

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND



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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HOW FOUR SELECTED NEWSPAPERS
FRAMED THE COVERAGE OF THE DEATH OF MTHOKOZISI NTUMBA**

MA RESEARCH REPORT

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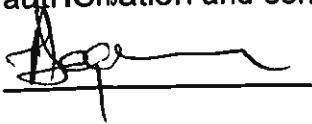
MS. AMUKELANI MAGOMANI

SUPERVISOR: DR D BALLIAH

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree
in Journalism and Media Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the
University of the Witwatersrand

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Journalism and Media Studies in the faculty of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that authorisation and consent to carry out this research was obtained.



Amukelani Magomani

06 February 2023

ABSTRACT

For years, traditional media such as newspapers have played a pivotal role in circulating news and information for public consumption. South Africa has recently experienced an increase in news on police brutality cases against protesters on various platforms covered by the newspapers. This study analyses the framing of media coverage by *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *Sowetan* newspapers of the pre-and post-trial of the law enforcement officers charged with the killing of Mthokozisi Ntumba. This case was centred on forceful actions by police officials to disperse a crowd during a student protest. Although Ntumba was not amongst the protesting crowds, he was shot and killed by police officers. The study aims to discover the ways in which Ntumba's case was reported by the four selected newspapers. The nature, aim, objectives and contextual significance of this study dictates that a qualitative research approach be used. The study was underpinned by the framing theory. Qualitative data was collected using the content analysis method, with purposive sampling used to select all textual units that contributed towards answering the study's research questions. A sample of 83 articles was selected on the basis that the articles reported the news of the killing of Ntumba and the follow up court trial of the police officers. Qualitative framing analysis was used to study the media coverage of the killing of a bystander and police brutality in South Africa. From the study's findings, it was revealed that different frames were used by the four selected newspapers in the coverage of Ntumba's case. The frames used by the selected newspapers highlighted the extent to which the issue of police brutality in the country has led to the death of people and other underlying issues that exist due to police brutality during protests.

Keywords: Framing, Media Reports, Newspapers, Police Brutality

DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr. Risimati Josias and Mrs. Tsakani Gladys Magomani, and all
endometriosis warriors worldwide.

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Jeremiah 29:11. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declared the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

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“Mintirho ya vulavula”

Contents

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	vii
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	viii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Introduction and Background of the Study	1
1.2. Research Problem	2
1.3. Aim and Objectives	3
1.4. Research Questions	3
1.5. Rationale/Significance of the Study	4
1.6. Delimitation of the Study	4
1.7. Structure of the Study	4
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1. Introduction	6
2.2. Background of the Selected Newspapers	6
2.3. Global perspective on Media Bias	8
2.4. Bias in the South African Media	9
2.5. Police Brutality	12
2.6. Protests and the Police	13
2.7. Conclusion	14
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	15
3.1. Introduction	15
3.2. Framing Theory	15
3.3. Previous Research underpinned by Framing Theory	16
3.4. Conclusion	18
4. METHODOLOGY	19
4.1. Introduction	19
4.2. Research Approach	19
4.3. Research Design	19
4.4. Data Collection Technique	20
4.5. Sampling	21
4.6. Data Analysis Method	22

4.7. Ethical Considerations.....	23
4.8. Conclusion	23
5. DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	24
5.1. Introduction	24
5.2. Data Analysis	24
5.2.1. Sowetan Newspaper.....	28
5.2.2. Daily Sun Newspaper	29
5.2.3. Daily Maverick Newspaper	32
5.2.1. Mail & Guardian Newspaper	34
5.3. Findings and Discussions	37
5.3. Conclusion	39
6. CONCLUSION	41
6.1. Summary of the Study	41
6.2. Limitations and Comments for Further Research.....	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY	45
APPENDIX.....	53

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Representation of the frames used in analysing data from the newspaper	
.....	34
Figure 1: Entman frame analysis model (1993).....	31
Figure 2: Graphical representation of the total number of newspaper articles analyzed between 11 March 2021 and 16 August 2022.....	33
Figure 4: Four police officers accused standing trial for killing Mthokosizi Ntumba..	
.....	41

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

African National Congress - ANC

Economic Freedom Fighters - EFF

Independent Audit Bureau - IAB

Independent Police Investigative Directorate - IPID

Living Standard Measure - LSM

Mail & Guardian - M&G

Right2Protest - R2P

South African Broadcasting Corporation - SABC

South African Police Service - SAPS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction and Background of the Study

The South African Police Service (SAPS) has struggled to foster a respectable reputation as a policing agency especially through the media since its transformation after 1994 (Motsepe,2020). The Institute for Security Studies (n.d.) state that despite their duty to protect the public from crime and violence, the police, sometimes engage in unethical practices such as corruption, brutality and torture. Their role in inflaming protests has been in the limelight ever since the killing of Marikana miners on 16 August 2012 by police. Although, protests are entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa as a method of bringing important societal issues to the attention of government, private sector and society, it is the responsibility of the police to protect the protestors (Right2Protest Project, 2017). However, the police's function during protests is to provide safety and public order policing to avoid any protesters experiencing harm or injuries as well as to protect essential infrastructure.

This study focuses on the case of a 35-year-old bystander, Mthokozisi Ntumba, who was shot and killed by police during a student protest at the University of the Witwatersrand (TimesLIVE,12 March 2021); a case which highlighted police brutality in the country (Independent Police Investigative Directorate [IPID], 2018/2019). Ntumba was shot while leaving a nearby clinic in Braamfontein, Johannesburg during the Wits students' protest as reported by the Daily Maverick newspaper (18 March 2021). The news around the killing of Ntumba once again focused media attention and public debates on police brutality and conduct around the country.

Still fresh in the minds of South Africans is the memory of the killing of the Marikana miners during a labour protest. 34 miners were shot and killed by the police on August 16, 2012 as a result of participating in a non-violent protest seeking improved pay and better living circumstances (Alexander, Lekgowa, Mmope, Sinwell, & Xezwi, 2013, Sinwell & Mbatha, 2016). A week prior to the day of the shooting ten people died, including two private security guards and two law enforcement officers (Sinwell, 2017). According to Baker (2014), the police's deployment was necessary due to the violence and destruction at the mine. IPID¹ Strategic Plan reported that "between the year 2013 and 2018, police brutality did not involve a one specific crime, but rather

¹ IPID is an independent police complaints body established by the national legislation to investigate any alleged misconduct of, or offence committed by, a member of the South African Police Service and Municipal Police Service (IPID Strategic Plan, 2020-2025).

comprises a variety of crimes that are difficult to track.” The case of Mthokozisi Ntumba made headlines and trended on social media platforms such as Twitter under the hashtags #MthokozisiNtumba, #JusticeForMthokozisi to highlight police brutality in South Africa. According to reports in the Daily Maverick newspaper (Daily Maverick, 2022), “the police officers pleaded not guilty at the first hearing of the trial.” Given the background, this study set to examine and analyse the frames utilised by the newspapers in the media coverage of Ntumba’s killing and the problem of police brutality in South Africa.

1.2. Research Problem

Levry (2020) has conducted a study on police misconduct, and how mainstream media cover it in the United States of America. The study revealed that mainstream media exaggerate or hide information from the public (Levry, 2020). Shultz (2019) carried out a study on the media coverage of law enforcement and its effects on the officers’ duties to the public. The study found that media is leaning more on the police side, and the public is beginning to question their credibility. In other countries, including South Africa, the literature on how the media cover police brutality cases as well as in the case of Ntumba’s killing is critically lacking and academic scholarship is limited.

Media research shows that “the public’s knowledge of events can be influenced by news media in a variety of ways, including agenda-setting, encouraging people to consider certain issues when judging political leaders, and influencing people to vote for a specific contestant” (Dalton, Beck & Huckfeldt, 1998; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Furthermore, news media can shape public perceptions of a particular subject or incident. Kinder and Sanders (1996) argue that “frames are interpretive frameworks anchored in political discourse.” Frames, on the other hand, exist within the mind; they are cognitive structures that aid individual citizens in making sense of issues. According to some researchers “neglecting the sources’ involvement in framing also means ignoring fundamental power questions” (Carragee & Roefs, 2004; Reese, 2001; Vliegenthart & Van Zoonen, 2011). The reason for conducting this study is that there is lack of literature that addresses the nature of media coverage on police brutality in South Africa.

Duncan (2016) in her book, *Protest Nation*, states that the “SAPS institution is clearly stressed.” This is due to the high rates of crime in the country as well as the ratio of the police to the population. The pressure that comes with being a police officer is immense and cannot be ignored. Moreover, the pressure or stress experienced by the police as well as the media attention during protests in South Africa often put the police conduct in the spotlight. These were

lessons drawn from the Marikana massacre and the #FeesMustFall protest which changed focus on how the police respond to protest. Nonetheless, with the issue of police brutality in the spotlight, particularly following the death of miners working at the Marikana platinum mine in Rustenburg (Gernetzky, 2022), and the death of the 16-year-old Eldorado Park Nathaniel Julies who was shot by police (Shuma, 2022), the issue of cannot be ignored. One would ask whether every protest should end in a loss of life. Moreover, does being black warrant for extreme hostility from the South African police service as some of these cases suggest? It raises questions on why a few researchers such as Bruce (2000, 2002a), Cawthra, (1994), and Kubheka, (2017), have conducted studies on police brutality while the issue has been extensive. Although there has been media coverage on the case of Mthokozisi Ntumba, there is no literature to my knowledge that critically assesses this coverage. In the absence of other studies focusing on the case of Ntumba, this study hopes to contribute to an understanding of framing in the news media on police brutality during a protest.

1.3. Aim and Objectives

The study aims to analyse the reporting by *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Sowetan* newspapers on Mthokozisi Ntumba's case - a bystander killed by the police officials and analyse possible indications of bias during media coverage of the Wits students' protest. For the study to address the main aim of analyzing the frames used by the selected newspapers in coverage of Ntumba's killing, the following objectives were formulated:

- To explore the framing of media coverage on police brutality in the case of Ntumba as reported in *Sowetan*, *Daily Sun*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian* newspapers.
- To compare and contrast the media coverage of the Ntumba case by the four selected newspapers, and analyse their languages and approaches used when covering and reporting.
- To analyse and explain indications of bias during the media coverage.

1.4. Research Questions

As part of its broad focus, the study will seek to answer the following key research questions:

- How did *Sowetan*, *Daily Sun*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian* newspapers report in the police brutality case of Ntumba?
- How the four newspapers differed in their coverage of the Ntumba case (I don't know if there is a 'why') and have in common in terms of their media coverage during the Wits students' protest?

- What biases were identified in the media coverage of Ntumba's case?

The answers to the preceding questions will emerge from the content analysis that will be used in assessing the data. The questions will be discussed in the context of the 83 articles to be extracted from the four selected newspapers. These questions will be referred to again in the concluding chapter of the study.

1.5. Rationale/Significance of the Study

The study highlights a substantial event in South Africa where a bystander was killed by the police during a protest. Moreover, the police officials allegedly accused in most cases getacquitted on the charges laid against them (see. *Mail & Guardian*, 19 March 2021 & 16 August 2022; *Daily Maverick*, 13 May 2021; *Sowetan*, 11 July 2022). An example is the Andries Tatane case, Marikana Massacre and many other unknown to the media and the public (Duncan, 2016). The study attempts to contribute new knowledge and to reduce the existing literature gap in the field of media studies and journalism particularly on media coverage of events that affect the South African society. In addition, this study is crucial as it highlights the role of the media in framing police conduct in society. This view is alluded to by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), who argue that the media has a great influence on how society consumes information and form an opinion. The hope of this study is to provide further understanding of how framing can be better understood in a South African context. Furthermore, the study will also show how different media houses package their stories according to their target market.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on the media coverage of Ntumba's case, reported in *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Sowetan* newspapers. To make it manageable, the study will focus on only 83 articles reported during the period between March 1, 2021 and August 30, 2022. This researcher is of the view that the 83 articles selected are broad representation of all articles reported in other media coverage in respect of the case in question.

1.7. Structure of the Study

The study is composed of six sections. **Section 1** provides the introduction and background of the study. The chapter also outlines the study's problem, aims and objectives, research inquiries and the rationale for the study. Lastly, the chapter provides the delimitation of the study. **Section 2** focuses on the review of literature which provides the background of the research problem by providing what other scholars have researched. The chapter establishes background of the four selected newspapers, bias in the South African media, global overview on media bias, police brutality and lastly, protests and the police. **Section 3** outlines the theoretical framework, which

examines the applicable theory related to this study. Framing theory is the theoretical framework adopted. **Section 4** unpacks the methodology approach which addresses and clarifies the research method, research design, collection of data technique, sampling, data analysis as well as ethical considerations. **Section 5** provides data analysis, findings and discussions. The chapter will deliberate on the findings obtained in conjunction with the research objectives. **Section 6** is the final chapter or the concluding chapter that evaluates whether the aim of the study has been achieved and research questions answered. Moreover, the limitations and recommendations for future research are highlighted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The aim of this section is to present the literature by various scholars about the coverage of police brutality, as the literature relates to this study. The study also provides perspective on media bias in the South African context and the global society. Boote and Beile (2005) are of the view that “literature review is the foundation of every research project as it puts the research into perspective.” Diana (2012) on the other hand, states that “the review of relevant literature helps to classify some gaps and compare the present study with related situations.” Furthermore, Morule (2015: 7) opines that in the literature review, the researcher is expected to explore studies that have key influence in the current study.

2.2. Background of the Selected Newspapers

Research materials selected for this study included newspapers in their print and online forms. These newspapers were selected because they cover the largest variety in terms of race, gender, and demographics from an audience perspective in South Africa. The researcher felt this was important as it would provide the most balanced analysis.

The *Daily Maverick* is a daily publication that is primarily online but also available as a physical copy in selected stores. It was founded by Branko Brkic in 2009; the publication is a combination of news, investigations, analyses, and opinions (*Daily Maverick*, n.d.). The publication prioritises both in-depth investigative reporting (weekend edition) as well as daily political, entertainment, and sports news. By concentrating on feature-length reporting, the *Daily Maverick* filled a niche in quality journalism to be found online (*Daily Maverick*, 2012). The *Daily Maverick* content model is made up by the following combination which seeks to ensure a distinct approach. These include external influence, writing style, publishing and editing, authors and a newswire copy (*Daily Maverick*, 2012). Duncan (2016) argues that *Daily Maverick*, post-Marikana massacre developed an area of specialisation on protest and strikes coverage but much of its coverage was confined to the platinum belt. *Daily Maverick*’s success as a publication has been to consistently provide high class quality journalism (*Daily Maverick*, 2012).

The *Sowetan* was established after the apartheid government banned a number of black newspapers in the 1980s. A group of journalists bolstered by legendary editors such as Aggrey Klaaste and Percy Qoboza founded the English-language paper the *Sowetan* and it set out to capture the stunning details of the liberation struggle. While at its core it covered political issues

and news, the paper also sought to engage communities in nation-building actions and

initiatives. Aggrey Klaaste through his leadership created a culture of discussion and engagement through the *Sowetan* newspaper and became a prominent institution of public life (Cowling, 2014). Today, *Sowetan* is available in all nine South African provinces and is an indispensable source in understanding South Africa's history and current events.

Daily Sun is a tabloid daily newspaper launched in 2002 by Media24, a division of Naspers group. According to their website (Daily Sun, n.d.), readers in and around major urban areas are among their target demographics." These readers are predominantly black. *Daily Sun* is available in all nine South African provinces. According to Narrative (2022), "in August 2022, South Africa had 17 news websites with *Daily Sun* standing at 1.21 million readerships." Narrative is the official measuring partner of the Independent Audit Bureau (IAB) South Africa, provides precise traffic figures for the country's leading websites. *Daily Sun* gave voice to a significant portion of the population that had remained marginalised in the post-apartheid mediated public sphere by creating a mass readership of poor Black working class readers (Bosch & Wasserman, 2023).

Mail & Guardian newspaper was founded by a group of journalists in 1985 after the apartheid government forced the closure of two liberal newspapers. The paper built up an international following as a vocal critic which led to run-ins with the apartheid government and its eventual suspension in 1988 and subsequent change of name to the *Mail & Guardian*. At this time the paper was an important source of news for people interested in South African politics. "At a time when most newspapers labelled the African National Congress (ANC) a terror group, the paper put human faces to ANC leaders and provided a fair portrayal of their activities and policies. Additionally, it was the first newspaper whose news was not divided on the issue of colour.

The intention for all South African newspapers started in the 1980s had the objective of targeting either black (*Sowetan*) or white markets (*Business Day*). On the other hand, *The Star* and *The Rand Daily Mail* were two newspapers that catered to black and white readers, published separate "white" and "township" versions (Tomasselli & Louw, 1991). The newspaper was made up of liberal professionals, academics, and business leaders who self-funded it in an increasingly hostile political climate. These newspapers are amongst South Africa's largest publications and as mentioned, cover the majority of the population in the country.

The four selected newspapers for this study cover the news in a common *lingua franca* which is English. Although the language is the same, the coverage or type of reporting differs in terms of the style of writing, narration of stories and the target audiences for each newspaper. *Daily*

Maverick and *Mail & Guardian* target high-end audiences with Living Standard Measure (LSM) from 7 to 10, whereas *Sowetan* lies in the middle LSM and *Daily Sun*, a tabloid newspaper caters for the majority of lower LSM between 1 to 4 (Wasserman et al., 2021). Three of the four newspapers bolster position by circulating news in both print and digital platforms while *Daily Maverick* is dominating the digital space and few print newspapers in selected stores contribute to their readership rate.

Daily Sun, *Sowetan* and *Daily Maverick* are known as daily newspapers which publish news each day of the week. *Mail & Guardian* on the other hand is known as a weekly newspaper appearing once a week, mostly on Fridays. Duncan (2016) suggested that the *Mail & Guardian* and the *Daily Maverick* made significant differences to protest coverage. Hence this role of these two papers in the coverage of Ntumba's case is importance to note. *Daily Sun* on the other hand as tabloid newspaper known for diverting readers from serious news to entertainment (Sparks cited in Bosch & Wasserman), however in the case of Ntumba, it is necessary to analyse how the newspaper covered the news and the different frames used in the coverage.

2.3. Global perspectives on Media Bias

The debate about media coverage of police brutality is not unique to South African journalism. The issue has received attention for some time and in South Africa it dates back during the apartheid period. Nelson (1996) state that a combination of factors that results in media bias: Nelson states that news has become a product; they are controlled and influenced by governments and after business interest. Moreover, media sources also influence the direction which the narrative takes often because they have their own agenda. Boyle, McLeod and Armstrong (2012) on the other hand, state that protest news coverage is formed by aspects ranging from the biases of individual journalist, to the norms and practices of the news industry to the ideology of professions and culture. Such factors have been shown to limit news diversity by giving more importance to mainstream sources while disregarding or overlooking others (Brown 1979 cited in Boyle et al, 2012).

According to Gentzkow and Shapiro (2006), media houses attempt to establish a reputation for truthful reporting, and consumer assessments of the quality of news sources depend on prior beliefs. Nelson (1996) describes bias as "the tendency for or against a particular point of view". Nelson further state that bias may be the product of unintended or deliberate actions on the part of the media gatekeepers, but nevertheless exposes audiences to a tilted reality that may not be in their best interests. The media's portrayal of significant issues is neither impartial nor entirely

truthful (Nelson, 1996). Stories use framing tools by emphasising some viewpoints while downplaying others which demonstrate a deliberate angle to the stories. The media's ideological and financial conditions also have an impact on the news, in addition to deliberate manipulation (Nelson, 1996). Considering the media attention and impact the story of Ntumba has, the framing tools used by the four selected newspapers reveal how the paper shaped their reporting on the news.

News coverage of the George Floyd's killing by publications such as the *New York Times* in January 2021, is one of the examples from an international point of view. The *New York Times* reported on how a former "Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck for about 8 minutes" (Hills et al, 2022). Floyd later died in hospital. The coverage by the media, in the case of George Floyd, was evident that objective and balanced reporting had taken place as all the angles of the story were covered by the *New York Times* (Hills et al, 2022). Factors such as racism, police brutality were also mentioned as some of the motivating factors.

From the preceding discussion, one could also mention that the issue of media coverage is also evident in other African countries. An example of this police brutality is the case of "Nelson Chamisa, a Zimbabwean politician, and the current President of the Citizens Coalition for Change", which is an opposition political party in the country. On the 19th of February 2022, *News24* reported on how a supporter was allegedly beaten by police officers for holding car rallies. This media coverage was objective and impartial considering the political interference on the media in the country when covering news on ruling party versus opposition parties. Political differences or intolerance were clearly reported as the main causes of this brutality (*News24*, 2022).

2.4. Bias in the South African Media

While there have been several scholarly works that highlighted numerous issues in media coverage in South Africa, there is no recent work that compares and/or contrasts media coverage of newspapers during protests in South Africa. Duncan (2016) argues that journalists quickly jump to the conclusion that protests are about service delivery (in the case of Wits student protest which was about fees), whereas in fact, they are often driven by a variety of issues. South Africa has experienced numerous violent protests, xenophobic attacks which have attracted the attention of various media coverages at national, regional and global levels. Niyitunga (2021) argues that there is prevalence of protests in South Africa that have affected economic growth, stability and security. These protests have led many radios, TVs and

Newspapers to get involved in covering them and reporting the truth to the public.

There are so many challenges that have affected media coverage in South Africa. Among these challenges is the media bias. The biasness in the media coverage has influenced the output of South African news publications; in terms of selection of news, framing of news content and impact on the readers as well as the newspaper reputation. It is either the newspapers covers the news as it is or are careful in their reporting. According to Lloyd (2013: 12), “during apartheid, the government were said to have colluded with the mainstream print media either directly or indirectly.” Moreover, the big four publishing companies were largely owned by big-capital which controlled the English language press, or Afrikaans business interests (Lloyd, 2013) and were in business with the government.

The apartheid system had a role to play in the situation of South Africa media today. During apartheid restrictions that were placed on the media by the then regime controlled how the media operates in the country. These restrictions included the banning of reporting unrest in society and the banning of open-air meetings (van Grondelle, 2019:9). During this time, anti-apartheid activists and protesters were not merely imprisoned but also banned; making it illegal for media to quote or report the events surrounding them as they were (van Grondelle, 2019: 8). The issue here was to prohibit the media from reporting impartial news or information because they were to be considered as doing illegal activities. This therefore brought about bias in the media which led to many issues of social movements and activism not to be brought to light.

However, with the end of the apartheid system, the media inherited the same division which continued to cover and echo divided or partial news (Van Grondelle, 2019). It has been argued that the transition process towards a democracy also entailed a major challenge for the South African media; still, the industry suffers from bias and lacks of independence as most of the newspapers are influenced by the ruling party, according to Van Grondelle, 2019. This is made evident in the Wits students’ protests whereby, police officials used heavy and forces against the protesters and the way newspapers reported the protests (*Sowetan*, 10 March 2022). It was believed that post-apartheid would bring about fair and effective communication systems that allow unbiased media coverage (Steyn, 1994: 44). Van Grondelle (2019: 8) argues that the media in South Africa remains “being too white and too trapped in the attitudes and habits of the past”. Van Grondelle (2019: 8) quoted Mandela and said that “media was still run by embittered conservative whites who were out of touch with black society and only hired black people to avoid being accused of racism”. The Oxford Analytica (1998: 2) accused “black journalists of following the lines set by their white employers to be sure of promotion.”

Govenden (2019) is of the view that the ANC's adoption of the media charter in 1992 that recognised that diversity of media content is a cornerstone of democracy. The ANC's policy role in the post-apartheid era shaped the current media today. Moreover, the ANC argument that all citizens have the right to participate in societal decision-making processes but doing so demands individuals be well-informed and have access to opposing viewpoints.

Following such accusations, transformation of the media in South Africa has remained an unfinished task. Ownership constitutes one economic component of a media organisation (Govenden, 2019). Moreover, "the power of ownership has possible effects on an organisation, its editorial police and direction, editorial independence and editorial content" (Govenden, 2019: 84). The challenges and biases have been visible in the areas of ownership, content and staffing. While staffing went through drastic changes via an affirmative action plan that became a legal requirement for every media company, the question of who owns the media, and the content of the media coverage, and how to publicise it has remained unchanged. The changes that were brought about by the staffing have not changed the content and character of newsrooms.

Wasserman (2019) stated that "the clear ideological division in the media landscape has blurred to a large extent and there seem to be some sort of elite consensus around things like corruption or free market", as you will for instance "unlikely get a newspaper that supports socialism" (Wasserman, 2019). On the other hand, Pelser (2019) claimed that is "self-censorship", which leads to "a reluctance to ventilate opinions that might be regarded as regressive or right wing". There is lack of freedom for the journalist as they fear for their lives, hence work not for the benefits of the nation but work to preserve their employments. Pelser (2019) further stated that "an added level of freedom to really interrogate; to say maybe this is wrong, maybe this is right, without constantly thinking about the outcome" is needed in the current media coverage in South Africa.

The presence of fear, lack of freedom and bias in the media in South Africa was adopted from the apartheid regime. Hartley (2019) stated that, the fear of losing readership has contributed to today's media challenges. This is evident in how the SABC has been accused of its relationship with ruling party which is the main funder as the government in power. For newspapers, the advertisers are the main influence on how news is covered. It has also been argued that there have been challenges in terms of finding a balance between commercialism and the news coverages. The South African Audience Foundation (SAARF) as cited in Lloyd (2013) state that only 30 percent of the adult population in South Africa reads a daily newspaper. Moreover, most

newspapers still target the urban elites (with exceptions) and do not distribute outside major cities. However, the situation may be different today with more people accessing the news on digital platforms and internet.

2.5. Police Brutality

South Africa has a long history of police brutality. Bruce (2000: 4) describes police brutality as an excessive use of force by the police. It is important to first look at the history of police brutality from a South African perspective. According to Brogden and Shearing (1993), the SAPS is one of the most important sectors in our communities. However, during the time of apartheid, the police were known to be violent and only lenient to a specific race (Cawthra, 1994). Post 1994 period, that is, after the dawn of democracy, it was expected that the image of the SAPS would change and embrace the rainbow nation (Cawthra, 1994). Rainbow Nation, Buqa (2015) refers to unity among cultures within the nation of South Africa is made up of its multi-racial population and multiculturalism. In the context of this study, the role of the police is understood to be one that unites communities and not segregate them according to racial profiling and association to crime based on skin colour. The image of police during Apartheid was that of fear and extreme violence perpetuated at black people (Zondi & Ukpere, 2014), whereas the ideals of a rainbow nation seeks for inclusion, peace and social cohesion. Moreover, it was further expected that they would work in line with Batho-Pele ('People-First') principles² (Makda, Bayat & Ukpere, 2012; Van Graan & Ukpere, 2012). However, the struggle against police brutality continues 29 years post-apartheid era.

Petrus (2014: 1) singled out the Soweto uprising and the Sharpeville massacre as examples of the extent of violence during the apartheid era (Petrus, 2014: 1). 69 unarmed protesters in Sharpeville were shot and killed by the apartheid police on March 21, 1960 (Lodge, 2011: 1). The protesters were protesting against the oppressive pass laws. According to Bruce (2002a: 1), 180 protesters were wounded during the shooting. Lodge (2011: 1) further eluded that the massacre showed how black people have been fighting against apartheid. In June 16, 1976 students from different schools in Soweto marched against the introduction of Afrikaans language in township schools as a medium of teaching in township schools. According to Iwase (2014: 1), the community of Soweto decided to join the protest in solidarity with their children. A minimum of 176 students lost their lives. Teboho "Tsietsi" Mashinini led the protest. McMichael (2015: 1) further alluded that excessive use of force on black people during

² Batho Pele Principles are government initiative to develop the quality and accessibility of government services by cultivating efficiency and accountability to the recipients of public goods and services.

apartheid era was a common practice. As initially mentioned, a similar case of police brutality happened in Marikana in August 16, 2012 (Davies, 2015: 1). Police fatally shot 34 striking mine workers. The scene depicted that of apartheid era.

According to Roberts, Bohler-Muller, Struwig, Gordon, Mnchunu, Mtyingizane & Runciman (2017), communities have lost hope and trust in the police. Petrus (2014: 1) adds that “just like in the apartheid era people are killed in a democratic South Africa by the same people who are tasked to protect them.” Although there have been efforts to bring transformation in policing, violence never ceases. Another case that made headlines is that of Andries Tatane. Tatane was shot and killed on April 13, 2011 in Ficksburg, in the Free State Province. The community members were striking against lack of service delivery. What started as a peaceful strike, turned into violence with police shooting on protesters. Tatane was hit in his chest with a rubber bullet. According to (San History Online, 2019) he was also beaten by police and he later died in hospital.

Another case is that of a 26-year-old Mido Macia from Mozambique who was tied and dragged by a police van in the township of Daveyton in Johannesburg East on February 26, 2013 (Faull, 2013: 5). Hours later, Macia died. According to Faull (2013: 5) it was later discovered that he died due to shortage of oxygen supply to his brain. Faull (2013: 5) further alludes, “the blood mark in Mido Macia’s holding cell wall was proof enough that Macia was assaulted in police custody.”

2.6. Protests and the Police

South Africa is known as the world’s epicentre of protests (Alexander, 2010). It is therefore essential to highlight this phenomenon called ‘protest’ as well as the role played by the police in public order policing which often ends up with cases of police brutality. Moreover, as this study is focused on the killing of a bystander during a protest, it is necessary to provide literature on protest and the police. According to Duncan (2016) more protestors believe that nonviolent protests are pointless because the government simply ignores them. This is evident when there is no property destroyed or disruption of normal business and the protest would take days till it dies down. Thus, this pushes for the police to use force as mechanism for crowd control and public order policing. Hess and Orthmann (cited in Motsepe, 2020) suggested that, depending on the situations, the presence of a police officer stimulates feelings of respect, confidence, and security in some citizens; but fear, hostility, hatred and indifference in others. However, during protests the presence of the police has often been aggressive (Bruce, 2002a).

The Right2Protest Project [R2P] (2017) revealed that “the police and prosecutorial authority often showed extreme hostility towards students,” this follows the events of the #FeesMustFall students’ protests in South Africa’s institutions of higher learning. The death of a bystander; Mthokozisi Ntumba at the hands of the police reveal the hostility and the treatment the police have toward students’ related protests. Moreover, the student protests received more media attention and are often amplified by social media activism (R2P, 2017). Duncan (2016: 142) on the other hand argues that “protests turn violent in response to police violence.” This is seen in the Wits student protest which led to the killing of a bystander. The police used excessive force on students participating in protest and those who were within the vicinity of the protest in Braamfontein such as Ntumba.

2.7. Conclusion

The objective of this section was to discuss key concepts and literature relevant to this study. The contextualisation of key concepts such as police brutality, media bias and protests guided this study on what other scholars and researchers have discussed. The chapter first provided a background of the four selected newspaper and the purpose of their selection. The concept of police brutality is central to the study’s literature to understand the phenomenon of why the police use excessive force when dealing with public order policing during protests. Secondly, media bias on the other hand is relevant as the study analyses the framing of news in the four selected newspapers. The review of literature on media biasness helps the researcher to understand the strategies that go into the production of news and the impact thereof. Lastly, South Africa known as a protest capital of the world as described by Alexander (2010), creates an opportunity to explore this phenomenon of protest and its impact on society. The theoretical framework for this study is examined in the following section.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

As stated earlier, this study hinges on the media framing theory, a theory used a lot in the journalism and media studies disciplines. This section of the study begins by giving a definition of what framing is before delving into particular cases drawn from the selected newspapers under examination.

3.2. Framing Theory

The framing theory has its roots in several disciplinary traditions. Several scholars have defined framing as a concept at different points of analyses (Scheunfele, 1999). According to Entman (1993), “framing is the selection of facets of a perceived reality and make them more noticeable in a communicating text, in such a way to promote a particular... casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” Entman (2007) defines framing as “the process of leaving out key components of perceived reality and accumulating a narrative that emphasise links between them to support one interpretation.” According to Entman (1993), the two main components of framing are selection and salience - the highlighting of one aspect of a reality more than the other.

Framing has the power to emphasise a certain issue, and greatly influence how an issue is interpreted and understood (Weatherred, 2015). According to Baranauskas and Drakulich (2018), frames used to package information that influence the public. To affirm this, Entman (1993: 51) “argues that the concept of framing is one of the most significant aspects within the discipline of communication science.” These frames are described by Gitlin (1960) as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion that symbol-handlers frequently use to organise discourse.” In the context of this study, journalists packaged or framed the media coverage on the story of Ntumba through selecting certain content that was relevant and more salient to their readers. The use of language, sourcing patterns, narrative styles and other factors played a role in framing the news on Ntumba.

Framing theory will enable the use of morality as a frame, which is the framing in the news to

understand the process of how news was framed by the four newspapers. Morality as one of the frames in news coverage was identified because through it, the study will be able to understand which kind of morality led to police forces killing a bystander who was not even involved in the Wits students' protest. It will also help understand what kind of morality guided the four newspapers in reporting the news to the media. Arowolo (2017) argues that morality in media journalism is "media coverage that frequently elicits moral judgments, sometimes as a result of the transgressions of political players; or alternative, policies can be viewed as morally debatable" while Mokhberian et al (2020) identified morality as a frame in its own right among a number of news frames that shape audience perceptions of issues.

The use of morality as a frame in this study will help understand how to use the specific and generic frames to understand which morality guided the four newspapers. This is because "in content analysis, a frame is a rather abstract variable that is challenging to recognise and difficult to code" (Matthes & Kohring, 2008: 258). Therefore, using specific and generic frames will enable the analysis needed in the study and understand the differences between the four newspapers. For example, both generic and specific frames will enable me to understand the logic of each newspaper in selecting some aspects that were perceived to be real and make them more significant in an interactive text, causal interpretation and moral evaluation (Entman, 1993: 52). Although on one hand, specific frames help to analyse and understand the great specific details in the media coverage by the four newspapers. The generic frames will enable to understand the systematic platform for comparison across issues of media coverage, frames, and topics, on the other hand.

To evaluate the reporting of content in the case of Mthokozisi Ntumba by *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Sowetan* newspapers, those frames will analyse the language used in the reporting. To affirm this, Pollak and Kubrin (2007) argue that language significantly affects how public forms opinions. This theory will, therefore, be employed to determine the frames used by *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Sowetan* newspapers in the media reporting of the Mthokozisi Ntumba's case. In addition, the following mechanisms: headlines, choice of quotes, subheads, photos, and photo captions will aid in analysis of different frames found in each of the articles analysed.

3.3. Previous Research underpinned by Framing Theory

This section aims at appraising the most recent, relevant, and related academic contributions made by various researchers who have analysed how the media frame certain events on various media platforms. Brown and Harlow (2019) argue that media approach protest in a negative and

stigmatised manners, often depicting the protesters as violent. Moreover, factors such as proximity of the protest to the media direct or influences the narrative that will be shared and the type of media distributing the news. Duncan (2016) section of the book which focusses on '*media coverage of protests in South Africa*' highlight the notion that the media can make or break the police image in how they frame the police conducts against protests. She argues that "journalists incline on the same institutional sources of information for their news such as official sources (be it government or law enforcements) and their accounts of events (Duncan, 2016: 143). This similar framing mechanism was also observed in the coverage of Ntumba's case, majority of the article gave voice to the authority instead of protestors. Duncan (2016) further outlines how coverage of the Marikana massacre had taken place. Journalist reported the event behind the police line in consideration of their own safety. However, this presented to the world images that the journalist vindicated the police's view of events – which indicate self-defence against the protestors on that fateful day.

A study carried out by Wekesa (2013) to evaluate the media reporting of four East African countries by China. Moreover, the study employed the framing theory to compare how China reports about East African countries. Wekesa found that the Chinese media were neutral and not biased in their reporting of East African countries. In the study, Wekesa (2013) observed negative and positive frames focusing on conflict frames (negative) which relates to discrepancy between individuals, organisations or nations which was very prevalent in East African countries. Lastly, economic consequence frame (positive) was described as a result of preoccupation with profit and loss.

According to a comparative study carried out by Zimbizi (2017) on the media reporting of the 2015 student protests between mainstream media and alternative media, it was found that social media is a great and useful tool in the gathering of news, and therefore, cannot be ignored. The study was underpinned by both the framing and agenda-setting theories. In the study, Zimbizi (2017) found that the tone of stories, voices or sources used as well as dominant and prevalent frames which were themed around violence, battle, chaos, social justice and solidarity covered the story on the 2015 student protests. Moreover, the visuals from the protests complemented the abovementioned frames. In essence, the 2015 student protests which took a number of days highlighted the different frames in the study and also presented a more balanced coverage.

The relevance of studies by Zimbizi (2017), and Wekesa (2013) in this study is that they all used the framing theory. The two scholars highlighted the role played by the media in framing news coverage of an event either negatively or positively. Thus, this theory will also be employed in

this study.

3.4. Conclusion

The section introduced the theoretical concept that speaks to framing. The theory guides the entire research. Adom et al., (2018) is of the view that theoretical framework frames how the researcher or instrument collect, analyse and discuss findings in addition to how the researcher discusses the related literature. The adopted theoretical framework which is framing theory looked into the analysis and coverage of news in the case of Ntumba's killing. The theory focuses on selection of aspects of a perceived reality and makes them more noticeable in a communicating text. The theory is most widely used in analysing media content and in the context of this study, newspapers were used. The next section addresses the methodological approach.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This section of the study explains the methodology employed in conducting this study. The study's methodology includes information on how the study was carried out, how data was collected and the framework and technique of analysis. This is done to confirm that the research questions were thoroughly addressed and the aims of this study achieved. Keeves (1997) defines research methodology as research strategy, approaches, and techniques used in a study to obtain certain findings.

4.2. Research Approach

There are three different possible research approaches that can be used to pursue a research project, namely, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The nature and purpose of this study dictate that a qualitative approach be utilised. Tuckman (1994: 192) states that "qualitative research refers to research that generates descriptive data such as person's verbatim or recorded speech and observable behaviour." Moreover, Creswell (2009: 39) also states that "qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the opinions of participants, asks open-ended to general questions, collects data from participants primarily in the form words (or text), describes and examines these words for themes and conducts the investigation in a biased and subjective way." The importance of the use of words in qualitative research is stated by Devers (2000: 251), who observes that the "qualitative research approach is a type of research which uses the power of words to describe situations." Thus, a qualitative research design will be adopted, to solicit views, insights, and opinions from the data consisting of words from the four selected newspapers in a case study on police brutality involving Mthokozisi Ntumba. The use of the qualitative approach means that the researcher largely relies on the views of the reported case. In this context, the qualitative research approach was suitable for this study.

4.3. Research Design

Research design is defined by Punch (2011) and, Okeke and Wyk (2015) as a detailed plan of how you are going to conduct your research. In any study, a research design is inevitable as it provides guidelines that are pre-requisite in conducting research work. The design of the current study will be a comparative case study, which is prevalent in social science (Starman, 2013). According to Narasuman et al. (2019: 140), "researchers use case studies to examine a problem, topic or an event." Yin (2009: 12) cited in Mhindu (2016) defines a case study as "an

empirical study that looks at a contemporary phenomenon in the context of real-world events.” Given these definitions, a case study has its focus on a phenomenon in its typical life setting. Thus, in the context of this study, data was obtained and scrutinised on the media reporting from four selected newspapers in South Africa on the case of Ntumba, a bystander shot and killed by the police during students’ protest. The current study does not conduct interviews or observe people but looks at how the case of Ntumba was framed and reported in the four selected newspapers.

4.4. Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques refer to how relevant data will be collected to validate the argument. In this study, it refers to instruments and resources that will be explored to help collect data. Burns and Grove (2001: 49) define data collection as “the accurate systematic gathering of data pertinent to specific research objectives or questions.” According to Burns and Grove (2001: 50), “data can be composed in numerous ways, but whichever tool is selected, the research objectives must be achieved by the instrument used.”

The study employed the content analysis method to collect data. Content analysis is the most widely used research method in the social science field. Content Analysis method can be used quantitatively or qualitatively for systematically analysing written, verbal or visual text (Wilson, 2011). However, this study makes use of qualitative content analysis research, as a tool in which the researcher interprets documents to offer context and significance to a research issue. Documents are, in fact, a convenient source of data easily accessible to the creative and resourceful investigator (Merriam, 2009: 139).

According to Krippendorff (2004: 18), content analysis is “a research method for drawing conclusions from texts (or other meaningful matter) about the context in which they are used.” In this study, “texts” mentioned by Krippendorff include the *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, the *Mail & Guardian*, and the *Sowetan* newspapers. Lasswell, Lerner and Pool (1952: 34) are of the view that “content analysis is a technique which seeks to describe what is stated about the given topic in a given location at a given time with the highest degree of impartiality, precision, and generality.”

The relevance of this research technique in this study is stated by McNamara (2005), who avers that “media content analysis is a specialised sub-set of content analysis, a well-established research methodology”. Through this research technique, the researcher was able to give insights into issues and agendas that the reporters at the selected newspapers sought to report

on. The effective use of this method guarantees that the researcher identifies the intentions, focus/communication and trends of a group, individuals, or institutions as well as what is relevant to the study.

4.5. Sampling

A total of 83 newspaper stories were sampled from four selected newspapers. These 83 articles were selected because they represent different news media coverage from the four selected newspapers over a period of 1 year and 5 months (11 March 2021 to 16 August 2022). The media coverage period begins from the day after (11 March) the killing of Ntumba, and throughout the court trial and the acquittal of the four accused police officers till the last article covered on the 16 August which was to mark 10 years anniversary of the Marikana massacre. Therefore, this helps to understand the differences between the four newspapers, to compare and contrast their media coverage, what led to those differences, their effects on information in society. These articles also enable the researcher to understand factors that influenced the police officials to use heavy force against the protesters. The scope of the study was during students' protest at Wits University in 2021. This enables us to understand how the comparison of the four selected newspapers is significant in this study, and with frames techniques, the scope helps to contextualise news emanating from each newspaper.

The study used purposive sampling as the researcher has read and reviewed specific text or content to be analysed. According to Krippendorff (2004), purposive sampling, involves selecting all textual units that contribute to answering the research questions. Moreover, White and Marsh (2006) are also of the view that purposive sampling enables the display of an overall representation and the identification of comprehensive, accurate responses to the research questions. The 83 articles sampled were accessed through online digital platforms which is the newspapers' websites. From the 83 articles analysed, 39 articles from *Sowetan*, 21 from *Daily Sun*, 15 articles from *Daily Maverick*, and lastly, 8 articles from *Mail & Guardian* were part of the study over the period of a year and 5 months (11 March 2021 to 16 August 2022).

The selected newspapers articles range from the front-page news, opinion piece, editorials, and columns to cover wide audiences. The articles selected were published from March 11, 2021 to August 16, 2022. The articles were published the day after the event of the killing of a bystander by the police, the pre-court trial and post-court trial event to establish how the reporting was framed during this period. Consideration of the content or orientation of the selected newspapers varies from general to tabloid to high-end investigative journalism. *Daily Maverick* and *Mail &*

Guardian target high-end audiences with LSM from 7 to 10, whereas *Sowetan* lies in the middle LSM and *Daily Sun* caters for the majority of lower LSM (Wasserman et al., 2021). One other factor, illustrates that the sample covered is limited in that it only considers newspaper reports in English and not in other South African languages.

4.6. Data Analysis Method

Data analysis forms an integral part of all academic and professional studies. Thus, data analysis is pivotal in academic research as the method that brings about order and meaning to a mass of collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 1990: 111). However, data analysis strategies depend on the data gathering that was done. Punch (2005: 194) asserts that “there is no single appropriate technique to conduct qualitative data analysis, and there no single methodological framework which is highlighted by the range and diversity of approaches.” The researcher in this instance would select text articles from the four selected newspapers and use the framing theory to analyse content that more salient and relates to the study objectives.

Coding was used in the process of data analysis to ensure inter-coder reliability. The researcher decides on items to be coded either in a single category or various categories in the initial set of testing of the data. As the study is qualitative in nature, the coding process takes place in an inductive manner. White and Marsh (2006) state that in the process of coding, “the researcher identifies crucial phrases and text segments that relates to the questions, observe similarities and continue to iteratively compare the categories and constructs that emerge compared with other data.”

Using Krippendorff’s (2004) coding method, this study would focus on a range of key variables which include aspects such as voices (sources), gender (source or reporter), use of language, reporting type, and narrative modes of framing. This study use computer software that is widely used by social sciences scholar to analyse the data collected in the content analysis method.

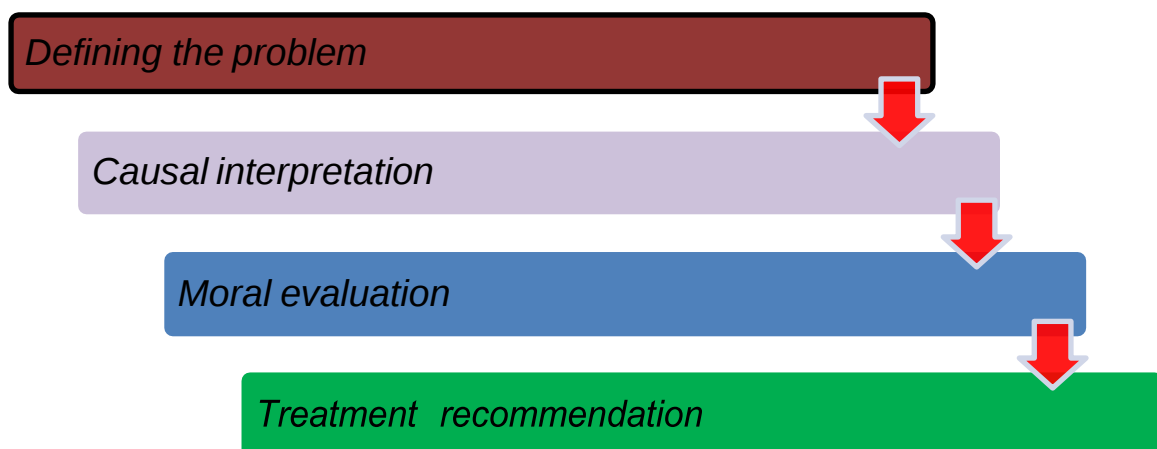


Figure1: Entman frame analysis model (1993)

To analyse framing of media coverage in the newspaper, Entman (1993) provided some key aspects which involves ‘selection and salience.’ In the context of this study, these include (1) *defining the problem* – how the newspapers cover the news or define the killing of a bystander by the police; (2) *causal interpretation* – how the media interpret the killing of a bystander in the framing of news content; (3) *moral evaluation* – how the media coverage evaluates the problems of police brutality; (4) *treatment recommendation* – what solutions the media prescribe for the issue of police brutality. Furthermore, to explore the frames generated in this study, the researcher will look into the coverage of the protest that led to the killing of the bystander, the police’s conduct, the court case trial, covert meanings, sources and frames of reference in the stories reported.

4.7. Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a crucial component of any research study. Creswell (2013: 174) argues that “regardless of the method used for to qualitative research, a qualitative researcher must deal with number of ethical issues when gathering data in the field, analysing it, and disseminating qualitative results.” Ethical issues are inevitable in research regardless of data collection instruments employed as these directly or indirectly feature in the process of data analysis. The data for this research consists of available online media articles. According to Wassenaar (2006: 66), a study of this nature is technically exempted from the usual ethical considerations. For this study, ethics will not play a critical role as this study will draw existing data from the internet and compare the media coverage of Ntumba’s case by *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Sowetan* newspapers. However, the study adhered to the University of the Witwatersrand’s ethical protocols which guide research studies. I have applied for ethical approval on the 15th of September 2022 which was approved on the 12th of January 2023. The ethics clearance number is **JOMS2022/1**.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter described the research method used in this study. The study was thoroughly discussed in detail, along with the qualitative content analysis method, the sample used, and method of data analysis. Moreover, method of analysing data and the ethical guidelines were explained. The methodology section guides the collection and analysis of data which results in data findings and discussions as explained in the next section.

5. DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Introduction

This section of the study offers an analysis of data, findings and discussions from the 83 articles in four selected different newspapers. The articles covered the story of the killing of a bystander Mthokozisi Ntumba during the Wits students' protest in Braamfontein. The four selected newspapers analysed articles from the *Sowetan*, *Daily Sun*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian*. The study relied on qualitative content analysis using purposive sampling for the 83 newspaper articles analysed.

5.2. Data Analysis

From a total of 83 articles analysed, 39 articles from the *Sowetan* newspaper, 21 from *Daily Sun* newspaper, 15 articles from the *Daily Maverick* newspaper, and lastly, 8 articles from the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper were part of the study. Figure 2 below represents the overall percentage number of newspapers analysed which shows *Sowetan* as dominant followed by *Daily Sun*. *Daily maverick* and *Mail & Guardian* articles coverage percentage was low.

6.

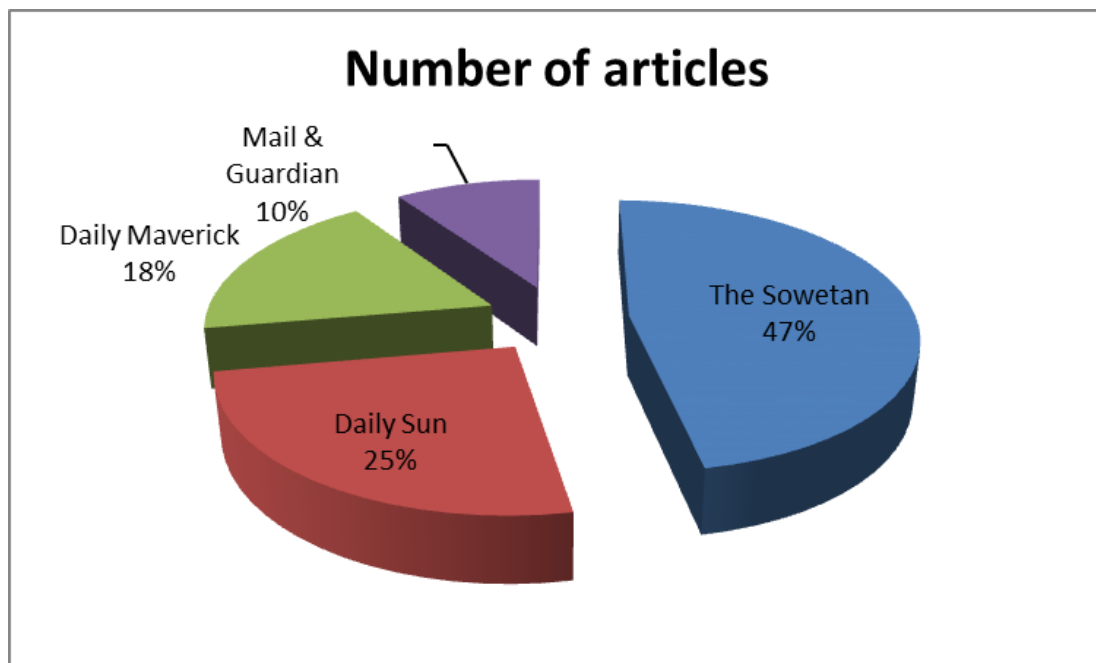


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the total number of newspaper articles analysed between 11 March 2021 and 16 August 2022.

The table below represents how each frame was used by all the newspapers that used it. The most used frames were narrative approach and episodic reporting. The least used frames were sensationalism and issue comparison. The table shows that 7 frames were used by the

newspapers in reporting and following up the pre-and post-court trials of the Ntumba case. Unfortunately, no newspaper was able to use all the seven frames.

Frames	<i>Sowetan</i>	<i>Daily Sun</i>	<i>Daily Maverick</i>	<i>Mail & Guardian</i>
Emotional appeals	The experiences of the family members of Ntumba can be one element of using emotional appeal to capture the reader's mind and emotions. The sadness in the story by obtaining the family member voices add to the emotional appeal.	<i>Daily Sun</i> use catchy headlines with an impact to evoke emotions. The selection of single source that state powerful emotive quotes to get the reader's attention.	<i>Daily Maverick</i> use emotional appeals in its reflective coverage of the Ntumba story by comparing the issue of police brutality with other issues affecting the country. Moreover, the previous cases of Andries Tatane, Nathaniel Julies, and the Marikana massacre represent some of the never-ending cases of police brutality in the country which the newspaper uses to capture the emotions of the readers.	
Choice of sources	Multiple voices for most of the articles. The newspaper's vast coverage of the story and the use of various sources illustrate the frames used.	The newspaper uses a single source pattern to cover the context of the article. One source tells a story, unlike the other three newspapers. The voice of one source has an impact	The newspaper used official sources more in the coverage of Ntumba's case. This is done in the sense to hold the authorities accountable.	The newspaper used fewer sources as most of the content was based on personal reflections on the issues highlighted.

		in how the newspaper frames the news around the story of Ntumba		
Episodic reporting (Journalistic style, Crisis coverage)	The type of reporting is different from other newspapers as the <i>Sowetan</i> follows a pattern of giving regular updates of the story in the Ntumba's case. The newspaper uses episodic reporting by focusing on single specific event as it transpires	The short and single source coverage represent the newspaper type of reporting which in essence influences their writing and coverage of the Ntumba's case. The type of reporting is episodic focusing on a single issue per article.	Thematic reporting is used by the newspaper giving a background of the issue and highlighting other issues related to police brutality.	The newspaper uses thematic reporting around the case of Ntumba. The newspaper does that by highlighting important issues such as race during protest and the unfair treatment of black protestors as compared to white protestors. This type of reporting reveals the deep division and inequality that continue to exist since the days of apartheid.
Choice of words		The newspaper use of catchy headlines or strong quotes to represent the type of frames used. Tabloid newspapers have always been connected with a melodramatic style of writing; this is seen in the kind of headlines used.	A critical analysis of the issue and use of words gave more salience of the issue of police brutality. A comprehensive analysis of the issue and extensive research put into the story highlight the frame used.	As the newspaper caters for high LSM group, its coverage consisted of a variety of issues and words used is different from the other newspapers. The articles were more detailed, research-based and covered a wider scope than the story of Ntumba alone. Although some of the opinion piece

				contained subjective or personal reflection showing dissatisfaction in the issue of police brutality.
Sensationalism		As tabloid newspapers tend to sensationalize stories by telling the story as it is and not shying away from an emotional response. This was also evident in the coverage of Ntumba's case.		
Issue Comparison		<i>Daily Sun</i> used catchy headlines in comparative approach in the form of quotes from sources.	<i>Daily Maverick</i> compares the story of Ntumba with other previous cases such as the Andries Tatane, Nathaniel Jules, and the Marikana Massacre.	Reports on police brutality is framed around other issues such as race, COVID-19, #FeesMustFall, electricity crisis to expand the issues existing in South Africa. The lack of urgency on IPID in solving the cases of police brutality is evident in how the newspaper covers the story around Ntumba's case.
Narrative Approach (Alarmist or informative)	The newspaper uses a descriptive narrative style of framing the story of Ntumba. As the story unfolds the articles provide	The stories covered use descriptive and non-linear narrative styles. The newspaper provides the reader with the background of the	Daily Maverick uses this frame to sound the alarm about the crisis of police brutality and its repercussions for the country.	The newspaper uses a first-person viewpoint narrative style. The author uses the 'I' or personal reflection in the story. The newspaper uses

	regular updates or daily accounts of Ntumba's case, from the day of the killing, during the court trial, and the end of the trial.	story, how it unfolds, and the current state in a short and straightforward manner.		contributors in the form of ordinary citizens to share their viewpoints about the current affair or Ntumba's case.
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Table 1: Representation of the frames used in analysing data from the newspapers

5.2.1. Sowetan Newspaper

Sowetan newspaper in comparison with the other three newspapers analysed for this study, covered or produced the most articles around the story of Mthokosizi Ntumba. Moreover, the authors who covered the stories ranged from journalists, reporters, investigative reporters to columnists. The stories written ranged from front-page news, columns, analysis, and investigative report; all shed light on the story of Ntumba from various angles. The reporters gave different perspectives in their coverage and their writing styles and the narration of the stories showed extensive research, time and resources invested in the story of Ntumba. The media coverage illustrated that the newspaper provided a broad view of the stories and ensured that readers are kept glued to the developments in the case of Ntumba's killing. For example, article headlines such as; *"Ntumba family welcomes arrest of four cops"* (16 March 2021), *"Mthokosizi Ntumba trial postponed after lawyer falls ill"* (20 January 2022), and *"Expert witness accused of doctoring footage of Ntumba shooting"* (31 January 2022) just to mention a few, represent the broad coverage by the newspaper. The newspaper used episodic reporting to frame the news around Ntumba. The newspaper ensured that every piece of information related to the case of Ntumba was published.

From the analysis, *Sowetan* ensured consistency in their reporting, in terms of covering every part of the story on a regular basis as it unfolds. From the onset, different voices were articulated in the articles. Voices from official government sources, witnesses in the form of students, bystanders, and the police gave account of what had transpired. During the day of the students' protest which led to the killing of Ntumba, even during the court trial of the four police officers – different witnesses made news which added to wealth of information around the case. Moreover, the newspaper warranted that the experiences of the family members since the passing of Ntumba were also articulated even a year after his passing. The newspaper was able to obtain the family's perspective which can be viewed as frame strategy that warrants for an emotional appeal. An example of such is highlighted in article titled, *"Brother breaks silence on*

Ntumba's death anniversary" (11 March 2021). Thus, according to Lecheler and de Vreese (2019), emotional appeal as an affective effect is evident in the articles by using members of Ntumba family in the coverage. The readers will have sympathy for the family and continue to show their support of the case.

The *Sowetan* applied the 'bigger picture approach' by providing a variety of perspective on the story. In addition, extensive research and investigation on the case to ensure that the information around the killing of Ntumba is brought to the public. The newspaper does that through providing multiple voices to the story, involving other relevant stakeholders in the matter; such as government officials, witnesses and regulatory bodies like IPID and to the victims (student protestors) and victim's family (Ntumba's family). In essence, the articles ranged from quite a number of topics from the events that led to the killing of Ntumba, possible tampering of evidence, disappearance of key witness, street name change, inconsistency in witnesses' testimonies, family's lawsuit just to mention a few. Furthermore, the articles also provided recommendation in the form policy framework to end police brutality. Examples of such articles are as follows, "Expert witness accused of doctoring footage of Ntumba shooting" (31 January 2022); "*We found the witness police couldn't*" (08 July 2022). The newspapers showed the great length to cover the story and to source out information.

Headlines used by the newspaper are what appear in the articles. They form part of the content in the articles. The narrative approach is descriptive by providing regular feeds as the story transpires. Examples are as follows, "*Ntumba accused free after key witness goes missing*" (6 July 2022); "*I received the report but it did not explain Ntumba's killing, says officer,*" (25 January 2022); and "*Police brutality of serious concern, says Bheki Cele*" (12 April 2021). These are some of few examples on how the newspaper uses their headlines to frame news on the killing of Ntumba.

One aspect that added depth to the articles was the use of social media content like tweets to strengthen the articles in the form of multimedia content. As the articles in this study were accessed online, Twitter highlights were added to enhance or amplify the stories. This can also be regarded as supporting evidence or adding more salience to the news article. Similarly *Daily Sun* also attached Twitter post in the form of videos during the day of the protest and in court to aid their news stories.

5.2.2. *Daily Sun* Newspaper

Daily Sun as a tabloid newspaper covered the second most stories around the killing of Ntumba.

Majority of the articles analysed relied on sources to write up with the content of the articles. The journalists would interview one source and use the information obtained as a story published for that day. The frame used is episodic reporting relying on descriptive narration. In addition, the articles revolved around stories of the day in the case of Ntumba hence the single source per article. Days after the killing of Ntumba, the articles referred to sources from witnesses or people that were part of the students' protest to capture primary source of information on what happened that fateful day. This pattern changes as the stories unfold with official statement from political leaders and government officials leading the story by providing their reflection of what had happened. Moreover, during the court trial, statement from officials in court, witnesses, the police in question and the magistrate providing judgment on the case made news for the newspaper publication.

The news articles were short and straight to the point just to give update around the case of Ntumba. A single person quote covers the whole story for the day. An example is the article titled; *"Mokoena – I saw Ntumba lying on the floor"* (17 Jan 2022) or *"How Ntumba alleged killers got bail"* (26 March 2021). These are some of the examples of a single person quote which covers the whole content of the story. A single narrative is communicated per article. No analysis or reaction from those who were part of the story from the onset to provide their views on the court judgment for instance. This can be derived from the newspaper's targeted readership which are people from lower LSM; in most cases do not have the time to read a long-detailed story. They prefer highlights and a simplified interpretation of the news. *Daily Sun* is very good at providing brief stories to communicate a specific message and for readers to spend less time reading articles.

Daily Sun newspaper is known for its catchy headlines, and using graphical images especially when emphasising an issue or attracting attention for its readers. The frame of sensationalism is used by not shying away from emotional response to communicate the message. Sparks cited in Bosch and Wasserman (2023) states that tabloid newspapers are frequently criticised for decreasing journalistic standards and favouring sensation over substance, diverting readers from important news to entertainment, or disregarding ethical principles. One of the headlines *"Killed like a dog, but won't be buried like one"* (14 March 2021) which was a quote from the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader Julius Malema was used as a way to quickly capture the reader's attention on the story. Using a popular figure in this context, a leader of a political party can have an influence on how the reader interprets the message and the reaction that follows. Moreover, it opened up other underlying issues about the treatment or killing of black

people by the police.

The comparison of the word 'dog' to a human being in the article reveals how invaluable life of a person is at the mercy of power from the authorities. It is described as valueless and not important. The use of the word 'dog' evokes affective effects of framing news which rely on emotions to get the reader's attention. According to Lecheler & de Vreese (2019), affective effects refer to framing exposure that elicits emotional responses. Referring to someone as a dog has connotative effects and sometimes derogatory. Moreover, this is one of the frames used by the newspaper or the author to add substance on the story of Ntumba. This kind of headline is synonymous with the newspaper's style of writing. As discussed earlier that majority of the stories were based on source quote or views which make the article get published.

One predominant feature from the articles is the use of pictorial image of the four accused police officers during the court trial. As illustrated in figure 2 below, the use of the head scarf in the form of face mask was symbolic with the different colour coding featured. The police officer reaction cannot be identified and whether they show remorse or not for what had happened on that fateful day. This image is also used by the other different newspapers analysed for this study. The image of the four in colour coded face masks remains one of key highlights in the Ntumba's case and it is widely used when reporting the story.



Figure 4: Four police officers accused standing trial for killing Mthokosizi Ntumba. Credit: Christopher Moagi

5.2.3. *Daily Maverick* Newspaper

Daily Maverick uses an easily noticeable frame used in stories on Ntumba. They use a comparative approach of similar cases on police brutality to expand the scope of this issue and to illustrate how deep the crisis is. The newspaper had the second least number of articles analysed in this study. The key emphasis on the coverage was on the government and the role it had played in dealing with this issue that keep occurring for years. In one of the articles dated (18 March 2021) the author state that “*I am Nathaniel and Mthokozisi is me*” was a comparison of victims of police brutality in South Africa. Nathaniel Julies was also a victim of police brutality (*Daily Maverick*, 18 March 2021). The newspaper used issue comparison framing to compare other related issues that involved incidents of police brutality. Another similar case of police brutality is highlighted in the article titled; “*Ten years from Tatane to Ntumba: It is time to take rubber bullets out of protest policing*” (13 May 2021). The many unresolved cases and some unknown cases of police brutality in South Africa have reached a crisis point. Thus, *Daily Maverick* highlighted in the articles that unless something is done to end this scourge of police brutality and the use of force, no one is safe.

Another frame from *Daily Maverick* coverage is the use of probing questions to seek answers from the authorities and initiate public debate on the issue of police brutality. In-depth research and writing were evident especially in the form of providing figures and statistics on the issue. This was done to elaborate on the extent of the issue and what role the government has played over the years. The story of Ntumba rekindles memories of other similar cases such as the killing of Andries Tatane in Ficksburg during a service delivery protest in 2011. *Daily Maverick* uses memory logs to reflect on the current issues in relations past events.

Articles were long and detailed to provide a comprehensive account of the issue. As Duncan (2016: 152) in her book argues that *Daily Maverick* developed an area of specialisation on protests and strikes, which raised the bar significantly on protest reporting during the Marikana Massacre. This type of coverage has been a factor in the reporting of Ntumba’s killing during a students’ protest at the University of Witwatersrand; it seems nothing has changed in terms of the police conduct during protest ever since the Marikana Massacre and *Daily Maverick* still asking pertinent questions as to why. In one of the newspaper’s opinion piece titled; “*The killing of Mthokozisi Ntumba: Outrage porn simply derails the fight against police brutality in South Africa*” (18 March 2021) outlined detailed account on how killing of people by the police to thrive in the country and it was not a ‘new conversation’. The newspaper provided a critical reproach by

criticising the police conduct during protests. The newspapers used an alarmist approach to this issue as they narrate the stories around police brutality. The newspaper is concerned with how the continuation of police brutality has taken the country back and derails long-lasting activism in South Africa.

Daily Maverick provides the 'bigger picture approach' through reflecting on international news and localising the issue. This is evident in an article titled, "*Ten years from Tatane to Ntumba: It is time to make rubber bullets out of protest policing*," dated (13 May 2021) which looks at the banning of rubber bullet in the UK and other countries due to its impact on the killing of people, draws conversations to a local context and how the use of it has led to the death of others. In the article, a 2014 national instruction adopted by the SAPS approved that 'rubber rounds may only be used as aggressive means to disband a crowd in exceptional circumstances. Such extreme circumstances are yet to be seen in most of the protests; however, death of individuals is a normal occurrence. In addition an OP-ED titled; "*Rubber bullets: Banning them is not impossible – it's imperative*" (30 May 2021) highlight the call to end the use of rubber bullets which had led to the killing of many people during protests.

Another striking frame is that in some of the articles by the *Daily Maverick*, the journalists provide personal account or personal reflections related to the story of Ntumba and the treatment of the police. An example of an opinion piece titled; "*Student fees are important, but so are health, pensions, child support and a basic income grant*" (15 March 2022). The author in this article was very critical about quite a number of issues; the language used had an angry tone. The article sought to use an alarmist approach to inform the readers while warning them over certain issues that continue to persist in the country. In some way subjective views that uses affective effects aid in strengthening the impact of the news through sharing of feelings and experiences on the issue. This is one way of framing news that enhances empathy to get the readers' attention.

Most of the articles are based on sources from government officials than ordinary people. The newspaper seeks answers from the authorities through obtaining statements from official sources. These statements would in turn be used in the future against the same officials who do not act upon on what they had initially promised. An example of such is provided in an analysis piece titled; "*Mthokozisi Ntumba's death: When ministerial words are as lethal as police bullets*" (15 March 2021). In this analysis, the minister was articulated having said that 'if the police's life is in danger, they have a right to use deadly force' – these sentiments have resulted in more victims of police brutality in the country. The newspaper used the official source's use of

language in the past events to frame the current discourse in the Ntumba's case.

Moreover, *Daily Maverick* provides interpretation of the legal terms in relation to the story of Ntumba and the repercussions that exist. This is evident in relation to arguments from the official government statement and the legal repercussions there is. At times government officials issue statements or commentary to suit the narrative without considering the repercussions. *Daily Maverick* is good at reminding them of the past as they seek answers to the current dilemma. Moreover, the type of pictorial representations used in some of the articles illustrate the anger and disgruntled masses or people to frame the coverage using emotional appeal to show the readers that police brutality is wrong.

At the end of the articles, the journalists use quotes either from official sources, or personal thoughts to conclude the story. This is done in a way to emphasise a point and leave a reader with something to take home. The reader is left with something to think about and continue to seek answers to unanswered questions.

5.2.1. Mail & Guardian Newspaper

Mail & Guardian coverage was similar with that of *Daily Maverick* on the killing of Ntumba, as the stories reflected on a number of other issues that exist in the country under the umbrella of police brutality. The newspaper had the least number of articles on the case of Ntumba analysed for this study. Prominent stories such as the Marikana massacre and the killing of Andries Tatane were used in comparison to that of Ntumba to show the extent of the problem and how it has become a systemic issue. The newspaper devoted substantial amount of space to the coverage academic content and other forms of research on the police brutality issue and how it has turned out to be a national crisis.

Mail & Guardian has provided critique of police brutality for political and business reasons. A big picture approach in the form of personal reflections from the authors, in column and contributors' section of the newspaper reveal the extent of the situation around the killing of Ntumba. The authors share their sentiments and lived experiences or encounters of police brutality and its impact on the South African society. In the article titled; "*Confronting the power of the police*" (16 August 2022), the author was very critical of the police conduct, looking back at South Africa's history of police violence. Another article titled; "*What will it take for the police to stop killing our citizens?*" (19 March 2021), looked into the killing of civilians by the police. With all the evidence gathered in the past, the issue is viewed as deepened crisis and the newspapers reflected on those to amplify the issue of police brutality in the country over the years.

Mail & Guardian provided a background of the story and shifts the angle to focus on the pressing matter related to the story. Moreover, the newspaper covered multiple issues in a single story (i.e., a series of related events). The aim was to cover various issues in a single story. Within the story of Ntumba – a case of police brutality, there were issues of racism, #FeesMustFall, COVID-19, electricity loadshedding and other issues included. The newspaper has higher LSM readerships which are people that would dwell much on the content and make connections on what the writer is communicating in the articles. *Mail & Guardian* use these issues as narrative mode of framing (i.e., a story within a story) to highlight the various problems the country faces. The newspaper also focused on the #FeesMustFall because it is a dominant narrative that also led to the killing of Ntumba. In the article titled; “*Teargas, bleeding knees and burning tyres: A day in the protest for free higher education*” (16 March 2021), looked into the struggle for access to free higher education in South Africa. The struggle students endure to get access to education is a systemic issue that is continuous. The journalist used episodic reporting through storytelling providing a historical background years prior to the famous #FeesMustFall protest.

The newspaper’s choice of words especially in reflecting on the issue of race is highlighted in terms of police treatment of black people versus white people. The article titled, “*Police brutality: Citizens are just as much to blame*” dated (March 26, 2021), highlight the deepened crisis of police brutality in the country. In the article, the author also reflects on the white farmers in Senekal who held a violent protest at the police station. The public order policing was in the spotlight once again and the coverage showed racial differences on the treatment of white protestors versus black protestors was highlighted. The newspapers critic the treatment of white people and black people by the police which is a cause for concern especially in relation to the country’s reconciliation efforts. According to Cawthra (1994), during the time of apartheid, the police were notorious for being violent and only lenient to a specific race. *Mail & Guardian* asked pertinent questions about the issues surrounding the killing of Ntumba while telling a story. More thought-provoking questions about police brutality are enquired by the newspaper. The newspaper used thematic reporting to frame the media coverage on Ntumba by relating the issue of police brutality to that of race.

One of the *Mail & Guardian*’s unique set of news production is the ability to publish articles of its own contributors. The opinion writers contribute stories about the current affairs issues and trending topics. This, in essence gives a voice and/or a space to ordinary people to share their opinions on a particular issue. This is a form of citizen journalism that gives the citizens the ability and an opportunity to engage the audience, share views on issues that affect them. In the

case of Ntumba, an example of an article titled, "*Police brutality: Citizens are just as much to blame*" (26 March 2021) was one of the contributor's views which covered quite a number of issues. The author puts blame not only to the police but also to all South African for not calling for reforms on social transformation and institutional transformation in some spheres of government to avoid future events such as these. Although a disclaimer by *Mail & Guardian* is placed at the end of the article to highlight that 'the views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the newspaper,' is in a way adding to the frame used by the newspaper on narrative modes of coverage using first person viewpoint narrative style.

The newspaper further highlighted and provided critique on the IPID's lack of urgency in dealing with the reoccurrence of police misconduct is revealed in the articles. In the quest for answers, the newspaper reiterates the role played by IPID in dealing with cases related to police brutality. In an opinion piece titled, "*What will it take for the police to stop killing our citizens*" (March 19, 2021) criticise IPID for not concluding tonnes of cases of police misconduct in the country. The choice of words in this article uses affective effects of framing news. The author used emotional appeal to evoke feelings of anger towards IPID in the dealing with police brutality. The newspaper relied on first-person narrative style used in the article by the author to express dissatisfaction with IPID in relations to unresolved cases of police misconduct in the country.

In addition, *Mail & Guardian* used narrative mode of coverage by providing a storytelling style of writing. Journalists or authors narrate the stories on the field (i.e., first person narration) which illustrated that the reporters were on the ground during the students' protest. The articles are detailed to show that the journalists were on site covering different parts of the story. Moreover, the journalists have added quite a number of issues in their writing to demonstrate the deplorable state, South Africa is heading towards. One of the opinion pieces titled, "*Police violence: a life stolen*" (12 March 2021) speaks about day 349 of COVID-19 lockdown, Stage 2 electricity loadshedding, two days after the killing of Ntumba just to mention a few. Thus, shows how extensive the crisis in South Africa is becoming similarly to the never-ending cases of police brutality in the country. The newspaper capture the reader's mind by framing the news using emotional appeal in highlight the many issues that country is faced with include the one of police brutality.

Lastly, from the articles analysed it is noted that the newspaper used pictorial images that were specifically focused on the police. The pictures published showed the police in combat, police vans, and 'nyalas' which were central in the media coverage of Ntumba's case. Other

newspapers analysed in the study provided a range of pictorial images from different parts of the story and other related stories to display wealth of resources and coverage.

5.3. Findings and Discussions

From the data analysed, various issues that were prominent in the articles emerged. The issues are linked to the problem of police brutality found in the media coverage and formed part of answering the study's research questions. Nelson (1996) is of the view that framing tools adopted in stories features some viewpoints and downplay others which demonstrates a deliberate outlook to the stories. The findings outlined below looked at four issues that were dominant in the media coverage and journalists used to frame the stories on Ntumba's case. These include:

- Media bias
- Accountability of the authorities
- Protests divided on racial lines
- Critical reproach to police brutality

Media bias - The coverage of news in the case of Ntumba can be viewed from different positions. Hartley (2002: 17) refers to media bias as a concept used to explain perceived flaws in media representations. The selection of what makes news and what does not is a form of framing that results in media bias. The journalists that cover the story focus on facts and interpretations of events that illustrate media bias and also by telling the story in a way that suits their narrative refers to media bias. For example, in the *Sowetan* newspaper, journalists unpacked the story as it unfolds and made use of different sources. *Daily Sun* on the other hand relied on giving key daily updates and often used single sources to cover the content of the whole story. Single sources provide a specific idea or single viewpoint whereas, multiple voices provide a broad view of the story and cover different perspectives in one article. *Daily Maverick* newspaper was detailed in their reporting and coverage of the Ntumba case and offered a comparative approach with other similar cases of police brutality. This is done by situating the problem of police brutality to other related issues. Lastly, *Mail & Guardian* took an academic and a more political approach to the story.

Media bias is also viewed from a perspective of Boyle, McLeod and Armstrong (2012). They state that protest news coverage is formed by aspects ranging from the biases of individual journalists, to the norms and practices of the news industry to the ideology of professions and culture. Different media houses have their unique editorial policies which guide their conduct on news coverage and set them apart from the rest of other media houses. *Sowetan* caters for

the middle market and is targeted at the majority of black readers, similar to *Daily Sun* with a low LSM and dominant in black communities. Their news coverage of Ntumba's killing was descriptive providing news as it unfolds to keep the readers interested. *Daily Maverick* which is dominant on the digital space, it caters for middle and higher LSM, set sight on investigative reporting. It was evident in the analysis that the coverage was more investigative, probing and seeking answers to a never-ending crisis of police brutality. *Mail & Guardian* has a higher LSM and targeted readership is people in academic, professional or executive spaces. Their coverage had focus on the education sector, which was the reason that a bystander was killed during a student protest. Media bias becomes apparent based on their newspapers selection of what makes news, the journalist's writing style, use of language and other several factors.

Accountability of the authorities - One of the most prominent issues in a case of police brutality is lack of accountability from the authorities. From the newspapers analysed there seemed to be lack of responsibility in ending police brutality. In the articles analysed, the authorities referred to the police minister, IPID and the government. Examples of lack of accountability from the authorities were found in the following articles; "*Mthokozisi Ntumba's death: When ministerial words are as lethal as police bullets*" (*Daily Maverick*, 15 March 2021); "*Police brutality: Nearly 60 000 cases opened against cops in 10 years*" (*Sowetan*, 09 April 2021). The authors highlighted the voices of the authority or official sources as the more salient in order to demonstrate the importance of the issue of police brutality in South Africa and the impact of it.

Sourcing pattern, as one frame used in the study played an important role for the newspapers especially when seeking answers or when covering the story. *Daily Sun* using a single source per article gave relevance to the selected individuals, whereas the other three newspapers relied on multiple sources to give a broader view of the story. *Daily Maverick* and *Sowetan* used a variety of sources including official sources in the form of government officials to get their perspective on matters. However, the official voices expose their lack of urgency in solving issues. The newspapers frame the authorities' use of language to hold them accountable. In addition research played a key role in this aspect as background information was needed when probing questions to the authority. Duncan (2014) suggests that lessons from reporting on the Marikana massacre in 2012, where journalists consulted those in business, political affiliations, management, government and the police but not mineworkers, have aided them to improve to cover all angle and to engage with multiple sources.

Protests divided on racial lines – From the articles analysed there were sentiments that connect the problem of police brutality to race. This was evident in how the different newspapers

reflected on the treatment of black protestors by the police as compared to white protestors. The story of white farmers in Senekal, Free State Province protesting over a case of farm murder in the area is one of the typical examples on how the police handled a situation that was deemed to be volatile. Public order policing was not exercised as compared to when dealing with service delivery protests or #FeesMustFall student protests. The story of Senekal farmers protest appeared in some of the articles analysed in this study. The story represents another form of protest that received media attention and was prevalent in South Africa. The R2P project (2017) highlighted that the police show extreme hostility towards students. This was evident in the #FeesMustFall protest where police at Wits University acted hostile towards black student protestors over students of other races. The Marikana massacre was also another example of the type of hostility the police projected towards the miners and black people.

Critical reproach to police brutality – The four newspapers provided different approach to the situation of police brutality. The framing of media coverage highlighted previous experiences of protest that turn violent and the newspapers were very critical of the police misconduct and approach to student protest. *Daily Maverick* and *Mail & Guardian* were very critical of the issue of police misconduct and its continuation in the country especially when it comes to protests. The two newspapers used thematic reporting by providing comparative reproach to past protests and issues that led to incidents of police brutality. The newspapers articulated those past events related to police brutality and asked pertinent questions. Moreover, lessons from covering the Marikana massacre added wealth of knowledge and experience on how to report the Ntumba's killing. *Sowetan* resorted to using resources on the ground covering all angles of the story and ensured that the story of Ntumba's killing put police brutality and misconduct on the spotlight. Adding multiple voices and of the family to provide different perspectives which highlights or negate the issue of police brutality.

5.3. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the framing of news in the killing of Mthokozisi Ntumba and the court trial of the four accused police officers that followed. Aspects of framing have been observed and analysed from the four different newspapers which covered the story. The data findings revealed different frames used by the four selected newspapers show differences and similarities in how they story of Ntumba was covered. *Sowetan* and *Daily Sun* provided updates of the story as it unfolds from the day of the killing and during the court trial whereas, *Daily Maverick* and *Mail & Guardian* focused on providing 'a story within a story' by addressing,

shedding light on some other issues affecting the country along with that of police brutality. The use of language was different and style of writing was unique for each newspaper as it forms part of their target readers. The victim was portrayed as bystander killed as one of the many cases of police brutality in South Africa. The next section provides conclusion.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of the Study

In conclusion, this study analysed the reporting by *Daily Maverick*, *Daily Sun*, *Mail & Guardian* and *Sowetan* newspapers on Mthokozisi Ntumba's case - a bystander killed by police officials. The data analysed was obtained from four selected newspapers' online digital platforms (specifically their websites).

The study was informed by the following research questions:

- How did the *Sowetan*, *Daily Sun*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian* newspapers report in the police brutality case of Ntumba?
- How and why did the four newspapers differ in their media coverage during the Witsstudents protest?
- What indications of bias were identified in the media coverage of Ntumba's case?

From the data analysed in the four selected newspapers, the study found that different newspapers cover news differently. There are many elements of framing used to get the story across and ensure that the target readership is achieved. It is one way the media continues to exist by creating news that suits their audience and maintain consistency in their reporting is a key determinant. Entman's (1993) view that framing involves selection and salience is evident in how the four selected newspapers covered police brutality in the case of Ntumba. The different newspapers provided a critique of the issue of police brutality and asked for pertinent questions with regard to the role and position of government.

Sowetan provided regular feeds of the day-to-day news in the Ntumba case in order to connect to their audience needs. The newspaper had a team of journalists who covered the news from different angles, providing a broad view of the story. They were able to obtain statements from official and non-official sources. The voices of the family and the pain of losing a loved one as articulated in the newspaper evoked memories of the Marikana massacre, and the killing of Andries Tatane. *Daily Sun* on the other hand, as a tabloid newspaper often criticised for producing sensational news, provided more salience on quotes from the ground. It also gave voice to the citizens, those who were part of the protest and the official sources. Nonetheless, the newspaper is also known for its catchy headlines and use of language. Pollak and Kubrin (2007) argue that language significantly affects how the public forms opinions. It was no different with *Daily Sun* in the coverage of police brutality in the Ntumba case.

Daily Maverick provided a critical reproach to police brutality. The newspaper gave more

salience to the far-reaching implications of police brutality. Detailed research in the coverage of the story emphasised that there is a need to hold the authorities to account and seek pertinent answers to the problem of police brutality. *Mail & Guardian* similar to *Daily Maverick* provided a bigger picture approach to the story. The focus was less on the case of Ntumba but the problem of police brutality in the country. Another issue raised was about race – especially when it comes to the treatment of black protestors versus white protestors. In essence the police are seen as enforcing the apartheid mode of operation in public order policing when it harshly deals with black people over white people.

The four selected newspapers reported Wits students' protest differently. The experience of covering the #FeesMustFall protest and the Marikana massacre was evident in the broad coverage of the Ntumba's case as another example of police brutality. Another important factor was the close proximity of the protest to some of the newspaper publications site – the protest was in Johannesburg a few kilometres to some of the newspapers that can easily device resources and personnel to cover the story. Lecheler and de Vreese (2019) argued that as part of issue interpretations, news can encourage particular trains of thought. The Wits student protest activated some ideas that the event might turn out to be similar to the past students' protests that makes it newsworthy. Journalists use such framing effect of issue interpretations to device resources and time to cover such a story.

The *Sowetan* used all its resources on the ground to cover the story in great length. This was done through getting different perspectives from quite a number of sources who witnessed the event as it unfolded. The different voices aided in determining the newsworthiness of the story. *Daily Sun* as a tabloid newspaper that caters for low-income readers with a lower LSM, gave voice to its readers through the use of catchy headlines, use of social media to expand the story to other platforms for a wider readership. The use of pictorial/graphical images aided in showing newsworthiness of the story. During the court trial for example, the focus on the four accused's face masks revealed various connotation (i.e., COVID-19 mask restriction or remaining anonymous till the end of the trial). During the protest the identity of the police officer who fired the shot could not be identified which led to their acquittal due to insufficient evidence.

Daily Maverick on the other hand was based on in-depth analysis of the story and linked it to other similar cases such as that of Nathaniel Julies in Eldorado Park. The newspaper used past issues (i.e., Marikana massacre, Sharpeville massacre, Andries Tatane and others) to highlight how deepened the crisis of police brutality has turned out to be especially during protests and moreover, expose the authority for not taking decisive actions to end it. *Mail & Guardian* took an

angle of race relations as part of the pertinent issues that relates to police brutality and protest. Personal reflections from the journalist and contributors assist in raising different arguments and cover different scopes with the umbrella of police brutality.

Duncan (2016) states that the “media can make or break the police’s image through framing of police actions against protests as being legitimate or illegitimate.” An article titled; “*Police brutality ‘of serious concern’, says Bheki Cele*” (Sowetan, 12 April 2021) speaks to the extent of the crisis and the tarnished image of the police. Thus, the argument by Duncan responds to the third research question *What indications of bias were identified in the media coverage of Ntumba’s case?*

The media as a fourth estate has a duty to impart news and information for public consumption. In a democratic state such as South Africa, the media plays a powerful role in uniting society and informing them of the country’s political developments. During the apartheid governments, the South African media and newspapers were divided over racial lines in terms of “white news and black news” (Van Grondelle, 2019: 8). In addition, the biases that have overwhelmed South African media have their origins in the apartheid administrations. In the context of this study, the killing of a bystander during the Wits students’ protest at the hands of the police officers who are meant to protect them, evoked emotions and memories of many other events, some which received media attention while others remain unknown. Thus, the four selected newspapers covered the news of Ntumba’s killing differently and shared some similarities in terms of some of the pictures used. In essence this ensured that their readers were kept updated of any developments in the case of Ntumba, Wits students’ protest, and the issue of police brutality in the country.

Although media bias exists in terms of how the newspapers cover their stories on the Ntumba case, this affects the credibility of media houses and news reports in South Africa. The use of language, narration style, pictorial images, and emotional appeals are some of the frames that contribute to media bias. The media frames tend to affect how the newspapers position the articles in the Ntumba’s case. Whenever, there is a crisis the media must remain objective and impartial to maintain the credibility of being the most trusted source of information for the masses. In addition, it is also the responsibility of the readers to select what to consume and what not to consume. In a post-democratic South Africa, media freedom is parallel and free to operate but the onus also lies with the reader on what to consume and not consume.

6.2. Limitations and Comments for Further Research

The study only concentrated on a single case of police brutality in the Ntumba's case using four selected newspapers covering the story in English language. However, the issue of police

brutality is a national issue which affects most people in different communities. A comparable study would be interesting to analyse the issue of police brutality in a different setting, with other media platforms such as television news, social media and a different language to observe how framing is used in a different environment.

Most studies using content analysis methodology analyse quantitative data. Quantitative method can analyse a large sample, although this study relied on qualitative method to seek to obtain views, insights, and opinions from the data consisting of media texts from the four selected newspapers. A similar study can be conducted using quantitative method with a large sample size to measure the extent of the problem of police brutality and the framing of news around police brutality.

The issue of race is also pertinent as the study observed. It is important to explore this aspect especially in the case of Senekal white farmers' protest or any other significant event that relate to police brutality to analyse elements of framing of news from a different race group.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



From: Dr Dinesh Balliah,

Acting Director, dinesh.balliah@wits.ac.za

To: The Faculty Officer, Humanities Wits University

Date: 2 February 2023

Re: Reader's report and changes: Ms Amukelani Magomani

Dear colleague,

This letter serves to confirm that Ms Magomani has satisfactorily attended to the changes requested by Prof Franz Kruger, the reader for the proposal as part of the internal reader process.

With sincere thanks,

Dinesh
Balliah.

02 February 2023



Miss Amukelani Joan Magomani

Student Number: 2131720 Unit No 2

Inzalo
No 4 Clinton Road
New Redruth Johannesburg 1450
Gauteng
South Africa
2023

20 February

CC. Dr Dinesh Balliah

Dear Miss Amukelani Joan Magomani

DECISION ON RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS BY
COURSEWORK AND RESEARCH REPORT

I am pleased to advise you of the decision reached by the reader/readers of the Graduate Studies Committee on your proposal entitled: ***“Comparative study on how Daily Maverick, Sowetan, Daily Sun And the Mail & Guardian newspapers framed their coverage in the case of Mthokozisi Ntumba.”***

Reader's decision on proposal:

Revised proposal accepted.

I confirm that Dr Dinesh Balliah has been appointed as your supervisor.
Please take note of the information on the Criteria for submitting research for examination which is attached and ensure that the Faculty is informed of any changes of address during the year.

Kindly note that all MA and PhD candidates who would like to graduate as soon as possible must ensure that they meet the ETD requirements within six (6) weeks of receipt of the examiners' reports by the supervisor. **A student is required to remain registered in the Faculty until his/her graduation.**

Yours Sincerely

M Ntseare

Mpho Ntseare (Ms) Faculty of Humanities Private Bag X 3
Wits, 2050

Private Bag 3, WITS 2050, South Africa | T +27 11 717 4007 | E help.humanities@wits.ac.za | www.wits.ac.za/humanities



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25 April 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that we have granted Amukelani Magoman (2131720), who is pursuing a Master of Media Studies and Journalism degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, permission to use the attached image for academic purposes.

Kind regards,

Amos Mananyetso
Editor: Daily Sun



Articles Analysed

Sowetan Newspaper

1. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-07-11-ntumbas-family-eager-to-fight-onfor-justice/>
2. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-07-08-i-didnt-vanish-i-was-never-called-to-testify-in-ntumba-case-sure-din/>
3. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2022-07-08-we-found-the-witness-police-couldnt/>
4. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2022-07-06-ntumba-verdict-a-blow-to-rule-of-law/>
5. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-07-06-ntumba-accused-free-after-key-witness-goes-missing/>
6. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-07-05-charges-against-cops-accused-of-killing-mthokozisi-ntumba-dropped/>
7. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-07-05-drop-charges-against-cops-accused-of-ntumba-murder/>
8. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-03-11-brother-breaks-silence-on-ntumbas-death-anniversary/>
9. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2022-03-10-mthokozisi-ntumbas-death-by-rubber-bullet-was-avoidable-rights-institute/>
10. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-03-10-student-activists-intensify-campaign-to-rename-street-after-ntumba/>
11. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-03-10-state-to-fight-ntumba-shooting-lawsuit-says-family-lawyer/>
12. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-15-student-tells-mthokozisi-ntumba-trial-of-being-shot-twice-in-the-back/>
13. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-14-historic-university-debt-haunts-returning-students/>
14. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-10-former-student-testifies-about-being-shot-on-day-mthokozisi-ntumba-was-killed/>
15. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-09-police-officer-tells-court-of-nyalagoing-after-students-on-day-ntumba-was-shot/>

16. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-08-court-hears-polices-white-weakrubber-bullets-cannot-kill-a-person-in-ntumbas-shooting-trial/>
17. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-08-commander-on-day-of-ntumbashooting-testifies-without-cops-diary/>
18. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-02-commander-admits-leaving-outcrucial-details-relating-to-ntumbas-killing/>
19. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-01-ntumba-murder-accused-did-notreport-shooting-to-commanders/>
20. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2022-01-31-expert-witness-accused-of-doctoring-footage-ofntumba-shooting/>
21. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-02-08-commander-on-day-of-ntumbashooting-testifies-without-cops-diary/>
22. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-28-ntumba-shooting-use-of-rubberbullets-explained/>
23. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-27-i-saw-video-footage-of-an-officerfiring-at-people-on-a-city-street/>
24. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-27-ntumba-trial-patrol-cop-to-take-thestand/>
25. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-26-officer-admits-she-doesntunderstand-what-close-range-entails/>
26. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-26-mthokozisi-ntumba-postmortemunder-scrutiny-in-court/>
27. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-25-i-received-the-report-but-it-did-notexplain-ntumbas-killing-says-officer/>
28. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-25-mthokozisi-ntumbas-fatal-shootingby-cops-was-not-reported/>
29. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-20-mthokozisi-ntumba-trial-postponedafter-lawyer-falls-ill/>
30. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2022-01-20-ipid-officer-to-take-the-stand-intrial-of-cops-accused-of-killing-mthokozisi-ntumba-at-student-protest/>
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