difference in political ideology between the EFF and ANC, that in as much as they had teamed up on voting for the amendment of Section 25, they held different views on land ownership models.

The debate in this category featured commentary from major political players, political analysts, constitutional lawyers and activists showing wide range of views, some in

agreement with the amendment of the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation some not.

5.7.2 Property Rights

Property rights appeared as an objection in the arguments about the amendment of the constitution. However, it is important to note that the theme also appeared in discussions that did not focus on the constitutional amendment. The articles featured in this section comprise all articles that dealt with property rights and security of tenure and most arguments referred to the bigger theme of the amendment of the constitution.

Daily Maverick

Property Rights is one of the most debated topics in the *Daily Maverick* with six articles on it out of the 24 opinion pieces. Some opinionistas, like Ivo Vegter, a columnist and author, have gone as far as quoting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states that, “Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property” (Vegter, 2018; para 16). However, in response to this, some writers believe that the Constitution allows for expropriation of land in the interest of the public, which in this instance, refers to landless black people.

There seems to be agreement from most of the *Daily Maverick* opinionistas that private property is an essential element of human economy. This is explained by, “the fact that human economy and property have a joint economic origin, since both have, as the ultimate reason for their existence, the fact that goods exist whose available quantities are smaller than the requirements of men.” (Hayek, F.A., 1992; 10) or this

effect, private ownership of goods must be protected from those who would dispossess them (Vegter, 2018).

Economic emancipation, according to Solly Msimanga (2018), the former DA mayor of Tshwane, cannot be achieved without secure property rights. He claims that one of the priorities of the DA-led municipality in Tshwane was fast-tracking title deeds to black people in townships and this enables them to access loans, funding for business adventures and to transfer property should one die or decide to sell it. Not giving people property rights, Corrigan argues, would be perpetuating a long-standing reality of denying black people property rights rooted in colonial and apartheid legislation.

Development of property and investment, it is argued, would be brought to a minimum as people would be reluctant to invest in property they do not own and which can be taken from them at any given time. Van Heerden (2018) dismisses this argument as nonsensical, asserting that even when amended, the constitution would not allow for that as the clause only applies to those with more than one farm or with huge scales of land unused.

Land tenure is a component of the land reform programme aimed at restitution. It has been criticized by the likes Van der Merwe (2018), a Daily Maverick feature writer, of leaving vulnerable groups insecure more than ever than they were under apartheid. He highlights capture of the land by the elite, for instance, traditional leaders and chiefs. These, he continues, take advantage of the fact that there is no law defining who should get farming land, how it should be used, identified or acquired, or what rights the beneficiaries should have. This lack of defining law, accountability and transparency has to some degree paved the way for abuse. It is for this reason that the Zulu King, for instance is fighting against land reform, as the biggest direct beneficiary of the Ingonyama Trust.

Another argument brought across the opinions is the contradictory message of land expropriation without compensation (see Ngwenya, 2018; 9). At the center of it lies the idea of equalizing land ownership to redress the disparities but by making the state custodian of the land, and giving temporary land use rights, this effectively denies tenants tenure of security and ultimately the success of the activities on the farm.

News 24

Regarding private property ownership, there are three articles in this publication on the issue and all authors concur that establishing secure property rights is key. There is criticism of the ANC as, Hall points out, since it took over, it has not used the current legislation effectively and has been pussy footing around private property rights, at the same time, they accuse the government itself of dispossessing poor black people in informal settlements (Hall, 2018; para 17).

Criticism of the land audit also takes prominence in the arguments, with claims that the government statistics are not indicative of the reality when it comes to ownership patterns. This it is argued, would shed light on the unused land the government has at its disposal and has failed to relocate and also expose the corruption and ineptitude of the current government. There is also the fact that more than half of commercial land, it is argued, has changed hands since 1994 and a land audit should realistically reflect that.

Sowetan

There is one opinion article on the *Sowetan* around property rights focus on the public discourse and debate about land expropriation. It plays down the hysteria surrounding people losing their farms and housing, calling for a level-headed debate and calling out fear mongering and threats. Malala (2018), a media practitioner, asserts that the claim for land is similar to the cry on affirmative action and broad-based black economic empowerment. The fear of white people of having their property taken away,

it is argued, is attributed to their privilege which is blinding them from wanting to redress the injustices of the past which have left black people poor. There is also a dismissal of the claims that the property rights regime of the country would fall apart due to land expropriation without compensation.

To this end, most opinion is of the view that the debate should not be, “stymied by the fear mongering of a white minority whose aim is to ensure as little convenience and challenge to privileges it has acquired through injustices.” (2018; para 7).

Still on privilege, Malala also points out how the debate on land also steps on the toes of chiefs and kings who wield control over communal land. He brings up King Goodwill Zwelithini, as an example, who has been very vocal on the issue and has even suggested secession of the KwaZulu Natal from the rest of South Africa.

Summary

As stated earlier above, the constitution of South Africa provides for three rights to land namely, equitable access, the right to tenure security and the right to restitution. With the proposal of the amendment of the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation, there seems to be ambiguity on what it would mean for private ownership of land. A title deed in every economy secures the owner of various economic opportunities for instance, accessing resources from banks. Upsetting this security as some have argued earlier will be detrimental for the economy.

The ANC government sees the state as the custodian of land and ,under this model, some political parties like the DA in opinion pieces argue that this will confine black farmers to perpetual tenancy, relying on the state to increase the tenancy all the time. However, there are some examples which are being thrown around by those who support expropriation without compensation, who attest to farmers, who in spite not having outright ownership of the farm, have made them commercially viable.

The arguments in the opinions raise the concern of unfair restitution, where they are saying that land expropriation without compensation, in as much as it provides a window of opportunity to discuss and address the wrongs of the past, it has to be done in a manner that does not punish some white people who have worked hard to attain and accumulate the property they own. This according to Crosby (2018) is a serious breach of individual rights. However the counter argument remains, that there are those who have accumulated wealth and are beneficiaries of the apartheid and colonial system, hence there is the need for restorative justice yet at the same time private property should be protected.

In summarizing this category, the fear of loss of private property outlines most of the arguments across all the media platforms under study. There is a clear indication of this across all platforms notably on the *Daily Maverick* and *News 24*. Reasons for this fear vary from violation of the right of individuals to own private property to the use of title deeds to obtain loans which in its absence would impact negatively up and coming black business from previously disadvantaged communities. *The Sowetan* took a more neutral stance which is though in favor of land expropriation without compensation highlighting that it challenged the privilege of white people, chiefs and kings who had unfairly benefitted from the past.

5.7.3 Historical Dispossession

The historical dispossession of land in the colonial era and further systematically officialized by the Natives Act of 1913 is blamed for the persisting of the socio-economic injustices prevalent in the country. A significant number of opinion writers use history and their interpretation of it to advance their argument in support of land expropriation without compensation or in rejecting. Some nuanced voices look at history as an opportunity of learning from past wrongs.

Daily Maverick

One opinion on *The Daily Maverick* boldly declares, “Land expropriation, a victory for Africa” (see Thambo, 2018), yet another one on the same publication reads, “Expropriation without compensation is unnecessary and will lead to tears” (Vegter, 2018). These two headlines are a reflection of the arguments and parallel stances on the issue of land. What is interesting to note, however, is that most opinions acknowledge historical dispossession as part of the country’s history but the framing of it differs, with some parties calling it a, “gross injustice”, “original sin” and others, “a mistake”, “unfortunate”.

In advancing the arguments on historical dispossession, history is widely cited but its accuracy is disputed. Sinawo Thambo (2018), the EFF Student Command Chairperson, claimed that Jan van Riebeeck was the first settler to start building fixed structures in the Cape much to the dismay of the local Khoi and San, as that was an abuse of their hospitality. Furthermore, that subsequently led to the frontier wars, the Great Trek of the Afrikaners, the establishment of the Union of South Africa and finally the formalizing of dispossession of the black Africans in 1913 and onwards.

However, some white people (see Corrigan, 2018; Vegter, 2018), claim that when the white people first came into the Cape, they found vast plain lands which was not occupied by anyone and settled there. The argument used to counter the assertions that land was forcefully taken away from the black people. They go on to suggest that since the black people at the time in the Cape could not provide their white counterparts with some form of proof that the land was theirs, a form of security of tenure, then how can they claim such land?” (see Van Heerden 2018). Terrence McNamee (2018), former deputy director of the Brenthurst Foundation, on the one hand preoccupies himself with the question posed by COPE leader, Mosiuoa Lekota in parliament who received a fierce backlash in parliament for questioning the legitimacy of black people as original land owners in South Africa by asking, “Who is our people? Who is not our people?”. In response, the other opinion writers suggest

that the answer lies, “ in a post-democratic South Africa founded on reconciliation and politics but not economic freedom.” (Thambo, 2018; 9).

On the other hand, opinionistas like Thambo (2018), strongly believe the adoption of land expropriation without compensation is a historic moment in the country democracy since 1994. They believe, in the talk of economic emancipation of the previously marginalized groups, land expropriation without compensation is a start to reclaiming the dignity of black people, which was stripped away from them, and would redress the inequalities which resulted. In addition, this school of thought is of the view that central to the resolution to expropriate land without compensation is the view that, why should the land that was forcefully “stolen” from black people be compensated?

There also is an argument that blames the wording of the Constitution and the Freedom Charter of 1955. Some of the opinionistas are of the view that people like Lekota are misguided by the language used in the above documents, which when read have the undertones of unity and reconciliation before justice and equity. They feel like the ANC under then President Nelson Mandela sold out at the negotiating table, settling for political power and leaving the economy of the country in the hands of the minority whites (see Qobo, 2018; Thambo, 2018).

News 24

History features heavily on this site in the discussions on land. One opinion piece traces the dispossession of the land from black people to the partition of Africa, where European powers during the period of Imperialism between 1881 and 1914 divided Africa amongst themselves (Motsau, 2018; para 8). Chabana Chabana quotes Lord Salisbury during that period at an Anglo-French conference joking at dinner reportedly saying, “we have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man’s foot ever trod, we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and lakes and rivers were”.

Jerry Matebesi, the EFF North West spokesperson, goes even further back in his opinion writing of the wars of resistance such as the Frontier War of 1779 and the 1906 Bambatha rebellion, concluding that, “African people remained a subjugated people stripped of human dignity”. This, according to these arguments, is the history of dispossession and to claim otherwise is to distort history and ultimately the answer to the root cause of the socio-economic discrepancies in this age. The history of violence certainly provokes extreme emotions and this is stated by most of the opinionistas who have alluded to history. However, some writers continue calling for rationality in addressing the land issue.

Another pertinent argument Max du Preez, an author and columnist brings across reacting to Lekota’s parliament question of whose land would you take, wrote a lengthy article validating the Cope leader’s struggle credentials, seeming by doing so, giving him the authority to ask the question, “who is our people?” as someone who was part of the struggle. His argument, which Thambo writing for the Daily Maverick touched on earlier is based on the question of, “who will you take land from- the great grandchildren of slaves and indentured Indians? From the descendants of French Huguenots who came to Africa in the 17th century fleeing religious persecution? In pursuing this conversation, de Preez concludes that the only rightful land owners should be the San and the Khoi Khoi as the very first people who occupied the land (2018; para 16). This then throws the spanner into the argument on who can claim the legitimacy of the land outside the San and the Khoi Khoi. There is also an attempt at humanizing of some of the European and Indian settlers as they are generally seen in the light of being violent settlers who came to steal the land from black people.

Addressing the land question in the light of the historical injustices requires sober emotions and proper meditation is one argument that runs across most of the opinions in this publication. Sihle Ngobese (2018;4), spokesperson of the Western Cape Department of Social Development, puts it well when he argues that in redressing the past mistakes, it would benefit the country if the approach taken to redress the land

question is by, “implementing a rational and legal process of land restitution” and, “very cautious, yet very decisive”.

The Conversation

The Conversation has two analyses on the issue of historical dispossession. The one is by Professor Fred Morton, a historian who believes that the public has oversimplified the land question regarding who is entitled to claim. He posits that considering the 1913 Native Act as a cutoff point is complicated and uses Tswana history to drive that point home. In essence, his point is that, prior to the arrival of the colonial settlers, the natives were nomads and had no fixed place of abode and therefore could not claim a set piece of land as their own.

Black anger is another argument brought on the other side of the fence by Prof Steven Friedman, a professor of political studies, notes how the land debate on expropriation without compensation is actually about dignity and equality. He goes on to say the current discontent amongst black people and the calls for land expropriation are an expression of black anger. He agrees with other opinion writers that the amendment of the constitution is not necessary as the current one has provision for that but acknowledges the demands for it. Friedman asserts that the racial tensions caused by economic inequalities are focused on land, even though farming is not South Africa's key point, however, the reason he explains triggers such strong sentiments is that land, “is a symbol of more than an expanse of soil hence for most it has nothing to do with actual agriculture (2018; para 9).

There is also a deeper argument which other opinion writers have alluded to in other publications pointing out the significance of land in black people's social and cultural life. This reference is well articulated by Friedman (2018) in his explanation of the link between the land and Black Consciousness. Historically, he asserts that the demand for land to be returned to its “rightful” owners meant the return of the country to its

people. This also stretched to mean not only ownership of farms, but also for black people getting a seat at the economic table and sharing in the economic pie. This explains the incessant and growing calls by young people demanding land, as most feel, 24 years later since the dispensation of the new government, the ruling party has not lived up to its promises.

Summary

Intrinsically linked to the historical dispossession argument are the following, the 1913 Native Act, inequality, disputed land ownership, racial polarization, land reform, land expropriation without compensation and restitution. Most if not all opinion pieces allude to at least one of these.

At the heart of the calls for land expropriation without compensation is the desire for restorative justice to correct the injustices of the past. Those injustices, as some of the opinion studied concludes, have left lasting legacies of inequalities, racial segregation and divisions which some opinionistas assert are impossible to overlook, disregard, forget and even reconcile.

However, some are of the view that the land issue is a ticking time bomb as it is not only about land, but has come to represent the failed promises to black people since 1994 and a betrayal by their leaders. Others however, see this as a window of opportunity for national reconciliation.

Another school of thought is of the view that extremist could hijack this issue right and left-wingers, who might radicalize the calls for land expropriation without compensation for their own gain, to sow further racial divisions and hatred.

To sum this theme succinctly, it is apparent there were general disagreements on historical accounts which led to the dispossession of land from black people by the colonial settlers. There are three opinions on *News 24* which claim white people never stole land from black people but instead occupied plain lands. There is also discontent regarding the use of the term, “our people”, to mean the native black people only, with others disputing that white people can also be considered as they have also been part of the country for generations and know no other place as home.

This basically questions the legitimacy of the claims that land was taken from black people and that it is unfair to expropriate land from white farmers as they were not directly involved and are now being punished for their ancestors’ wrongs. However, most opinion writers, of all races, across all platforms believe in restitution to amend the past wrongs but differ fundamentally on how it should be done. The majorities of *The Daily Maverick* opinion writers condemn the dispossession of black people by the white settlers and are of the view this should be addressed by executing land expropriation with compensation and secure the right to private property. This would in turn strengthen investment and growth of small business.

News 24 has denialists who are of the view land was never taken from anyone and that white people are being punished to win radicals and left wingers especially those of the EFF. Not all though are of this view, the rest of the opinion writers acknowledging the historical wrong of dispossession however differing on the point of addressing it. One school of thought is of the view that the government needs to compensate those affected and others supporting expropriation without compensation.

The Conversation had two differing articles with the one making the point that black people could not claim the land as historically they were nomads and the other one, looking at the meaning behind the calls for wanting land by black people and how it symbolizes a greater need for economic emancipation and asserting black identity.

All these divergent arguments reflect the complexity and sensitivity of the land issue and rightful calls by some opinion writers to have a sober debate, which instead of focusing on the past wrongs but on ways to remedy the land question to the benefit of all.

5.7.4 Land Expropriation as a Political Move

The articles under this theme raise concerns and arguments of the ruling party's capability to execute land expropriation policy without fear or favor. The arguments vary from the ANC using this emotive issue to cover its failures to it that the time was ripe for the injustices of the past to be addressed.

Daily Maverick

At the center of most commentary is the ANC's incapability of handling the land question sensibly. To this end, there are four articles concerned with the ANC's capability to handle land expropriation without compensation adequately, highlighting concerns of corruption amongst many others. However, its Deputy Secretary Duarte, disagrees saying that the ANC is committed to addressing the past inequalities and has made some progress in land reform. She also goes on to quote former Statesman, Nelson Mandela, in justifying the party's stance saying the policy aims to empower the landless blacks saying, "the progress we are making in land reform is matched in our other efforts to address the poverty that apartheid created. Our land reform programme helps redress the injustices of apartheid. It fosters national reconciliation and stability. It also underpins economic growth and improves household warfare and food security." (2018; para 1).

Duarte in her article adds that in achieving land expropriation without compensation, the ANC will not rush into the matter, thereby putting the country's food security and economy at risk. She quotes the land audit citing the disparities in land ownership

which is disputed by Corrigan (2018) who counter claims the data arguing that Duarte had incorrectly cited the data given and the evidence given is not sufficient for a policy formulation. In the absence of data, the argument continues, government actions are likely to be arranged around an alternative reality of untested assumptions of fact and ideology ultimately proving downright counterproductive.

Contrary to popular thinking, as Memerty asks in his opinion article, that the ANC had got in bed with the EFF to garner votes for the upcoming elections, Duarte dispels the narrative the ANC has been led by the nose before and continues to be so in adopting land expropriation as a policy by the EFF. The EFF on the other hand are basking in that glory alleging that the ANC would not have voted land expropriation without compensation as a policy had they not put pressure on them.

Some arguments in the opinions are concerned with the weakness in state capacity, corruption, capture and the state of inadequate rural infrastructure all contribute to the ineptitude of the ANC carrying out land expropriation without compensation (Corrigan, 2018; 8).

The EFF are credited by others of political sophistication and a thorough understanding of strategy and politics in forging ahead with the motion of land expropriation without compensation in parliament and getting the buy in of the majority ANC. (Thambo, 2018; para 2). Some opinionistas have accused the EFF of bullying other parties in its coalition governments and threatening to pull out should the other partners not support them. A case which has been noted is that of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro where the EFF had said it wanted to punish the DA for not supporting its motion by removing the DA mayor, Athol Trollip. The DA and COPE on the other hand are being accused of protecting white interests by voting against land expropriation without compensation.

At the top of most opinion pieces on land expropriation without compensation is the argument that the ANC simply adopted this policy purely out of political desperation (see du Preez, 2018; para 2, Mkhabela, 2018; 9, Dippenaar, 2018; 4) with five articles written substantiating this argument. . This sentiment is shared by many, who are of the view that it is political opportunism and cheap populism which has driven this policy both from the ANC and the EFF. This they all agree that it has to do with the upcoming elections in 2019 (see du Preez, 2018). There are other opinionistas, who are of the view that this policy has paved way for divisive racial propaganda. These people, it is claimed, spread racial propaganda by encouraging illegal land invasions, placing the blame on poverty onto white people. On the flipside, white people are also accused of spreading false news of alleged fears of farm murders, rape and forced seizures of property by black people. This narrative breeds contempt and tension for an already emotive issue. However some believe that those who are scared of losing land, must be careful on how they convey their fears and also need to understand the historical context of why land expropriation is important (Verwoerd, 2008; para 17).

However, some opinionistas believe that with the departure of former President Zuma fueled by state capture allegations, the opposition parties have little or nothing to give to the electorate in terms of policy. Hence the argument being that, the EFF for example only has two cards to play, land expropriation and anti-white sentiment. Therefore, some suggest that by adopting land expropriation without compensation as a policy, the ANC has stolen the EFF's thunder effectively making their policy its own, thus keeping the radicals in the party (du Preez, 2018). Another point of view is that the EFF (Mkhabela, 2018), with electoral victory or not, has done a remarkable thing of making the ANC abandon its key positions trying to neutralize the EFF's radicalism, something the PAC failed.

Another argument which features central in the opinion is the corruption of the ANC. Opposition parties are using the corruption card as a way of politicking and garnering

votes from the ANC. EFF's Gardee speaks of the, "ANC's past experience of abuse of power, corruption and its injudicious dispensation of patronage for reprehensible purposes." (2018; 8). Other opinion writers and analysts concur, Du Preez quotes the Kgalema Montlante's High Level Panel report which identified the, "lack of state capacity, corruption and bureaucratic tardiness and incompetence" (2018, para 24). Verwoerd bemoans blaming solely the ANC for the failed land reform saying it shows, "a historical amnesia" taking into account the struggle from colonialism.

Noted in the arguments are also the factional battles within the ANC and former President Jacob Zuma is fingered as an instigator of the one faction and the current President Cyril Ramaphosa leading the other. It is reported that on the last day of the conference, in order to uphold the unity of the conference, many in Ramaphosa's camp were against amending the constitution and those in Zuma's camp, the more radical, were in favor of it. To maintain peace it is argued Melanie Vorwoerd (2018), the former ANC MP and South African Ambassador to Ireland, the Ramaphosa camp had to accept the principle of land expropriation without compensation on condition that it would not impact negatively on the economy and food security. This reflects a divided ANC, which has used the emotive land issue to score political points.

This brings into the picture the Zimbabwe argument. Most opinionists against land expropriation without compensation fear South Africa will copy the Zimbabwe land "grabs" which subsequently plunged the country's economy from being the bread basket of Africa to a total economy meltdown leaving millions in dire poverty and unemployed (see Verwoerd, du Preez, 2008, Leeuw, 2008, Matheus, 2008). Many white people were left farm less and had to immigrate to other countries. This fear and white propaganda spread by white extremists globally resulted in Australia offering fast track visa to white South Africans 'facing persecution'.

However, some arguments are positive, stating that the time was ripe for land expropriation and restoration of the dignity of the black people. They note that significant strides had been made to address poverty but there is a small group of

minority white people who hold most wealth while the black majority languishes in poverty. So in this sense, the ANC's bold decision on land expropriation reaffirms its commitment to serving the people and as a multi-party state, the implications of this decision would be seen in the upcoming 2019 elections. Verwoerd (2018) is of the same opinion stating that indeed the land issue needs to be addressed as it is not morally or politically acceptable that the majority of Africans do not own the land. She goes on to say that, as long as Malema doesn't become president, there is no way South Africa would head for the Zimbabwean model.

Sowetan

The two opinions on the *Sowetan* penned by Prince Mashele, a political analyst, regarding land expropriation without compensation as a political weapon question the ruling party's capability to see it through and the EFF seemingly using it as a policy to gain relevance. Mashele penned a scathing article titled, "Land question going nowhere under the incompetent ANC". He dismisses the EFF as pseudo revolutionaries, who are using land for political mobilization which is not sustainable. Mashele uses the PAC as an example of failed black revolutionaries. He describes them as "black loudmouths under the aegis of the EFF, toothless radicals who are relics of the PAC, the black consciousness movement" (2018; para 2). However, that argument is refuted by Matebesi who reckons that, "the EFF has the right to claim victory of the implementation of land expropriation without compensation because it is the only political party that shunned political expediency by adopting land expropriation before the dawn of national elections (2018; 16).

On Corruption in the ANC, Mashele posits this would be one of the impediments which will lead to the failure of land expropriation without compensation. He alleges that the ANC leadership only has its own selfish interests at heart and gives an example of Thandi Modise's farm where pigs were alleged to have become cannibalistic due to hunger. This he points out is a clear example of greed from ANC leaders who could

have easily given the farm, in this case, to those who are battling to secure land (Mashele, 2018; 12).

Mashele (2018) bemoans the loss of sober voices in the conversation on land expropriation without compensation as he believes most rhetoric is based on racial hatred with political leaders like Julius Malema capitalizing on it and Afriforum on the other end, fueling it. These figures, he adds, have drowned the voices of other sensible leaders and seem to be representing their respective races, which he argues is not the case. He calls them, political arsonists who thrive on racial fires and for solutions to be found on land expropriation without compensation, he believes a sober conversation needs to be had.

Summary

The ruling ANC finds itself in conundrum. Firstly, it is widely reported that the reason why land expropriation without compensation was adopted by the ruling party was a political tactic to garner votes for the upcoming 2019 elections. Secondly, some are of the school of thought that the ruling power in a bid to save votes of radical party members to the EFF, which has land expropriation as its policy, emerged out of its elective conference with radical policies. However, to appease those who were not for the policy, it had to add conditions. According to most articles reviewed for this research, this paints a picture of a weak ANC, which has failed its people and has nothing to offer them and has resorted to a populist more radical approach in its quest for relevance.

However, some vehemently, disagree, noting that the time is ripe for such a radical approach as previous ANC leaders have been prevaricating on the issue. They say, the willing buyer willing seller route had not yielded results hence the time to take a radical stance on resolving the issue had come. Some who are in support of land expropriation without compensation have shared their doubts across the media

platforms being reviewed for this research, of the ANC capability and will to expropriate land without compensation. The ruling party, some claim, has a history of corruption, incompetence and lack of will power about land reform. An example according to one opinion writer, Mzwakali (2018) is the ANC allocating a total 3% budget for land reform in the year that expropriation without compensation has been made a policy, a small fraction needed which some allege shows the lack of seriousness of the party.

Other political parties, like the EFF, some opinion pieces have noted are riding the wave to their advantage and claiming victory for the leading in the motion of expropriation without compensation. The DA often accused of protecting white privilege has also been up in arms clarifying their own stance on the issue. Parties like the Afriforum for example, have a lot of material written through the Institute of Race Relations disputing the claims made to them that the Afrikaansers stole the black people's land. The IRR, to some is a mouth piece of Afriforum and a protector of white privilege, so their objectivity on the land issue is questioned.

What can be deduced from the above arguments across all media platforms is the doubt most have on the ruling party's capability of executing land expropriation without compensation. The ruling party is being widely accused of corruption, self-serving interests and using the land issue to attract those who defected to the EFF and also address factional battles in the party, mostly the left wingers.

In essence, there is general skepticism on the motivation behind the adoption of land expropriation without compensation by the ruling party and that it is using it to garner votes for the upcoming presidential elections, claims which the ANC addresses in the opinion and denies. These were reflected across the board, in the *Daily Maverick*, *New 24* and the *Sowetan* with political players contributing to the debate and political analysts, media practitioners and activists highlighting that point. The EFF also features heavily in all the opinion attributed to land used as a political ploy, with all suggesting that the ANC was being held by the nose by the EFF, again, a claim denied vehemently by the ruling party.

5.7.5. Farming and Economic Policies

Land expropriation without compensation is key to concerns, and fears of eventual economic decline, Zimbabwean style. There were suggestions that this policy would negatively affect the agricultural sector, leading it to a decline and ultimately compromising the food security of the country. This section analyzed the articles which spoke of farming and the economy.

Daily Maverick

A lot is said on farming and economic policies and out of the twenty four articles written, five opinions address the issue on this publication and on how for instance land expropriation without compensation would collapse the agricultural sector. The reasoning being that with property exposed to expropriation without compensation by the state, the asset value of landholdings would be destroyed (Corrigan, 2018; para 4). This would mean the farmers would not be able to get the loans they require for production from the banks and the government simply does not have enough to cover the shortfall.

This argument is tied to the belief that black farmers who have been given land have failed to be productive, an argument some make is not backed by historical facts. Mzukisi Qobo (2018), associate Professor and chair of African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, for example, vehemently disputes this notion in his opinion citing, "one of the most self-serving myths about agriculture is that it is such a difficult sector and only white Afrikaans farmers can thrive in it due to intergenerational framing and the hardiness of the group that runs the sector. The success of Afrikaaner farms, is attributed by some to the establishment of marketing boards that facilitated off takes

from farmers, with guaranteed prices, therefore making sure South African farming does not fail, in ways which was denied to black farmers.

Therefore, the argument by some is that black farmers need tenure security which they can use to access loans, training and skills development and mentorship by those who are in the industry. This also dispels the stereotype, it is argued, that black people are not interested in farming as they have not been given the opportunity and if they were, have not been given enough support. This is important as it is noted by de Vos (2018) that young people regardless of age need to be encouraged to farm, as the average age of a farmer in South Africa is 62. Some allude to the statistics which indicate that 40% of South Africans live in the cities therefore an indication of lack of interest in farming.

News 24

Farming and Economic Policies had the most number of opinions written on land expropriation without compensation, with a total of eight whose arguments centered on South Africa heading the Zimbabwean route of economic collapse as a result of its land reform programme. There is fear that land expropriation without compensation would impact badly on South Africa's economy, ruining the current socio economic conditions. Sonet Kruger (2018), in his piece says wherever in Africa citizens chose to expropriate land, they have destroyed their countries and goes on to give Angola and Zimbabwe as examples.

Fubar Bundy (2018), a writer concurs, "very few people in the world are not aware of the fact that its land expropriation policy which has caused the ruin of Zimbabwe. Nkateko Ritshuri (2018), also weighs in adding that former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe expropriated land from white farmers with the belief that it would empower black people but instead resulted in hyperinflation which in turn led to food insecurity, job losses, foreign trade and investment.

Some arguments against land expropriation without compensation are centered on the fear of decline in investment and job losses in the farms (see Ritshuri, 2018). The decline in investment is attributed to non-conducive atmosphere for foreign investment.

The Conversation

Adding to the discussions on expropriation without compensation particularly on statistics, Ben Cousins (2018), clarifies some of the statistics thrown around by politicians and lobby groups in this one article on the publication of the issue, as a way of providing informed and reliable evidence. He notes that most discussions around expropriation without compensation are clouded by, “misrepresentation and lack of data”.

Foremost, he challenges the data provided by AgriSA and the government’s land audit report. Both reports, he says, are based on analysis of the information from title deeds in the national registry. AgriSA, in their report note that the market is much more effective at transferring land, than the state. It argues that 30% of agricultural land via land reform is close to being met. A point disputed by Cousins, questioning the methodology and how they got to that conclusion as the market is not distributing land at that extent as claimed.

Regarding the land audit, he notes that it provides some evidence of continued racial disparities of land ownership, yet it cannot identify the ownership of the 61% of privately owned land. He also adds that there is no information on how many people have benefited from land reform, and therefore the success of the programme (Cousins, 2018; para 14). In fact, he refutes the claim that land reform has failed, saying it is a claim not researched and therefore has no foundation.

Cousins also debunks the myth that black people opt for cash compensation rather than restoration of their land, dismissing it as, “nonsense” (2018; 18) distinguishing between urban claimants who chose cash because restoration was impossible, from rural people who opted for land instead of money.

He also challenges the argument that the government has vast amount of land which can be redistributed to the landless, saying that, “the reality is that most state land in rural areas comprises densely settled communal land which obviously isn’t available for redistribution” (2018; 20).

Summary

As stated earlier, in adopting the policy for land expropriation without compensation, the ANC, attached conditions to it, as long as it did not affect food security and the economy of the country. This it has to be noted did not calm the fears of majority land owners and has instead caused panic and hysteria. What is apparent from most opinion is the fear that South Africa would follow in Zimbabwe’s footsteps and in so doing ruin the food security of the country and the economy. Zimbabwe is referred to in most opinion pieces in a negative light and as an example of failed land reform.

The reasons, as this research has shown, attributed to failed land reform not only in Zimbabwe but here in South Africa are varied. Some opinion writers and analysts attribute the failed reform programme to lack of capital, resources, skills, support from other established farmers and generally black people failing to penetrate the farming sector for various reasons attributed to racism amongst others. The negative farming production, it is feared by most opinionistas would subsequently affect the economy. Statistics of farm ownership and of the amount of land redistributed are being disputed with the government relying on the land audit and the AgriSA audit, and both reports tell a different story.

Afriforum is on the record globe-trotting on a campaign to warn investors not to invest in South Africa or pull out, hoping that would put pressure on the government to abandon land expropriation without compensation. To some, this is a self-seeking attempt which shows that the white people do not care for the rest of the population and consider this anti investment crusade as inflammatory and reckless. However, others, reckon, that is the only way which can force the ANC to back track as they consider this the only way of being heard hence calling on desperate measures. To say the least, this heightens racial polarization and hatred.

Another narrative running through some opinion is that black people are not interested farming, therefore land. They suggest that black people would opt for cash payout instead of land and would rather stay in urban centers instead of farmlands. Others though, suggest that it is the unjust laws of apartheid which caused a situation of where the only place black people can get some work and means to support themselves is going to cities. This they say is one of the direct results of apartheid legislation which left black people to perpetual servitude.

News 24 has most articles written on farming and the economy and how land expropriation without compensation would impact on it. There is one group opinion writers who suggested that land reform was bound to fail and give examples of Zimbabwe and Angola. This, they argue, led to a decline in investment, also a point reflected on *The Daily Maverick*. Shared sentiments on the black people's inability and lack of interest is reflected mainly in *The Daily Maverick* and *News 24*, notably by white opinion writers. This was disputed by black opinion writers who are calling for reform to remedy such stereotypes and open up the agricultural sector with most calling it racist. The divisive nature of this debate on racial lines is made apparent in this section.

Cousins writing for *The Conversation*, tried to counter most of the claims regarding farming and the economy in relation to land expropriation without compensation by providing research on disputed facts. This adds to the conversation researched claims and disputes most self-serving statements made by politicians, political analysts and so forth, separating facts from fiction so to add.

5.7.6 Gender

In terms of gender, it is surprising that there is only one opinion piece on News 24 which speaks about Gender in all the opinion reviewed. The ANC Deputy Secretary Duarte (2018) made reference of it in passing when she was bringing the argument that the country has a long way to go in terms of gender quoting the states which reveal that 71% of farms used for agricultural purposes are owned by men. This is in spite of the fact that women make up 43% of agricultural labor force, producing up to 80% of food on the continent (Jwayi, 2018). It is therefore a concerning, how, women still have limited decision making power and control over the ownership of farms.

However, it is noted that in the *Daily Maverick*, a total of four women contributed to the discussion on land expropriation without compensation and none from *The Conversation*. Out of the 5 opinion writers on the *Sowetan*, two were women and on News 24, four women weighed in on the discussions.

Summary

In all the discussions on land expropriation without compensation, the silence on women's involvement in the land issue is deafening. As mentioned earlier, women comprise a significant proportion of the farming labor force and make up 51% of the population. They are the ones who shoulder the responsibilities of taking care of their families both in rural and urban centers. Yet there are seemingly excluded and underrepresented. It is however not surprising that in a very culturally patriarchal society like South Africa, this is the case.

Women are still struggling to be on an equal footing in the struggle against socio-economic oppression against their male counterparts and as this research shows, their voices are hardly represented and when they are, it is in passing. This is clearly manifest in the lack of coverage and interest on gender in relation to land expropriation

without compensation. There is an astounding silence on how women would be impacted negatively or positively by land expropriation without compensation from across all media houses.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The land issue in South Africa today is undoubtedly at the center of most public debates, conversations and opinion. It is an emotive issue, rooted in colonialization and apartheid, which as history details, led to the direct loss of land by the native black people, driven away to dry arid land by white colonial white settlers and constitutionally

enforced by the Land Act of 1913. The history of this dispossession is generally agreed upon by most people, but differ on how this historical injustice ought to be addressed. However there are two commentators from who disputed particular account of history alleging, when the white settlers came into the country, they occupied unused land or bought it, therefore this notion that the white people stole the land was rubbish. This is particularly telling as it reflects racial polarization around the land debate especially coming from New 24 which has its roots to the National Party and a former apartheid sympathizer.

The divisive nature of the land debate along racial lines can be linked to the long-lasting legacy of colonization and apartheid and how it relates to the current socio-economic, political and cultural disparities facing the country. This has resulted in certain stereotypes for instance being held by people, for instance the expectation that if someone is white they are naturally against land expropriation without compensation and if there are black, the opposite is true and generally coloreds' and Indians have nothing to contribute to the conversation. As this research report found, while this can hold true to some extent, it is not necessarily true as there are also opinion writers who have gone against that belief, therefore proving that it is not entirely the case. There are very rational and nuanced arguments coming from all races and publications.

Since the issue is a hotly debated one, the media as a facilitator of public debate and an agenda setter, is an essential platform for such divergent public discourse, which plays a crucial role in influencing people's perception, attitude, stance and opinions towards issues, through framing and priming an issue to push a particular narrative, and in this case, land expropriation without compensation.

It was therefore essential that this research report analyze the debates, arguments, frames and narratives used in the discussion of land expropriation without compensation in the opinion of the media and discern what message can be deduced from them. At the core of the public sphere theory is the idea that citizens on an equal footing engage and discuss issues of importance of the day. Platforms are given to

politicians, political analysts, advocacy lobbyists and ordinary citizens to mention a few and how they engage on the land matter.

The research report has shown active engagement of the opinionistas, either responding to each other through responding to each other's opinion articles, as in the case of political analyst Ruth Hall and the EFF's Godrich Gardee engaging on the constitutionality and the EFF's policy on land expropriation without compensation. This is also seen in reaction to news stories, in the instance of Max du Preez, a media practitioner defending COPE's President Mosiuoa Lekota's struggle credentials. There are also young voices that contribute to the discussion on the land issue with the EFF's student command chair, Sinawo Thambo, Mcebo Dlamini, the Wits SRC former president and former DA head of policy Ngwenya engaging on the issue. This reflects the diversity of the opinion writers.

However, this research report noted that, whilst land expropriation without compensation is a topical issue, and is discussed widely in the media, the people engaging through opinion writing are not representative of the majority of South Africans. Firstly, South Africa is a country with a black majority; it is disproportionate that the ratio of the majority of white opinion writers are more than black people in general.

There are myriad reasons for why this is the case explored in the research, tracing it back to historical dispossession, pre 1913 and post 1913, which automatically made white people more privileged than black people economically, whilst systematically impoverishing and creating reliance of black people. 24 years since the end of apartheid such effects are reflected in the education system, which research has found that there are very few black academics and experts as only a few black students complete tertiary. This is mirrored in the opinion, as most opinion writers are literate, with some expertise in their different fields and are able to be given the space to share their thoughts or research on issues, hence the disproportionate numbers. The Conversation is one such stark example, with only four white male writers.

This also speaks into gender disparities. Despite women being the majority of the farm laborers and also possibly affected, their voices are silent. In all the articles only one article spoke on women and land expropriation. Amongst women opinion writers, except for Jwayi, do not discuss the effects of land expropriation without compensation in regard to the role of women and what they stand to benefit. There is also a silence on the traditional laws and how they exclude women from acquiring land due to the patriarchal nature of the traditional and tribal systems.

Black people writing about land expropriation without compensation are also not purely representative of the majority of black people who stand to gain from this exercise, the poor people in the farms and former Bantustans. Most black writers, this research has found, are political analysts, politicians, academics and media practitioners. They are mostly urban-based, talking on behalf of farm dwellers who are mostly illiterate or do not have access to the media platforms as contributors and are less known. The young people writing are not representative of the rural young people and, if coming from universities, do not come from historically disadvantaged ones, but rather prestigious ones, like Wits University, in the instance of Mcebo Dlamini.

Of the identified media, *the Daily Maverick* had more negative articles written across all the five selected media. Looking at the profiles of the opinionistas writing for the publication, they are mainly neo-liberals who are concerned with sustained economic growth through free markets which allow for free markets, and the right to private property with minimum state interference in economic and social affairs. They also seemed pre-occupied with discouraging the amendment of the constitution, arguing that it is unnecessary and waste of time as Section 25 has such a provision already. Notably there are quite a number of influential politicians writing from the ruling ANC, the DA, Afriforum and the EFF who shared views reflective of their party stances. There is also a fear that the threat to private property might also extend to urban areas. A fear indicated by most urban dwellers.

The ANC as portrayed by some opinion writers is a party in decline desperately seeking political redemption and has now resorted to using the land debate as a political bait to win favor with the majority of the people especially the poor in the face of corruption and maladministration. This narrative runs across opinion in mostly the *Daily Maverick*, *News 24* and *Sowetan* where writers are basically highlighting the failings and ineptitude of the ruling party. The *Sowetan* which has a history in the liberation struggle is notably much nuanced in its coverage on the land issue, writing about it in balanced terms and bringing a sober headed argument to the table for ways as peacefully executing land expropriation without compensation.

The political card narrative is refuted by some who insist that the time for land expropriation without compensation is ripe, to finally addressing the injustices of the past. This argument features prominently in most arguments especially in the *Sowetan*, *News 24* and *the Conversation*. It is also prominent with politicians, notably the ANC and the EFF. The latter who are perceived by some in opinion as left wingers, radicals and communists for their belief in the state being sole custodians of land amongst other things.

This argument is supported by those who stand to lose, who argue that the process would be flawed, unfair to white people leaving them vulnerable to white genocide and is against international statutes of the right to property. This view is mostly held by lobby group Afriforum who have written extensively on it and have accused the ANC and those who support land expropriation without compensation to have distorted history as the land was never stolen, also cited reverse racism and lack of objectivity on compensation as some white farmers had worked hard to acquire the land they have and aren't direct beneficiaries of apartheid.

The fear of the South African economy crumbling down, Zimbabwe style preoccupied the majority of opinion writers, especially on *News 24* stating that the will also result in a threat to food security, a point denied by the ruling party, the ANC. Some believe

that this could be an opportunity to deracialize and open up the agricultural industry to more black people.

In conclusion, it is as Marianne Merten (2018) succinctly put it, “ a vortex of deep-seated lingering pain among black South Africans arising from colonial and apartheid dispossession and loss – and the fundamental need for social justice alongside constitutional imperatives of redress – but also power politicking and patronage. It is steeped in clashing economic interests, with those already holding power, be they white farmers or traditional leaders, enjoying a leveraged position to maintain privileges, and also the blunt reality of 21st century financial services based on loans against assets, mortgages and lasting liabilities.” (para 1).

In the midst of calls of transformation, the media still is mainly representative of the white people discussing land expropriation without compensation, which is disproportionate to the country having black people as the majority. This leads to further stereotyping and expectations of people to take a particular stance on land because of their race, which is not true as there are white people who are pro land expropriation without compensation and vice versa. However, it seems the colored people's voices are drowned in the discussions on the land issue.

The biggest disappointment was Isolezwe, which had no articles written during the period under study. The paper was chosen initially as of keen interest as it would have reflected the views of the traditional Zulu people. The Zulu King and sole custodian of the Ingonyama Trust, the largest piece of land in the country, has made active threats and declarations should land expropriation without compensation extend to tribal lands. This has caused consternation to some white farmers as they believe the land expropriation without compensation is selective and targeted and pursuing them.

Most opinion writers are male and there is little women representation amongst the opinion writers and on how land expropriation without compensation could affect them

or provide an opportunity for empowerment as most rural households are headed by women. Women seem to be excluded from the conversation despite being the majority both in population numbers and also workers on the land and farms.

Women in South Africa remain in the fringes of society and it is imperative that they are included as many face insecure land tenure as wives and kins due to the patriarchal set up of society. The media should actively reach out to women, to give a voice to the voiceless. The media has to take that first step to reach out to women, meet them, engage with them in their space and make sure their views are carried in the media space.

There is a problem of elites dominating the discussion in media , and the topics tend to focus on certain economic issues rather than farming communities and their experiences. Black readership papers seem underwhelming in their addressing of the land issue, and the issue of land tenure on traditional land is really not discussed at all. The debate is also somewhat skewed towards the issue of the constitutional amendment, and farming land, and also the question of politicking by the ANC and EFF takes a significant amount of the attention. So politics dominates at the end of the day, which in reality, put the needs of those who stand to benefit from land expropriation without compensation on the side.

Race appears not to be a factor in the positions taken, and the data from the research did not point that explicitly. This can be used as an opportunity to research further if at all, race is indeed a factor or not. The lack of black academics writing for publications like *The Conversation* , need to be scrutinized as there are black academics who could add value to the discussions on land. The ideas on land expropriation without compensation land reform come from the media, academics, politicians to mention some, but it does come across as if the ones engaging on the matter, are only a few privileged ones and not representative of the people on the ground and hence the sentiments that the media represents the elites. This results in lack of trust in the media and its intentions as an instrument which should foster national debate and matters.

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