

A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THREE, SOUTH AFRICAN, ONLINE NEWSPAPERS
(2021-2022) ON THE REPRESENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM
FIGHTERS

by

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A textual analysis of three, South African, online newspapers (2021-2022) on the representation of the Economic Freedom Fighters

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



SIGNATURE

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ABSTRACT

This study, entitled “A textual analysis of three, South African, online newspapers (2021-2022) on the representation of the Economic Freedom Fighters”, is a cross-sectional, mixed methods textual analysis investigating how three South African online newspapers, namely the *Daily Maverick*, *City Press*, and the *Mail & Guardian* represented the political party, Economic Freedom Fighters. The analysis focuses on texts produced and disseminated between January 2021 and June 2022, with the target population being the written texts and images from the above-mentioned online newspapers; specifically, all the stories reporting on the Economic Freedom Fighters (henceforth referred to as the ‘EFF’). Articles from these publications that ran with the EFF (or its member/s) in their headlines, were used as primary data; whereas other articles that related to the EFF or to this study, were approached as secondary data. Relying on purposive sampling, the researcher visited the websites of these newspapers to access stories written about the EFF; the method was deemed suitable to maximise understanding of the research problem.

Through the use of her personal laptop and data bundles, the researcher was able to access the Internet, identify and sample the required online articles, and finally analyse the articles in terms of the textual and visual elements thereof. The articles were analysed to determine whether the newspapers represented the EFF positively, negatively, or neutrally during the given time period. From a political communication perspective, the study contributes to how newspapers, or the media in general, gather and report political content, and it is hoped that the findings will promote objective and unbiased reporting.

KEYWORDS: Economic Freedom Fighters; Textual analysis; Social semiotics; Representation; Agenda-setting; Framing; Political communications; Mixed methods research; Online newspapers, *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, *City Press*

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research topic and the focus of the study; it unpacks the research problem and sub-problems which explain the issue that is being investigated. A discussion of the key assumptions and the context and background of the study are outlined to detail how the problem is a problem and why it must be investigated. To clearly articulate what the study aims to achieve, the project's objectives are also outlined and explained in this chapter before a conclusion is offered to sum up the chapter.

1.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

South African political parties deserve to be objectively represented by the media to enable the public to have balanced perceptions about these political parties based on factual and fair reporting. Better-informed citizens can make informed decisions about, for example, which party they prefer to associate themselves with in terms of representing their interests and being deserving of their votes.

Within the context of political communication, the current study uses textual analysis as analytical framework to analyse data using a mixed methods research approach. The purpose of the study is to investigate how three South African online newspapers: *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press* represented the Economic Freedom Fighters in their digitally disseminated news articles. It should be noted, however, that the study focuses mainly on qualitatively interpreting the sample of data, as the quantitative method was used to highlight which publications and how many articles represented the EFF negatively, neutrally, or positively. The timeline that was focused on spans the period from January 2021 to June 2022.

The researcher understands political communication to be any form of communication that relates to politics and political discourse. According to Robert E. Denton and Gary Woodward (1998:11), the crucial factor that makes communication 'political' is not the source of a message [...], but its content and purpose. When the media, such as the selected newspaper titles, produce political content, that is considered as one of the

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forms of political communication. This sort of communication can take place between the media, public, and political parties.

The systems of political communication and the media environment have changed radically with the expansion of mobile, social, and digital media (Vowe & Henn 2016), the decrease of traditional news media in terms of their business models and dominance over media consumption (Mitchell et al 2016:5), the obscurity of limits between the media and their genres (Chadwick 2013:9), as well as the citizens not being attached to news media and institutional politics like before (Bennett & Iyengar 2008). Blumler (2016:27) asserts that if the systems of political communication at the turn of the millenniums were facing 'momentous changes', evolution would have since advanced and intensified changes in political communication and media environments.

Some of the stories that the newspapers focused on in this study cover, include political news and current affairs. Based on a preliminary Internet search by the researcher back in 2021, it was evident that the newspapers in question had done intense coverage on the EFF during that particular period. Furthermore, a lot of people visit and/or subscribe to these newspapers' websites for stories.

The *Daily Maverick* newspaper has a reach of 1.7 million monthly readers and over 100 000 newsletter subscribers (Charalambous 2019). According to the newspaper, to better serve their readers, they track reader habits, the content that the readers prefer, and the time that each reader spends on their site in a session (*Daily Maverick* [sa]). Part of their content includes political news.

The *Mail & Guardian* is a weekly newspaper and website, and focuses on, among others, political analysis, investigative reporting, and local arts (*Mail & Guardian* 1994). The newspaper has a reach outside South Africa as it allows readers from other countries to subscribe to it, and garners over one million unique browsers per month (Rate Card 2020). With their offices based in Johannesburg, and owned by *Media24*, the *City Press* describes itself as an agenda-setting South African news brand. It publishes on various platforms, including online and social media, and has a readership of more than two million (About us 2017). They deliver their stories in textual, visual, and audio podcasts format.

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Considering the readership of the above-mentioned newspapers, their websites experience significant 'traffic'; that is to say, a lot of viewers/readers visit their sites. In addition, unlike other media offerings which can be restricted due to time, costs, and space, newspapers frequently have more political news as they have less of these restrictions (De Vreese et al 2006:483).

The selected newspapers were easy to access from the Internet. However, even though it is possible to access old(er) data from the Internet irrespective of when it was published, the researcher remained aware of the possibility that such data can be easily taken down from websites. For that reason, the researcher subscribed to the websites of the selected newspapers, and saved all the articles that reported on the EFF by storing them offline on a hard drive, and where necessary, made printouts for backup and to highlight texts to simplify analysis.

In terms of new media, the use of the Internet – through computers or cellphones – has become notably dominant globally. Internet resources have simplified journalists' jobs and improved the quality of their work (Callison 2003). Journalists use Internet resources to access various information, such as to find experts, collect background information, provide context, find facts and ready sources, keep up to date with current affairs, and come up with story ideas (Middleberg & Ross 2002).

Lately, the public relies more on the Internet for news than traditional media. Most traditional and print media such as newspapers, have upgraded from being *just* traditional and print, to also producing and disseminating news digitally/online. The Internet and its tools that can be used to access news “ ... are the highly noticeable and considerable measures of the globalised world media” (Ali 2009:105). These Internet tools assist readers to catch up on missed news that were disseminated traditionally by enabling these readers to access news stories online from any location and at any time.

Not only does producing content online break the geographical restrictions among the readers, and engagement between the readers and publications, but it also accommodates different age groups, from those who can and cannot use or access the Internet. This also partly addresses the issue of electronic literacy and digital divide. Electronic literacy is about the capability to read and interpret information in the

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electronic space (Yustika & Iswati 2020). Chaacha Mwita (2010) warns, though, that the capacity of new media platforms for nurturing democracy in places such as South Africa is still limited mainly because Internet connections locally are still slow compared to the Western world.

Digital divide, on the other hand, is about the breach between those who have access to digital/electronic material and those who do not (Hargittai 2003:827). For the researcher, more needs to be done by Third World countries to invest in Internet connectivity, as the Internet is one of the components that show transformation in the media. In the context of this study, transformation speaks to the changes that have been occurring in the media and communication environment over the years.

The EFF was chosen among other South African political parties as they have (and continue to) express their concerns regarding how they are represented by the media, including by some of the selected online newspapers in the current study (Poplak 2019). Furthermore, the EFF is one of the three biggest political parties in South Africa, making them an influential constituency. This South African political party has also demonstrated notable growth since its formation in 2013 (Madia 2020). The growth that the EFF has demonstrated is greater than that of most South African opposition political parties such as the United Democratic Movement (UDM), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) that have been in existence longer than the EFF. The EFF's growth has seen them becoming the second biggest opposition party to the ruling government after the Democratic Alliance (DA).

The growth of the party is demonstrated during elections in terms of the votes that the party acquires. For example, in the 2014 general elections, the EFF received over 1.1 million votes or just over six percent (6%) popular support, resulting in 25 seats within the national assembly (South Africa. Independent Electoral Commission 2014). South Africans and the global society arguably did not expect a newly formed party to show such progress and to shake up the country's political landscape in that manner.

Following the 2014 general elections, were the 2016 municipal elections where the EFF acquired over 1.2 million votes, which, even when it did not win the key metropolitan governments, enabled the party to form coalitions with the second and largest

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opposition party, the DA (Satgar 2019:600). In terms of coalition arrangements in the metropolitan governments such as Tshwane and Johannesburg, it meant the DA could not make governance decisions without consulting the EFF. In terms of politics, the researcher understands coalition as when political parties who are democratically empowered through public votes collectively govern to represent the interests of the citizens.

The EFF had frequently raised issues and sparked debates on ‘thorny’ issues that, according to the researcher, received little attention from other political parties, including the ruling government. These issues include the land expropriation without compensation debate (Frequently asked questions 2020), the nationalisation of mines and banks proposition (Modisane 2013), the recommendation for insourcing of contract workers in government institutions (Dlamini 2020), as well as a motion of no confidence against former president, Mr Jacob Zuma (Makinana 2018).

Regarding economic liberation and the nationalisation of mines and banks, in late 2015, the party arranged a public march in Johannesburg to hand over a memorandum of demands calling for ‘economic freedom’ to the South African Reserve Bank, the Chamber of Mines, and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (Essop 2016:6). According to the researcher, these issues seem to be controversial for other political parties to profusely raise. The rallying slogan of the party is “Economic Freedom in our Lifetime”, and for Satgar (2019:581), the EFF fulfills this slogan with a set of performances, discursive interventions, and tactical maneuvers that are unleashing a new set of political practices in South Africa.

The current study applies a mixed methods research approach – mainly leaning on a qualitative research design – to examine a sample of texts produced by these newspapers in their reporting on issues (in)directly involving the EFF; thus, exploring the representation of the EFF through the said texts. The quantitative research method relied on in this study was used to briefly interpret the results numerically. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, henceforth), as an approach toward textual analysis and suitable for a qualitatively swayed study, is used to explore and describe the choice of language and words used by the newspapers in how they represented the EFF across

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the sample of analysed texts. Social semiotics was also deployed as an additional analytic approach to study the images and captions in the sampled newspaper articles.

Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy (2002:2) regard CDA as a specific kind of methodology used in qualitative studies that tries to understand the processes whereby reality begins to exist. Discourse analysis has been shown to be relevant in media studies as it provides insights into the manners in which newspaper articles become meaningful to news consumers by examining the textual patterns that serve as communication vehicles (Jensen 1987:8).

As Brian McNair (2003:31) states, for the effects of media messages to be clearly understood, there needs to be an understanding of the social semiotics of, among others, “a given communication situation and acknowledging the potential for differential decoding of the message which always exists”. Bearing in mind the communicative potential of visuals (images for this study) in the media, social semioticians explore ways of analysing the intersection of, among others, language, images, and spatial arrangement, which are relevant for this current study.

The articles from the websites of the selected newspapers are used as first-hand data, thus primary data. Relevant data that had already been collected by other authors were accessed from sources such as books, journals, and citations, and used as secondary data. Purposive sampling was used as the online newspapers were intentionally chosen as accessible samples for the study. The target and accessible population, as noted earlier, were the political content from the websites (articles) of the selected online newspapers specifically as they relate to the EFF.

Topics relating to media representation from a political context have been explored by several scholars such as Brian McNair (2018), Hajo Boomgaarden (2017) and Shani Orgad (2014). Regarding the EFF, Nkosinathi Msiza (2017) conducted a study to determine if four daily South African newspapers may have influenced their publications to be biased in favour or against the three biggest political parties contesting the 2016 local government elections, which included the EFF. Essop (2016) conducted a study focusing on the collective subjectivity and political representation within the EFF in the North-West Province. The research focused on two interlinked levels that answer

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questions around the EFF as a new political formation. The author argued that the EFF should be seen as populist and that it represents a new fascism in the twenty-first century shaped by contemporary South African and global socioeconomic conditions (Essop 2016:37).

Satgar's (2019:581) *Black Neofascism? The Economic Freedom Fighters in South Africa*, analysed the EFF through explaining its ascendance and analytically situating it in the conjunctural moment of ANC rule. According to the author, tendencies such as race hatred, violence, and a politics of polarisation are mounting with the party. The author's argument was that the party "does not represent a counterhegemonic challenge to the ANC but is rather a challenge to post-apartheid democracy and nation building" (Satgar 2019:581).

For this current study, the researcher attempts to analyse the political content of the selected newspapers in how they represent the EFF, whether it is through negative, positive, or neutral content framings. By negative content, the researcher means reporting that is unfavourable and may harm the image of the party; positive content means favourable or good reporting; while neutral content, in the context of this study, means providing objective and unbiased coverage. The theories that the researcher focuses on in the literature review to help frame the study, are representation; agenda-setting theory; framing theory, and social semiotics, which are usually observed in media practices, including the press.

According to Robert Entman (2007), while the representation theory focusses on *how* the subject is portrayed, the agenda-setting theory highlights that the media can choose *which* stories to cover, while the framing theory argues that journalists can highlight certain aspects of the story over other aspects to promote specific interpretations in the readers' minds. Social semiotics theory, furthermore, is relevant in the description of latent and manifest meaning of images. That said, the researcher has analysed and compared the written and visual texts from the sampled newspaper articles about the EFF to draw informed and objective conclusions as to whether the published content is more negative, positive, or neutral as regards this South African political party.

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The researcher lays down the foundation of what political communication is by engaging with the subfield and entwining it with the context of the study. The study further indicates how the political communications subfield has developed and that it is not just limited to traditional media, but electronic media as well, in an era where digitalisation dominates.

When newspapers such as the selected population of the study disseminate news online, it demonstrates that they have embraced the digital revolution to reach more readers fast, at any time and from any location. By explicating what political communication entails and how it knits with news distributed by media, for this study, it empowers the researcher to critically examine the context of the news coverage of the EFF by the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the three South African online newspapers: *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*, represented the EFF as a political party during the period spanning January 2021 and June 2022.

This study focuses on language and examines whether the choice of words used by these newspapers in their reporting on the EFF are negative, positive, or neutral. This approach assists the study in determining whether any of the selected newspapers had editorial biasedness or fairness towards the EFF. The researcher looks at the written texts used in the sampled articles, as well as how the newspapers contextualised their political content regarding the EFF, making the study exploratory in nature.

For the researcher, the study is important as it also examines if the three selected online newspapers adhere to ethics that guide the media in terms of collecting and distributing news. For example, chapter one of the Press Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media by the Press Council of South Africa (2022), states that the media ought to report fairly, truthfully and accurately. This document also indicates that media reporting must be balanced by not diverting from facts through misrepresentation, distortion and exaggeration, among others. The study, therefore, uncovers if the three newspapers adhered to such principles.

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In this ever-evolving digital era, the study reiterates that it is important for the public to consume truthful and unprejudiced content. The manner in which the public engages with media content can have an impact on their lives. For example, if the EFF is represented as a corrupt party that governs in a specific municipality, such negative reporting can lead to community unrest and protests in those areas.

Mr Julius Malema, political head of the EFF, has accused the media of being part of the “Ramaphosa Defence Force”, and that the media fail to scrutinise political figures to the same degree (du Toit 2018). Further, he has accused the media, including the three selected newspapers of being biased toward their reportage of the EFF. Accordingly, this study also unearths if he was not exaggerating. For the researcher, this is also important to address as not only the media should be factual, but the EFF should not also make baseless accusations as that would reflect the oppression of media freedom by the party.

1.2.1 Research question

The main research question guiding this study is: How do South African online newspapers, *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian* and *City Press* represent the South African political party, the EFF? The study questions if the party is represented positively, negatively or neutrally. The question is motivated by the continuous concerns raised by members of the EFF regarding how they believe they are being reported on by the media. Among their concerns, in 2014 for instance, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) banned the party from its broadcasts, and the party accused the national broadcaster of being manipulated by puppets of specific political parties to ban whatever relates to the EFF (EFF 'banned' from ... 2014).

1.2.2 Key assumptions:

Furthermore, through a consideration of the study context as discussed in the subsection below, and the main research question affiliated therewith, the researcher arrived at the following assumptions in relation to the topic:

- 1 There is editorial subjectivity in one or more of the selected newspapers in their reporting on the EFF.

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2 News prioritised by the media can set the agenda by shaping what the public thinks about in terms of political news.

3 The representation of the EFF through written texts and images by newspapers can frame issues in a way that is appealing to the audience and promotes specific understanding of issues.

1.2.3 Context and background of the study

The EFF was formed in 2013 by the former African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) president, Mr Julius Malema. Mr Malema's expulsion and parting of ways with the ANC came after the party leadership failed to respond to calls by the ANCYL for the nationalisation of specific sectors, which caused conflict between Malema and the then president of the ANC and South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma (Satgar 2019:583). The EFF boldly describes itself as a radical and militant economic emancipation movement, with the aim of, among others, bringing together revolutionary, community-based organisations and lobby groups under the umbrella of the political party pursuing the struggle of economic emancipation (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013).

While there have been public questions regarding what the party stands for, and who and what it represents, its founder has always asserted that it represents the black middle and poor classes (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013). With the red colour representing the bloodshed of liberation icons, what has become known as the Marikana Massacre, where protesting mineworkers were reportedly killed by members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) in the North-West Province, can be an example of the bloodshed referred to by the EFF (Pithouse 2013). This massacre is a point of symbolic mobilisation within the EFF that it even held its official launch at Marikana (Pithouse 2013). As a result of the support that it received, the party secured over 1.2 million votes in the 2014 general elections, which led to it becoming the official opposition to the ANC in the North-West and Limpopo Provinces (South Africa. Independent Electoral Commission 2014).

The EFF is mainly run by former ANCYL officials and is described differently by various commentators. Some describe it as a populist party (Mbetse 2014), others as

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aggressively disruptive (Nel 2019:4), while others perceive it as corrupt (Mvumvu 2019; Du Toit 2018). Mr Malema has been the centre of attention for most commentators since he left the ANC and started his own party, which surprised many with its rapid growth.

The *Daily Maverick* is an online daily newspaper founded in 2009. Its founders assert to have no affiliation to any other media group, political party, or religious organisation (*Daily Maverick* 2009). The freely circulating newspaper focusses on, among others, news, opinion, information, and analysis. Run by an independently owned, private investment company, it is funded through, among others, advertisement, and readership contributions. Based on a cursory Internet search on the website of the *Daily Maverick* in early 2021, there have been a few debates between the EFF and the *Daily Maverick* especially since 2019. These debates appear to have mainly related to freedom of speech and media freedom, as well as how the newspaper has been representing the EFF. The EFF accused the newspaper of being biased in their reporting of the party (Mahlase 2019). On the contrary, Mahlase (2019) accused the party of not respecting media freedom and freedom of expression, and that the party abuses and harasses journalists that do not agree with their views.

Having reported greatly about the party, the three selected newspapers have also experienced a ban by the EFF at its events. The *Daily Maverick* was among the media brands banned from the EFF's congress in 2019, and the newspaper felt that the ban was unconstitutional and was because of the newspaper's "groundbreaking reporting – specifically on the VBS scandal" on the party (*Daily Maverick* 2019). Though the ban happened before this study's focus period (2021 to 2022), this demonstrates that the EFF's sour relationship with this publication goes way back and persists as, for example, they continue to report about the alleged VBS corruption scandal linked to the party (Van Wyk 2023). Also, the *Daily Maverick's* Stephen Grootes (2021) has accused the EFF leader of being irrelevant, repeatedly encouraging violence and risking people's lives by calling on an action protest (gathering) to demand COVID-19 vaccines.

Even though Section 16 of the South African Constitution protects media freedom (South Africa. Department of Justice 1996: Sec.16.1), for the researcher, Mr Malema's

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concern also raises the question of how far media freedom and freedom of speech should go, but that is, of course, a topic for the attention of future researchers.

The online newspaper, *Mail & Guardian*, is owned by *M&G Media*, and focuses on, among others, political analysis, investigative reporting, local arts and popular culture (*Mail & Guardian* [sa]). The newspaper describes itself as a “quality investigative and comment news publication, based on a culture of editorial independence and excellence” and maintains an activist soul. *Mail & Guardian* further describes itself as an accountable and transparent newspaper, which upholds a strict code of editorial independence (*Mail & Guardian* [sa]). Part of their aim is to combat racial, political, and religious prejudice, and to safeguard freedom of expression (*Mail & Guardian* [sa]).

One of the stories that the *Mail & Guardian* has been following on the EFF in 2021 is the lack of consultation by its leader, Mr Julius Malema, on his visit to the former South African president, Mr Jacob Zuma’s homestead in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal (Tandwa 2021a). This publication has also covered numerous stories on the victory achieved by the party (Sussman 2021), consistently covered court cases by or against the EFF (Madubela 2022) and has depicted Mr Malema’s political life as ‘militancy’ as related to the party’s manifesto (Koko 2022).

The *City Press*, lastly, is an award-winning, online newspaper that also distributes its flagship print edition on Sundays nationally; the public also has a daily newsletter (About us 2017). The stories covered by this newspaper about the EFF include pieces on how the party has defended its call to open up South Africa’s borders to African nationals during the COVID-19 pandemic (Khumalo & Dlamini 2021).

The *City Press* has further criticised the EFF’s condemnation of journalists and for exposing them to danger by publishing their contact details on social media (*City Press* 2019). The *City Press* has also questioned the EFF’s banning of certain media houses at their elective conference, which the party claimed it did not have the capacity to handle the large number of attendees and journalists for security reasons (Nyathi 2019). The EFF previously criticised the *City Press*’ editor, Ferial Haffajee, for suspending the publication’s journalists and being vocal about it on social media (Nyathi 2019).

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For Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972), while the concept of agenda-setting from a media perspective can convince people what to think about, the concept of framing can shape how people think about an issue. In terms of framing, the authors uphold that it is about thinking about the news within a specific context.

Key to representation, and in alignment with scholarly propositions regarding framing and agenda-setting, Sibusiso Nkomo (2016:80) states that the South African press tend to represent political leadership and governance through a focus on the incumbent in leadership positions, their personality, history, and their actions. According to Antonio Menendez Alarcon (2010:398), “the media can structure public perspective”, and for the researcher of the current study, the media can contribute toward creating a framework of reference on the EFF. It is, therefore, relevant for the researcher to investigate and critically analyse the linguistic and visual aspects used by the selected newspapers in how they represented the EFF between January 2021 to June 2022. Thus, examining whether the political contents disseminated by the selected newspapers about the EFF have been negative, positive, or neutral.

According to Teddy Mungwari (2017:14), newspapers have a chosen agenda which almost inevitably influences news selection. Conducting research that looks at how political parties are represented by the selected newspapers, can, if need be, encourage the said newspapers to rethink their reportage on political issues. The current study is thus important in unveiling the role that the media play in political communication in terms of representing political parties and their leaders. The study also contributes to understanding the meaning of words used by the newspapers when covering political news, by advancing an argument regarding whether these word choices are fueled by negative, positive, or neutral connotations.

1.2.4 Reflection on the construction of the EFF

Before the establishment of the EFF in 2013, the expulsion of Mr Malema from the ANC as its president of the ANCYL, was a challenging period for him. Mr Malema got into trouble with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) as his tax affairs were allegedly not compliant with the rules set by this tax collecting authority, and as a result, his assets were seized (Nieftagodien 2015:446). When Mr Malema co-founded the EFF

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with the then ANCYL spokesperson, Mr Floyd Shivambu, there were mixed feelings from commentators about whether this populist party was fit for purpose in the political arena (Mbetse 2014:35).

While some young, black and underprivileged South Africans considered the party to be an alternative form of political representation, some commentators perceived the party as a threat to the country's democracy due to its political preferences, attitudes and behaviour (Nel 2019). It can be argued that the party is perceived by some young black citizens as an alternative to eradicate the injustices of the past such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, which still exist as South Africa approaches the end of the third decade of democracy.

When the EFF introduced itself on 11 July 2013, it was criticised for indicating in their manifesto that it aimed to combat patriarchy while its leadership structure was male dominated, which may affect how they address especially black women's issues in the country (Dlakavu 2017). However, this status has changed as currently, the party's top brass is an equal representation of both men and women (three from each gender).

As the party grew exponentially, it not only expanded in parliament, but it also expanded its existence in higher education institutions across South Africa, establishing the EFF Student Command. This structure represents students' needs and rights in respective institutions; it is, therefore, their mouthpiece on issues such as promoting access to education for the marginalised and a transformed education curriculum. In 2015 and 2016, the EFFSC played an essential role in the Fees Must Fall movement, which criticised the persisting colonial setup of South Africa's education system, patriarchy and knowledge production (Maggott 2019:4). The movement, accordingly, advocated for the cease on study fees increment at higher education institutions, and for the increase on government funding of education.

According to Robert Nyenhuis and Nicola de Jager (2021), the EFF as a Pan-African populist party adopts the Manichean contrast between deceitful elites and subjugate oppressed working-class people. The party's founders indicate that it adopts the Marxist-Leninist-Fanonian principle ((Shivambu and Smith 2014:166), and its campaigns focus on ethnicity and vigorously injects race into South African politics

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(Nyenhuis & De Jager 2021:3). Perhaps the injection of race into politics could be that racial inequality persists in the country. South Africa is a democratic state, but it is ironic that black people are the majority in terms of number, but are the minority in terms of having basic human needs, equal opportunities and economic benefit, among others. Further attesting that the party employs an Afrocentric theory, Thatelo (2022:72) found that the background music in the party's political television advertisements from 2014 to 2021, centred around black people rather than other racial groups.

For the researcher, the EFF embraces the Freedom Charter that acknowledges that people have been defrauded their "birthright to land, and, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality", further stating that all citizens should benefit from equal rights and opportunities (South Africa. Department of Education 2005:12). However, needless to say as indicated in its manifesto that the party prioritises the prevention of black people's exploitation and marginalisation from economic benefits (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013). Robinson (2014) argues that most of the EFF's manifesto content was sourced from the ANCYL policies during Mr Malema's leadership tenure in the league between 2008 to 2012.

The EFF embraces a unique political symbol in their attire, representing what the party stands for as a brand. With the red colour dominating their attire, they wear overalls, berets, dresses with dukes, which are the uniforms traditionally worn by some general worker. For that reason, the DA used to mimic them for portraying themselves as uneducated unskilled labour (Nyenhuis & De Jager 2021:3). The attire of a political party can be used to communicate a political message, and Mr Malema asserts that the red colour from the EFF attire "represents the bloodshed of those who have died during the struggle for economic freedom" (5 reasons why the EFF's ... 2014). The attire also indicates the party's solidarity with and respect for general workers.

Among others, the EFF asserts that it advocates for the redistribution of land through expropriation of land without compensation, anticapitalism, economic emancipation, and it opposes xenophobia and promotes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex's (LGBTI) rights, as well as the nationalisation of the mines (Shivambu and Smith 2014). Regarding enhancing the nationalisation of mines and standing by their slogan

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“Economic freedom in our lifetime” (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013), the party supported the Marikana miners’ demand of wage increment, demonstrating that it was committed to fighting the struggles of poor black people by advocating for better standard of living for them through economic liberation.

The EFF is also known for causing disruptions in parliament sittings whenever it felt that the issues it raised were being ignored by either the parliament’s speaker or the person they were addressing. For example, the party had numerous disruption actions in parliament over the former President Jacob Zuma’s administration and demanded that he adhered to the Constitutional Court ruling to pay back the government money that he spent for his Nkandla homestead renovations (Joseph 2021). Therefore, the party claimed honour that the pressure they exerted on Mr Zuma forced him to resign as president (Whittles 2019). This was an indication that the party believed that political leaders should be accountable, ethical and responsible, and also, the party demonstrated that it does not sweep matters of unethical conduct by government officials under the carpet.

Additionally, the EFF is famous for not beating around the bush and making explicit statements publicly without fear or favour. For example, on the issue of accusing the media of being biased, which is one of the factors that motivated this study, the party criticised the media for accusing the EFF of attacking South African Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan when it asked about his involvement in the country’s state capture during its commission of inquiry, which looked into capture, corruption and fraud in the public sector (Evans 2018). While the EFF maintained that the media protected Mr Gordhan by not asking him hard and relevant questions, the South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) requested the party and other political parties to not call out alleged ‘hypocritic’ journalists by name as that compromised their safety, but to engage with their editors instead (Sanef 2018). For the researcher, this was a fair request by Sanef as it is also important for political leaders to assist in ensuring the safety of journalists and to professionally address whatever concerns they may have with their employers.

1.2.5 The objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the political content produced by the three selected South African newspapers in representing the EFF. Using the CDA and social semiotics analytical approaches, the study seeks to critically examine the texts and images from the selected newspapers to determine and explain their meanings. As such, it will be established whether these meanings are positive, negative or neutral in their underlying messaging. This would assist the researcher to objectively conclude whether the selected newspapers have been unbiased or biased in their reportage or representations of the EFF, which also directly or indirectly speaks to whether the newspapers uphold consistent media ethics in covering political news. In that vein, the following are the research objectives associated with this study:

- Exploratory: The study explores how the EFF, as a political party, is represented by South African online newspapers, the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*.
- Analytical: The study aims to critically analyse a sample of texts and images from online articles by the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press* to observe how they represented the EFF between the period of January 2021 and June 2022.
- Descriptive: In a narrative form, the researcher aims to describe the content of the language used by the three selected South African newspapers in representing the EFF, to determine whether the said content is positive, negative, or neutral.

1.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the topic and what the study focusses on. The research problem, which highlights the issue being investigated, as well as the key assumptions were also highlighted. The context and background of the study, which also looked at why/how the problem is a problem and why it must be investigated, were discussed. The researcher further provided an engaging reflection of the EFF. To clearly articulate what the study aims to achieve, the project's objectives have been outlined and

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explained. The chapter, furthermore, explained that the main objective of the study is to investigate how the selected South African online newspapers represent (that is to say, report on) the EFF as a political party, and the ideological connotations that these representations may encourage. The next two chapters focus on the literature review in terms of studies that have been conducted by various scholars relating to the research issue and the theories that are employed in this study. The theories of focus are representation, agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and social semiotics.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW – PART I

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study consists of a two-part literature review, spanning across chapter two and chapter three of this dissertation. Part one (chapter two) focuses on the theories of representation, agenda-setting, and framing, whereas part two (chapter three) engages the social semiotics theory. Scholarly contributions from the first three theories to be discussed in chapter two, namely, representation, agenda-setting, and framing theory, are relied on to analyse the sampled newspaper articles' written texts in term of words or language. Whereas the fourth theory, social semiotics, is deployed to analyse the images (photographs and captions) associated with the sampled online news articles from the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press* that focus on the EFF. The four theories assist the study to effectively investigate the representation of the EFF by the three newspapers in question.

Swanson (2013:15) regards a theory as providing the description of particular domain of apprehending an occurrence, which can be articulated as a problem, subject, or concept. The researcher will highlight the theories underpinning this study regarding how the EFF is represented by the three selected online South African newspapers. According to Chaffee (1975:15), political communication can be defined as the “role of communication in a political exercise”. CDA is best characterised as an approach or attitude toward textual analysis, considering that its primary activity is analysing texts. By texts, the researcher means words and images. For that reason, the CDA analytical approach will be used in the study.

Using CDA as a social approach that is very context-sensitive, Thomas Huckin (1997:79) remarks that it has great contribution to the interpretation of a given text. CDA tries to link the various levels of analysis, being the text, activity of writing, speaking, listening, and reading that create and interpret that text. Through the representation of the EFF by the selected newspapers, meaning can be produced and exchanged between members of the public. Representation involves the use of images, language and signs; but in this study, the focus is mainly on language through texts.

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Notably, the merging of agenda-setting, framing, and representation theoretical concepts is valuable to indicate how issues were selected and prioritised by the newspapers under scrutiny in this study. Social semiotic theory will offer an understanding as to why specific images may have been chosen for each article that will be analysed, and what message is conveyed by those images.

These theories are relevant for the argumentative advancement of this study as, firstly, the representation theory will indicate how the political party is portrayed (using words) by the selected online newspapers. Secondly, the agenda-setting and framing theories will help demonstrate how the newspapers used their content to set an agenda (that is, facilitating *what* issues to think about) and a frame (that is, facilitating *how* to think about those issues) about the EFF for their readers. Lastly, social semiotics theory is valuable for showing that images (and their captions) can be used to tell a story; therefore, any images of the party that are chosen to accompany the written words of the news article have a direct and/or indirect meaning, and a way that can be interpreted by the readers. All these theories will clarify whether the party is represented negatively, positively, or neutrally by the said newspapers.

Social semiotic resources, which include texts and visual signs, can help us understand messages that are conveyed by the media (newspapers in this study). This theory is relevant in this study as the researcher is analysing texts in terms of words and images (images also as a visual signs), specifically images used by the selected newspapers in representing the EFF. The theories will be discussed mainly from political communication and media contexts.

The study entwines the theoretical framework and literature review by engaging and foregrounding the context of the study and providing scholarly debate relevant in thoroughly analysing how the selected newspapers represent the EFF. To further engage with the literature review, the researcher has consistently and thematically arranged themes for each of the theories in use and interconnects them with the theoretical framework to provide deeper analysis of the party by the publications.

2.2 REPRESENTATION THEORY

Part of the key elements of the representation theory is that it details how an object and subject are portrayed or depicted by the media, in the instance of this study. The researcher critically reflects on the concept mainly from a political context, regarding the EFF as the subject. This critical reflection is done to advance an argument as to how the media (selected newspapers) construct their messages in their textual and visual portrayals of the EFF, whether there are cases of unbiasedness or subjectivity.

According to an Internet search done by the researcher from the year 2020, it was noticed that, in terms of previous studies in media representation regarding politics, most of these studies focused on analysing previous election periods. Therefore, the researcher sees the need to close the gap and extend the scope of political communication by analysing the representation of the selected political party by specific online newspapers.

2.2.1 Seminal authors and bodies of work on representation

The concept of representation was first introduced by Ferdinand Georg Frobenius around 1896 from a mathematical point of view, focusing on infinite groups. However, this is not relevant for this study as the study is in the field of communications. From a slightly different perspective, sociologist Emile Durkheim looks at representation from a collective perspective (collective representation). Durkheim (1898) notes that the concept has broad elements such as myth, ideology, science, and worldview. He explains the term as a symbol that has a standard intellectual and emotional meaning to individuals of a collective, and can be learnt by personal experiences. Personal experiences are usually uncommon, therefore, what is being represented in the mass media can be interpreted from unique perspectives by the individuals of society.

Serge Moscovici (1961;1976) was the developer of a controversial concept: social representation, which suggests a social approach to social knowledge construction. For him, social representation (1972: xiii) is about the establishment of social order and of communication among community or group members through a system of beliefs,

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values, metaphors, and practices. This concept received several criticisms from scholars such as Caroline Howarth (2001) and Sandra Jovchelovitch (2001).

Moscovici suggests giving up the word 'collective' as proposed by Durkheim. As he puts it, the idea was to do away with the multiplicity of representations and their diversity within a group (Moscovici 1988:219). Collective representation can only be applied in a society or organisations that conform to, for example, the same culture, beliefs, values, and practices. If the group members have different beliefs and value systems, it would prove to be challenging to expect them to be represented as a collective.

Moscovici (1988:221) states that to consider representations as homogeneous and shared by a whole society would be to deviate from its meaning. Later, as relating to representation, Moscovici (2000:182) argues that one of the ways to avoid biasedness, is to analyse media products, among other texts, for specifically their deployed languages and visuals. This is because the mass media represent objects or subjects using media forms such as written words and images/visuals. The representation can be done through verbal, non-verbal, or visual communication.

French political activist, philosopher, and historian, Michel Foucault (1980), raised a question about what represents in representation. He views the concept as used to producing and constructing meaning and knowledge between members of a culture through politics, discourse of literature, and history (Foucault 1980). In communication, the mass media act more as the producers of knowledge and media texts (and construct media texts), while the recipients' role is more to construct, exchange, and interpret meaning thereof. According to Hobbs (2008:3-4), Foucault's concern for, among other things, discourse and politics, made it possible to link representation to culture, and to the media texts which act as modes of representation of the world in the new media age. In representation, aspects such as images, language, signs, and ideologies can be used to portray something in a culture. This thinking around the idea of representation partly inspired much of the groundbreaking scholarly contributions from thinkers such as Stuart Hall.

Born in Jamaica, political activist, cultural theorist, and British Marxist sociologist, Stuart Hall's *Encoding and Decoding in the television discourse* (1973) and (1991), contributed

to the foundation of representation theory as building on Gramsci's understanding of hegemonic culture. Hall emphasises the diverse meanings of media texts and how audiences deliberately engage with what the media disseminate. Media messages have varying meanings for the audience as their cultural backgrounds are diverse, therefore, the messages will have varying interpretations and effects.

In terms of media representation of political leadership, Hall (1982:46) notes that the media relies on those in power; and for them to stay relevant, they must be part of the power structure to generate news in a way that determines what the society knows in cahoots with those in power. Political leadership seems to be of more interest to the media than mere ordinary members of a political party. As leaders, their prominence and how they are represented by the media can attract more readership in the case of newspapers publications, for instance. As Hall (1991) points out, the audience might decode any given message with the same meaning as was intended when it was encoded by the producer, or a notably oppositional reading could be derived by the audience. As such, whether the media intend to represent the EFF positively, neutrally, or negatively, the message will likely be decoded by the audience in agreement or in opposition.

According to Hall's (1997) earlier work, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, he explains representation as how meaning of concepts are constructed in our intellect through languages. Linking language and concepts, for Hall (1997), it presents the possibility to refer to the actual world of objects, incidents, or people, or to their fictional worlds. Language as one of the key components that is used to express or represent concepts, varies from culture to culture. To understand each other, members of the same culture can use the same language to express concepts.

Hall (1997:24-25) presents three approaches to representation as reflective, intentional, and constructivist. The reflective approach posits that the signs we use to communicate with one another reflect their true meanings, as language acts like a reflector to the world. For example, if newspapers use the word 'bullies' to represent the EFF in their content, they are possibly going to reflect as such in the perceptions of the society, as

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the word can hardly be used figuratively. The application of meaningful content to enhance better rhetoric in communication is crucial in this manner.

With the intentional approach, Hall (1997:25) asserts that meaning is delivered through the signs we use to narrate something. The words that newspapers use to encode their messages will mean what they intend to; therefore, they will be decoded as such. The constructionist approach holds that we construct meanings by arranging signs into what we communicate (Hall 1997:25). For example, a shape of a red heart is used to demonstrate love, the association will be considered as such for others, but could mean a different concept to another. From a media perspective, the public will construct meanings based on what is communicated by the media, and how they possibly understand it in their diverse cultures. The constructivist view of representation affirms that individuals construct meaning, while societies normalise the meaning (Hall 2016:20). The approach requires writers and news consumers to produce and construct reality (or its reflection) by means of language and discourse.

The two most significant aspects within representation are process and product. Hall (2007:26) defines representation as the series of actions, channel or medium whereby meanings are both produced and concretised or transformed into material reality. In terms of process, it is about the framework in which texts are produced. The final text, comprising of images of reality that are constructed through representation is seen as the product. From a media context, the process involves how the media portray specific work, groups, organisations, or individuals.

Hall (2007) asserts that language can be used to promote biasedness and the distortion of messages in representation. As part of the system of representation, words and images help the readers to refer to things both inside and outside their heads.

Language, which is another system of representation, is referred to by Hall (2007) as signs such as object, source, word or image that are merged with additional signs into a system that can transfer and express meaning.

In other work, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Hall et al (2013) mainly focus on what verbal, non-verbal, and visual messages presented in media texts such as television, radio, or newspaper election campaign

advertisements, implied. Verbal messages include one-on-one conversations, videos, phone conversations. Non-verbal messages include gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact, while visual messages include images, videos, and infographics.

Another contributor, J Ann Tickner (1998) holds that representation is about the discourses that are used to depict a subject or object to influence some response. Representation means to stand for something, and various objects or subjects can be represented or portrayed through different signs and discourses (such as mental representation). The media can depict a subject or object to provoke a response from politicians or the public, for instance.

2.2.2 Secondary authors and bodies of work on representation

American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (1977) and Swiss linguist and semiotician, Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) are among the scholars who extensively contextualised representation through their publications as proponents of semiotics. Moving away from semiotics and focusing on representation, these researchers focused on the meanings conveyed by media texts, and how they come to possess those meanings. As a linguist, De Saussure (1973; 1974; 1959; 1996) looks at how representation produces meaning through language. De Saussure and Peirce (1977) view representation as the written, visual, and audio portrayal of an object or subject. They add that the concept is about meaning linked to mediated narratives and images, such as in newspaper reports, television episodes, and films.

With the aim to understand how language and symbols can be used in representations (Koerner 1973), similar to De Saussure (1916), French theorist, Roland Barthes (1972;1989), explore and mapped how language, images, and narratives transferred meanings. These components can be used individually or can be integrated to produce meanings. Barthes (1972;1989) looks greatly at how in representation, myths can be used to portray people, places, and events, and believes that myths aim to arouse immediate impression. In the context of text, Barthes holds that the movement from work and text changes the relations of the writer, reader, and observer. In the context of this current study, the newspapers use language and images to narrate stories or

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reports about the EFF, and the readers would construct meaning based on how the content is structured or angled.

In the first chapter of the second edition of *Images, Power, and Politics*, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (2009) maintain that representation is usually informed by ideology, background, and gender, and essentially works through language. Ideology as a mental framework is valuable in running a society, and is underpinned by scopes that are social, cultural, economic, and political. Brian Curtin (2009) in his book, *Semiotics and Visual Representation*, states that depending on a culture, and considering the root of representation in factors such as emulation (imitation) and similarity (resemblance), visual images have usually been perceived as having more direct meanings than language. The researcher argues that direct messages can sometimes be interpreted in a standardised manner by different societies. However, some images contain indirect (connotative) meanings that will be interpreted according to how they are perceived by a specific culture.

Viola Milton et al (2013) state that some progression between the apartheid and post-apartheid era is reflected in various forms of media representation. In the apartheid period, old forms of media were used, and newspapers were in printed formats. While we still have print newspapers in South Africa, new media, which mainly use the Internet, has made it easy to access news including political content from online newspapers, eliminating geographic and time restrictions.

For Sibusiso Nkomo (2016:12), the various forms of the media, including social media, have embraced the concept of representation as a regular contributor in their reportage. The researcher thinks that the most common representation embraced by the media is that of political representation more than any other. It might be because politics seem to attract more readership, and are some of the stories that assist media houses to better their revenue.

Frank Ankersmit (1996; 2002) reconceptualises representation as a political action that creates both the represented and the representatives, and raised a concern about the growing gap between the two. As a way of rethinking the political types of representation, Ankersmit (1996) sees the action of representing 'itself' as primary,

while the relationship between the two actors he sees as secondary. Focusing on the aesthetic model, he acknowledges that reality can be presented in specific perspectives (Ankersmit 1996), which can be the case with pictures and other media texts.

When Catharine Lumby (1999) focuses on studying the media, she found that they centred their attention on entertainment rather than informing media users. By doing so, she argues that media users are, therefore, not represented, but rather diverted to other benefits of the media. For the researcher, this centre of attention contributes to having uninformed societies as news focusing on politics and other current affairs are compromised for the benefit of entertainment. It can further cause social disconnection between members of society, and between society and the state when entertainment is centred more than information. It is because members of society will be interacting less with each other, and society cannot interact with the state about matters that they are not informed about, or are not aware of, the extent within which they are affected. However, this was perhaps extreme in the earlier years, as societies currently also welcome political and current affairs content since they are directly or indirectly affected, for example, by matters of service delivery and tax increments.

David Held (1995) and Dennis Thompson (1999) bring up the idea of constituency in representative theory by pursuing ways of representing the interests of non-nationals. Their idea speaks to representation in politics mainly, perhaps as a way of ensuring equality or addressing basic human needs, for example. Robyn Eckersley (2004), Andrew Dobson (1996), and Robert Goodin (1996) contributed to the concept of representation by expanding it to include the non-human nature, and the future generations' interests through the ideas of virtual representation and stewardship. Visual representation, for example, does not need human beings to physically interact with each other, but can communicate through online visuals (photos and videos).

Anne Phillips (1995) and Iris Young (2000) dispute individualism and the superiority of 'ideas' over 'presence', by promoting collective representation. Likewise, Jane Mansbridge (2003) has put emphasis on the theoretical significance of surrogacy and deliberative representation. These authors dispute that at the heart of the representation theory, features such as human constituencies, fixed constituencies, non-pluralism, and

elections, should be key. Nonetheless, if there is a lack of pluralism in representations of political constituencies in the media, it can drive some political parties to dedicate themselves to constructing virtual communities that provide favourable electronic representation, and thereby deserting mainstream communication.

Mary Beltran (2018) wrote a *Representation* chapter in *The craft of criticism*, where she explained representation as when a person or object is depicted in a written, visual, or audio form. There is more than one method that can be employed by scholars when studying representation. In her *Representation* chapter of another publication, Beltran (2020) explains these methods as narrative analysis, which is the study that focuses on story telling in media texts; formalist analysis, which focuses on the meaning behind artistic choices; and discourse analysis, which looks at how discourses are entrenched in media texts.

2.2.3 Previous studies

Scholars such as Marian Sawer and Gianni Zappala (2001), Michael Saward (2000), and David Laycock (2004) focus their studies on clarifying the vagueness of representatives' roles, and representative problems of minority groups such as women, indigenous groups (Africans), descriptive representation in deliberative forums, and other group representations. These researchers variously purport that more research must be conducted that includes these marginalised groups such as children and people with disabilities. The researchers note that where underage (under 18) children are concerned, informed consent or permission must be granted by parents or legal guardians, which speaks to research ethics. Regarding persons with disabilities, the researcher feels they also need more representation in politics or to be more recognised in the South African Constitution. For example, more people with disabilities need to be deployed at political leadership levels.

Using the representation theory, Fredrick Ogenga's (2010) doctoral study titled *Misrepresentation of the Zimbabwean crisis by South African Weeklies*, holds that reality can be socially constructed through, among others, texts, images, and illustrations in languages, leading to various implications. Therefore, that makes it difficult to provide an account of what is real. For example, a researcher cannot claim

that their findings represent actual reality, but its mere limited reflection, bearing in mind that reality is flexible.

Essop (2016) conducted a master's study titled, *A Study of Collective Subjectivity and Political Representation within the Economic Freedom Fighters in the North West Province*. Representation theory was one of the theories that the author used to analyse the collected data. The author criticises the argument that suggests that Mr Julius Malema's followers are 'manipulated, mindless masses'. She, however, does not dispute that Mr Malema's character and leadership style can at times be questionable. The author provides an example of an argument in previous studies by Klaus Kotze (2012:259) and Deborah Posel (2014), who criticise Mr Malema for living a luxurious lifestyle while politically advancing himself through a rhetoric around the poor and disenfranchised African people. Essop (2016:27) argues that a politician can live a luxurious life that might be maintained beyond their political earnings. What is key is the true and practical reflection of a leader that cares for society.

Previously, following the emergence of the EFF in 2013, media representations of the party had been connected to the ANC as some of the EFF leaders such as Mr Julius Malema, Mr Floyd Shivambu, and Advocate Dali Mpofu, began their political careers in the ANC or ANC-affiliated organisations (Essop 2016:23). For example, Mr Malema is the leader of the EFF, but will also be remembered and sometimes presented by the media as the former president of the ANCYL.

In an article, *Rethinking the digital democratic affordance and its impact on political representation: Toward a new framework*, Marco Deseriis (2020) remarks that electronic instruments do not compromise the independence of the trustee model of representation and the elected representatives, simply because they introduce new chances for self-representation. The author further remarks that electronic media enhance political representation and political participation as these can be achieved through less costs. This, therefore, provides a better opportunity for politicians and political parties to represent themselves before the public, and vice versa. This kind of opportunity enhances how political representatives respond to the public's needs. Either way, political parties and political leaders need to familiarise themselves with the

attitude of both the media and the public, so that these political parties and leaders strategise better on how to represent themselves. This can help political parties to create a better political identity, but it does not necessarily change how the media will represent them, whether is through negative, positive or neutral reportage.

Mandiedza Parichi (2016) conducted a study that is concerned with media representation of a particular social category of women: female politicians. The study is based on the understanding that most images and behavioural traits of males and females are culturally and socially manufactured and naturalised through some social entities by the media, and not biologically or otherwise naturally determined to any gender. Parichi's study addresses a gap in research by focusing on a marginalised group, female politicians.

Representation is about an object (such as non-living) and a subject (such as humans) being depicted in written, audio, or visual modes of communication. In this regard, media texts have particular meanings that they convey. As such, the choice of words that the media use to portray the EFF in news articles, for instance, has the power to draw imaginary or conclusive perceptions of the party in the minds of society.

Focusing on Swazi media and political journalism, Mbongeni Mbingo (2017), conducted a textual analysis of the representation of political parties during the 2013 national elections in Swaziland. He found that the print newspapers advantaged the ideology of the ruling regime's Monarchial Democracy, but marginalised alternative or counter political ideologies. Among Mbingo's (2017:v) conclusions, he states that there was not much difference between the commercial independent media and state-owned media, and that there was a missing voice in the representation of the political parties. Private and state-owned media cannot afford to be politically, historically, economically, or socially biased, as that would compromise their objectivity and reliability. For example, the *eNews Channel Africa* (*eNCA*) stated that it would not cover the EFF, while the EFF said it would not grant the media house any interviews (EFF, *eNCA tensions escalate ...* 2021). The hostility between the media house and political party could contribute to the 'missing voice' in political party representation.

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Scholars such as Walter Gieber (1964), McNair (1998), and Gaye Tuchman (2000) hold that the process of news-making involves the construction of reality or representation thereof. The media can then construct reality in a manner that best suits them or represent someone or something according to their views and interests as profit-making entities. In this sense, reality can be constructed in a subjective way just so the media behind these constructions of reality can tick the box in relation to the notion of 'newsworthiness'.

For Nkomo (2016:19), the news media reporting on political leadership and their conduct, including that of their competitors in how they interact with society, depends on how news publications understand or prefer to approach politics. In a constitutional and democratic state like South Africa, the role of the media is both participatory and representative (Nkomo 2016:14). Topical media, as compared to entertainment media, provide various specialised reporting on issues such as politics and other current affairs that affect the public.

Nkomo's study highlights the media representation of political leadership and governance in South Africa, with specific focus on former president Mr Zuma. For him, the news media assess Mr Zuma as the head of state, or leader of the nation more often than as the president of the ANC. His results show that media representation of political leadership relies on concepts such as media freedom and freedom of expression, and that topics relating to political leadership are often discussed in editorials and opinion articles.

Raymond Kuhn and Rasmus Nielsen (2014), in their work, provide an example of representative politics in the context of South Africa. According to them, representative politics on the part of the media, only becomes such once it takes part in criticising those who hold positions of political power, promotes particular issues and views, and keeps citizens updated or informed about public matters. Beyond informing the public about such issues, as part of their role, the media need to educate the public about various issues. In that way, the media will not only be representing issues in a specific manner, but this can also enable participation of the public (for example, through questions or sharing ideas) on those issues.

2.3 MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

This dissertation addresses representation from a media and political communication perspective. According to Denton and Woodward (1998:14), political communication can be defined as “pure dialogue regarding the assignment of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given power to decide on legal, legislative, and executive matters), and official sanctions (what the state rewards or punishes)”. On the other hand, McNair (2018:4) defines the concept as “purposeful communication regarding politics”, which for him, is also greatly mediated interaction, transmitted through the older and newer forms of media. Examples of political communication are political advertisements in the mass media, political speeches, political events, media coverage on political matters, and the interaction among individuals on political matters.

McNair considers the media as political communicators that use representational codes (such as content style and technical codes) that are linked to presentation codes and expressions that can carry emotions relatable to media users. Therefore, when the media conduct themselves in this manner, it can be in order to achieve a specific news dissemination goal. If the media promote pluralistic representation, the risk is that marginalised, minority, or the under-represented groups can be ignored simply because they are not the majority (Lilleker 2006). This would make the representative role of the media to be theoretically and practically questioned.

Relating to semiotics, representation scholars also explore the concepts of denotation (relating to the testing of images and narratives) and connotation (relating to meaning behind media texts); these are aspects of communicative language which media texts can also focus on. For example, if newspapers use a sign of a gun and blood when representing a specific political party, the denotative meaning would be that a gun is a weapon used to shoot, and the connotative meaning could be that the party in question promotes violence. In this regard, the focus on representation provides insight into the significance of texts and images, and how they can be associated with a group being represented by the media.

In communication and media studies, it is significant to understand the concept of representation. As such, the selected sample of newspapers for this current study fall

under communication that is conveyed through electronic media; therefore, are political actors. Political communication is greatly determined not by the source of the message, but the content and context of the message. The role of these newspapers is to transform political messages for the public through news-making and interpretation. Irrespective of how political parties are represented by the media, there is little that the parties can do to control how they are represented, and they cannot refuse such coverage. As Michael Katz and Carl Shapiro (1994) note, depending on the sociopolitical conditions, a political party refusing to be represented can have a negative connotation; such news can spread rapidly through various media platforms that have large users.

While the media connect the political system with society, the media system is, therefore, connected with the political system through the news and information that they distribute. This can be supported by Toril Aalberg et al (2017), who believe that political communication has to do with the relationship between political actors, the media, and citizens.

The Press Council of South Africa (2022) maintains that through journalism, citizens in a democratic and constitutional state can make informed judgments on the matters affecting them daily. In the researcher's view, the mass media can influence the pictures and perceptions that people have about political figures and political parties. The media can also use images attached to a specific political issue to relay their stories.

Elements such as symbols, images, and narratives in various types of media, act on the cognition of media users (Brooks & Hebert 2006). Newspapers, for example, are important in the construction and dissemination of political news and political ideology. The public will translate the elements that are used by the media in a manner that they can understand. Therefore, whatever words or images the newspapers choose to use when representing the EFF, the thought processes of the readers decode the visual perception in their heads. The words and images represent the concept (in this case, the EFF), which passes through the mental representation of the readers through words and images. For Hall et al (2013), that is the link between concepts and meanings, and

how things are given meaning through language, and make sense of the world of people, events, and objects.

There are several political stories that the media can report on; but other than language, the issue of selectivity comes into play, which can promote biasedness. However, it can be argued that stories reported by the media such as newspapers, need to be prioritised to address the limitation of space in publications. The media can also be selective as they need to consider issues such as readers' preferences, generating high readership, building brand loyalty, and commercialisation.

Mr Julius Malema has criticised different media houses such as the *eNCA* and the *Daily Maverick* for how he believes they portray the EFF (Mahlase 2019). For example, the accusations later led to the *Daily Maverick* newspaper being barred from attending the EFF's events, particularly the elective conference at Nasrec in 2019. After the EFF announced this decision, the newspaper accused Mr Malema of making a "panic move" (Friedman 2019). While the media need to exercise their right to free media and press freedom, including being free from political interference, they still have the responsibility to uphold media ethics by being objective, irrespective of which political party or leader they are reporting on. In Minavere Bardici (2012), the professional code for journalists is highlighted, which guides the manner in which journalists should represent people and objects, among others. Professional code for journalists includes upholding integrity, fairness, objectivity, respect, and honesty.

2.4 CRITICISM OF THE REPRESENTATION THEORY

Corina Vorlklein and Howarth's (2005) criticism of representation theory is that even though power relations are inferred, they are not clearly explained in the theory. Representation theorists could have clearly stated the link between the theory and power relations, especially in politics as it is crucial to understand how politicians can apply authority, and when to draw the limits thereof.

While different media organisations portray themselves as the only truthful and objective outlet, the theory posits that there is no truth, only the construction of the truth. The researchers note above argue that even when there are concrete facts that show

evidence to the truth beyond reasonable doubt, it could still be interpreted differently by the recipients (society) from different cultures; thus, they can construct their own truth. Just like politicians or political parties, the media claim to deliver work that is in the best interest of the public. For Curran (2003:211), the news media are seen as rivals to professional politicians. It can be argued whether the media and politicians act in the best interest of the public, or merely to promote their own agendas through the representation tactics they deploy.

Pieter Fourie and Beschara Karam (2001) note that “media representation disregards the distinctive attributes and character of media products, the genre of these products, the intricate connection between the real world and portrayal, the intention of a journalist, and the character of perception and media user” (Nkomo 2016:13). This also speaks to the media representing issues in a manner that satisfies the editorial goals, which could at times, lead to biasedness and distortion of the truth. In these researchers’ view, the theory should consider the possibility that some media practitioners and organisations can be captured by politicians for personal gain and/or to character assassinate other politicians, especially those belonging to other parties. “The capturing of the media happens when the state deliberately seeks to influence the media industry” (Prat 2016:669). For example, Mr Julius Malema has accused specific media outlets, such as the now-closed *Africa News Network 7 (ANN7)* television channel and *The New Age* newspaper of being ‘propaganda machines’, and protectors of corruption (Gupta media not welcome ... 2016). Mr Malema had questioned the relationship that the owners of these media houses, the infamous Gupta family who were accused of state capture in South Africa, had with former president, Mr Jacob Zuma and other highly placed ANC leaders (Gupta media not welcome ... 2016). Therefore, representation can also be about specific interests being protected over others.

Hannah Pitkin (1967:209) writes in *The Concept of Representation*, that the representation concept relates to “substantive acting of others” and does not encourage accountability or official authorisation to others. The theory encourages media users to embrace the dominant studying of a text. However, it is crucial to remember that media

users' unique backgrounds motivate how they interpret media texts. Furthermore, people's interpretations of texts are also significantly influenced by how these texts are constructed by the media to set a particular ideological agenda. Thus, highlighting the importance of the agenda-setting theory for a study of this nature.

2.5 AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

Agenda-setting theory is one of the many theories that are suitable to apply in political, communication, and media studies research. The theory has claimed dominance in newsrooms across the world, as the media gatekeepers must strategise on how to influence what the public think about. However, political organisations can use their media specialists to set their own desired agenda by strategically aligning themselves with the public's interests, needs, and preferences. The current study wishes to critically engage this theory by applying it to a carefully selected sample of news articles to examine the kinds of ideological agendas that were arguably set by the producers of these sampled texts.

2.5.1 Seminal authors and bodies of work on agenda-setting theory

A media critic, philosopher, and journalist, Walter Lippman (1922) is the one of the first scholars to suggest the agenda-setting theory in the first chapter of his *Public Opinion* book. He argues that the mass media create the realisations and conceptualisations we have of the world through reflections of reality. Lippman adds that we see reflections of reality in the news media, but that does not mean that it is reality itself. The news that the media choose to cover may be distorted through the texts used in portraying a specific issue or individual. It cannot be concluded that the news is a realistic account of an occurrence, as reality can have more than one reflection.

After a few decades of the production of Lippman's book (1922), Bernard Cohen (1963) published a book, entitled *The press and foreign policy*, wherein he noted that the press is extremely successful in dictating what the media users think 'about'. On the contrary, Cohen maintains that the media does not dictate what people think, as different people perceive the world differently. The ideas that this author conveyed made it possible for the agenda-setting theory to be formalised by McCombs and Shaw (Cohen 1963).

Cohen later conducted a study using agenda-setting theory reporting on non-elections (Cohen 1963).

McCombs and Shaw (1972) are known to be the founding fathers of empirical research on the agenda-setting function of the press. These scholars were both associate professors of journalism at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. According to the duo, agenda-setting is about what the news editors select and show the public as important or newsworthy (McCombs & Shaw 1972). For them, agenda-setting tells the audience or society what to think about, not necessarily what to think (McCombs & Shaw 1972). Their study, mainly known as the Chapel Hill study, holds that the media agenda is defined by the pattern of news coverage over a period of several weeks. In terms of the media agenda, the more the media cover a specific issue, the more the public thinks about that particular issue.

Everett et al (1988) cite the contribution that the agenda-setting theory has had by emphasising on mass communication research towards a more longitudinal analysis of social impact. In that way, these authors were able to purport that agenda-setting theory has drawn away this sort of research from short-term attitudinal effects, which enhanced the understanding (or knowledge) of the role of the media in society (Everett et al 1988). The primary roles that the media have in society include entertainment, education, and information.

Ohio State University's associate professor of communications, Gerald Kosicki distinguishes agenda-setting into three interrelated themes, namely: public agenda-setting, policy agenda-setting, and media agenda-setting. Public agenda-setting refers to matters that are portrayed in the media and that the public actively prioritises; policy agenda-setting focuses on issues covered by the media and how these influence or are connected to legislative agenda of policymaking bodies; and media agenda-setting looks at the pre-existing aspects in terms of what is defined, selected, emphasised by the media in their content (Kosicki 1993). For this study, the researcher focuses on media agenda-setting, in terms of the analysis of newspaper content. Attention is paid to which issues are selected and emphasised about the EFF across the sample of texts under scrutiny.

2.5.2 Secondary authors and bodies of work on agenda-setting theory

Secondary authors are authors that provide a follow-up view, or information that relates to a specific, original issue that is presented. These authors normally reflect on the original issue and provide a notable contribution to that specific issue, concept, or theory. Marc Benton and Jean Frazier's (1976) *The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media at Three Levels of "Information Holding"*, was a content analysis study that proposed the three levels of peoples' information holding as: "(1) awareness of general issues; (2) awareness of proposed solutions; (3) and specific knowledge about the proposals". Preceding research have shown the effectiveness of the concept in the first level. Therefore, Benton and Frazier's study examined whether the theoretical concept of agenda-setting is effective in the second and third levels (Benton & Frazier 1976). In their findings, they suggested that the theory was also effective in the second and third levels, and that what essentially sets the agenda for media users is mainly newspapers.

According to David Proress of the Northwestern University and McCombs (1991), the theory of agenda-setting focuses on how issues are transferred from the media agenda to the public agenda; which, thus, also includes the transmission of saliences. This perspective draws focus closer to persisting effects on cognitions, and away from instant effects on opinions and attitudes. McCombs and Amy Reynolds (2002), additionally, write that agenda-setting relates to the ability that the media must ascertain the salience of matters on the public agenda. In this study, McCombs has been clearly stated as the primary or seminal author of the agenda-setting theory; however, Reynolds is the secondary author. Regarding salience, the authors basically look at the significance and prioritisation of issues on the public agenda.

Professors William Davie and Michael Maher's (2006) contribution in *Review and Criticism: Research Pioneer Tribute—Maxwell McCombs: Agenda-Setting Explorer*, argues that before agenda-setting, scholarly wisdom was that the media "exerted less influence" on the public agenda, and that this agenda was created by social processes other than media messages. Powerful roles of agenda-setting and astounding ethical responsibilities are set by the topics that are chosen for a new agenda, and by the story frames that are chosen about those topics (Davie & Maher 2006:820-821). When the

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media set the agenda, it does not mean ethical principles should not be applied. For example, when the media set the agenda, it does not mean that they must promote misinformation or disinformation, they still need to be factual.

McCombs and Erkan Yuksel (2004:328) assert that in agenda-setting, the reiteration that the media put on specific news fundamentally indicates why and to what extent the media consumers perceive those issues as significant. Just like in the case of Reynolds, Yuksel is a secondary author here. Basically, the media can choose to draw more attention to some news by emphasising specific statements and images over other.

Several authors have either been cited or co-authored in most of McCombs's various publications on agenda-setting. The authors and the publications include, namely: Lynne Masel-Walters co-authored in *Agenda-setting: a new perspective on mass communication* (1976); and Laurie Mullins (1977) wrote a chapter titled *Agenda-setting and the young voter*, in McCombs and Shaw's *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press*.

In *Newspaper Political Advertising and the Agenda-Setting Function* by Thomas A. Bowers (1973), he notes (like McCombs and Shaw) that when media users are exposed to specific issues that are emphasised by the mass media, that impacts the media users' perception on the prominence of those issues. If other issues are less emphasised, society is likely to think less about them; thus, they will perceive them as less prominent. Jack McLeod et al (1973) presented a content analysis study which focused on how the press sets the agenda. They indicated that the press, as a form of the news media, sets the agenda on various issues in most political campaigns such as government elections. Just like most authors who have produced work relating to agenda-setting, McLeod and colleagues maintain that when the media choose which issues to omit, and which to cover, that exerts pressure on what media users think about.

Dietram Scheufele (2000:305) asserts that "Agenda-setting depends on the theory of attitude accessibility by growing the salience of issues, and consequently, the ease that they can be retrieved from memory when making political judgments". The media as the 'watch dogs' of the public, increase the prominence (salience) of political issues by

prioritising which news to cover to ensure that they remain in the memories of the audiences, and would usually inform them of any developments in that regard.

According to Scheufele and David Tewksbury (2007:11), when the media portray some issues as more important than others, that can shape the judgements that people have about politicians and political issues. For example, if the media choose to cover a criminal case against a politician, over the community engagements projects that the politician does, the public will likely remember the controversial criminal case story and pre-judge the politician; they will thus hardly remember the positive stories. David Weaver (2007) compares the second level of agenda-setting, which investigates the salience of attributes of matters, to the framing theory. This level of agenda-setting and framing both addresses the 'how' question; thus, how issues are portrayed in the media.

Authors, Deborah Guber and Christopher Bosso (2012), focus on institutions and agenda, where they maintain that to ascertain the essence of rules, organisational hierarchies, procedures and institutions (such as political institutions which have a substantial effect on policy), there must be a great focus on agenda-setting. The media are not the only institutions that set the agenda. Political organisations, for example, can set their own agenda by choosing which issues to expose to the public through the mass media, and which to keep confidential. However, there are issues that cannot be kept confidential by political organisations and political leaders (such as political leaders' court appearances) as they are of public interest, and the media will find a way to cover them.

Depending on what media houses regard as 'newsworthy', they select specific issues over others for coverage (Field et al 2018). These media houses further suppose that if a country does not have powerful democratic systems and institutions, that will make way for the ruling state to make use of media state institutions, for instance, and use the concept of agenda-setting to influence public opinion. Darren Lilleker (2006) sees agenda-setting as one of the key concepts in political communications. The author believes that the media set the agenda by the manner in which ('how') they communicate their stories, and by sometimes putting these stories on the front page in the case of print publications and lead stories in electronic publications. This indicates

the salience of issues or the story that the said media houses think will be more newsworthy on a particular day, and will want to draw attention to them.

2.5.3 Previous studies

In Karen Siune and Ole Borre's (1975) contribution, *Setting the Agenda for a Danish Election*, the duo indicate that, how the political party leaders, voters, and media connect or interact with each other, has an effect on the rise of political matters, especially during election periods. During political elections, even parties that usually keep a 'low profile' start engaging more with its supporters and media, and come with persuasive strategies to attract more supporters.

James Winter et al (1980) presented a paper to the Mass Communication Division, International Communication Association Annual Conference in Mexico, which looked at issues-specific agenda-setting: inflation, unemployment, and national unity in Canada between 1977 and 1978. These are some of the issues that the media set the agenda on, and the public are likely to think about as they are directly or indirectly affected by them. For example, if the unemployment rate is high, the public could question whether the ruling party is creating jobs as they claim.

Among others, Leonard Tipton et al (1975) looks at the impact that the media has on the behaviours of the voters, and which of the political information conveyed by the media was considered to be prominent by the public. The public usually focuses on issues that affect them, such as unemployment and service delivery, and could make decisions on which party to vote for based on the promises made by the said parties. Philip Palmgreen and Peter Clarke wrote a chapter titled *Agenda setting With Local and National Issues*, published in Protess and McCombs (1991), where they note that in terms of hypothesis, newspapers prove to set the agenda better than television, especially regarding local issues (Palmgreen & Clarke 1991). It is also easy for newspapers, particularly online newspapers, to set the agenda on breaking stories. Unlike print newspapers, online newspapers do not have to wait for the next day to report on a breaking story but can do it immediately after sourcing information. In the case of television, if a channel is not specifically for news, they will have to wait for a

specific 'news' time to report on breaking news and set the agenda after their competitors.

Agenda-Setting in an Historical Perspective: The Coverage of the American Revolution in the German Press (1773-83) by Jurgen Wilke (1995) focuses on examining the effect of agenda-setting in mass media from an historical context. The author notes that the political system of Germany was different from the others of the First-world countries such as Britain. Their differences resulted in German newspaper coverage to have no effects on the agenda of public policy but had effect on the agenda of the media. The researcher holds that public policy agenda and media agenda are connected as the public needs to be consulted on policy issues that affect them. The consultation can be done through the media as a communication machine.

Denis Wu and Renita Coleman (2010) advances the agenda-setting theory by studying the comparative strength and new contingent conditions of the two levels (the first and second) of the theory's effects. They explain that this concept is not only about which issues are relayed as more salient than others, but also about how often (the frequency) these issues are covered or disseminated by the media (2010). The frequency of news coverage indicates salience on specific issues over others and motivates the public to prioritise (think about) specific issues more than others.

In cases where the media disseminate information that is relevant and the public is aware of it, it does not mean that they (the public) take reality constructed by the media as it is, but they can reangle it. The public needs to be orientated (by the media or political leaders) about relevant issues to address uncertainty (Chernov et al 2011). One of the ways that the public can address uncertainty and stay informed about specific issues is by following the reports about issues in terms of regular updates from the media or finding the root of the issue through self-sought research.

2.6 AGENDA SETTING AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Not only do the news media have the power to direct public attention to specific issues, but they also direct the public to specific aspects of those issues. This is also what agenda-setting is partly about. On issues around public affairs, the media and political

spheres are the most studied aspects in agenda-setting studies. These are referred to as objects, and they have attributes. For McCombs (2004), some attributes such as images of political leaders, are emphasised when the mass media present an object, and the public thinks and talks about the said objects.

Expanding on the notion of attributes, when the media describe political leaders from their personal or professional profile, the description can be positive, neutral, or negative. One of the battles that politicians face other than with each other, is that of the media coming across as their opponents in terms of news values and the treatment of stories in a different direction to that of politicians (Lilleker 2006). Therefore, the media can structure political news in ways that are suitable for *them* (and not for politicians), so as to attract more readership and public engagement, and influence what the public think about the issue.

As the researcher herself accesses news through different radio stations, television channels, and newspapers, she casually observed that political news in South Africa seem to be making headlines most of the times. These, for news producers and the audiences, might be prominent and relevant. Whatever major issues that the media report on, the public is likely to be more interested in issues that affect them personally or as a society. For example, when a minister of finance delivers a budget speech, the public would be more interested in how they will be affected by said budget speech, whether it is benefiting them through an increased social grant, or what the increase of taxation means for the middle class, for example.

The more the coverage on a specific issue or political figure, the more the salience of issues involving them, which can spark public debate or steer public perception. The researcher for the current study understands salience as something that makes an object prominent and noticeable. For example, if newspapers often use Mr Julius Malema's image of him burning the old South African flag, salience and public perception on the issue would increase. The quantity of articles written on a specific issue or about a particular politician can contribute to driving public debate and steering public perception. Salience further increases if more than one media outlet reports on the same issue.

Networking agenda-setting is one of the additional levels of the theory and is explained as “the transfer of salience of objects from the news media agenda to the public agenda” (McCombs & Shaw 1972). It affirms that the more the media frequently mention an object by its features or attributes, the greater the public associates the object with the attribute as the frequent mentioning has a bearing on public thinking (McCombs 2004). For example, if the selected newspapers depict the EFF as a revolutionary or violent party, the readers will perceive the party as such. The depiction would be advanced in cases of inter-media agendas, where the same issues are covered and emphasised by different publications.

According to Msiza’s (2017:11) study, the tone and issues linked to a political candidate (including political leaders of opposition parties), as well as how far the media go in covering them, affects the choices that members of the public make about the candidate or issues linked to them. It might be that the public has perceptions based on stories reported by the media than from personal experience. The media can set the agenda by relating political news to public issues. Issues such as basic human rights, politicians’ conduct, conflict among politicians from different parties, internal party conflicts, and service delivery, may be prioritised.

Most print media publications are strategic by publishing stories that they deem ‘catchy’ or more salient on the front page, which would expectedly have high-resolution images with a larger font size headline. Nonetheless, leading stories in online newspapers will be displayed with larger images and larger headlines. A positive message about something or someone is more likely to gain support than a negative message. However, negative content can spark interaction between the public, politicians, and the media. One of the reasons why political news is important to the public is because politics are directly or indirectly linked to the personal lives of members of the public, such as issues around crime reporting and government housing.

While different influences such as ideology and organisational influence on content may exist, the media need to continuously ensure their freedom and avoid any interference that could make them compromise their ethics, leading to the public questioning their integrity. As part of freedom of expression, Section 16(1)(a) of the South African

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Constitution also supports freedom of the press and other media (South Africa. Department of Justice 1996:Sec. 16.a).

Shaw (2017) affirms that the media are persuasive in drawing public attention to specific events, issues, and persons, and in establishing the significance people attach to public matters. In agenda-setting, it is important to prioritise news according to their newsworthiness over other 'neutral' news. McCombs (2002:4) claims that in a mere daily newspaper, over "75% of the potential news is dismissed and never conveyed to the audience". The process of prioritising news requires editors or journalists to decide which news to cover and which to ignore (Riaz 2008).

McCombs (2005:164) believes that " ... key government officials and institutions can have substantial control on what is covered and how it is covered". It can be recalled that South Africa has had an independent commission of enquiry into the alleged editorial interference at the South African Broadcasting Corporation from internal superiors and the ANC, which the ANC was later cleared from the allegations due to lack of evidence (Smit 2019).

News that is disseminated by the media, distorted or not, can be perceived differently by society due to the manner that the said news is represented and perhaps how members of society are impacted by them. Hence, Freeland (2012) argues that people will always have different perspectives on issues in different setups in terms of their significance and value. This is motivated by the way they are represented by various news media within specified societies. According to Satgar (2019:518), "South Africa has a classification struggle underway regarding how to identify the EFF". He acknowledges that some political analysts and scholars see it as a 'fascist' political force, while others refer to it as 'populist' or 'left populist' constituency. Irrespective of how the EFF represents or refers to itself, Satgar's statement indicates that there is still debate among society and media about the identity of the party.

There are various assumptions made by some scholars as regards the setting of agendas by the media. Firstly, it is proposed that diversity in the media allows for various agendas, and the consumers can choose their preferred agenda (McCombs 2005). Gabriel Weimann (1996) holds that, today, the public can influence what makes

news, so it is not entirely up to the editors. Various media outlets can approach the same story from different angles; thus, set the agenda differently. It is up to the public to decide which 'angle' or agenda to believe or relate to.

While the media have the power to set the agenda on political news, political parties must also have a strong communication team that understands how the media operate. This can help them develop good strategies for how to respond to media reports, and to also set their own agenda by disseminating party specific news electronically in their own voice. The public needs to be cautioned not to only rely on one-sided news reports by the media, but also listen to the side of the story of the subject being reported on to make informed decisions.

Using the agenda-setting theory in the current study assists the researcher to establish which issues were prioritised, and which were downplayed by the selected online newspapers in their representation of the EFF. Also, which were reported alongside a positive, neutral, or negative connotation, and whether, in any way, that has disadvantages or advantages for the party.

2.7 CRITICISM OF THE AGENDA-SETTING THEORY

In terms of criticism, most agenda-setting related studies indicate how the media shape public perception (Weiman & Brosius 2016). However, the theory and its methodological traditions fail to effectively demonstrate the connection between mass media and public perception, basing their arguments only on the Chapel Hill study (McCombs 2004). This is a call for researchers to conduct further studies that show which issues the media use the most to influence public thinking, and to what extent they prioritise those issues. While the theory also places emphasis on journalists as those who set the agenda, the editors play a stronger role in setting the agenda. Editors are the main gatekeepers who hold final decisions about which stories to publish and from what angles.

The initiators of the agenda-setting theory did not give information on how the psychological effects brought by the practice of agenda-setting prevail, if at all (Maher 2001). The theory has accessibility biasedness as those educated, resourceful, and exposed to the media are more informed than those who are not. Also, Toshio

Takeshita's (1997) concern is that some of the effects of this theory are more eminent on highly educated groups, as opposed to their less educated counterparts. Issues such as digital divide and information divide need to be addressed as a matter of urgency to enhance public knowledge.

In relation to agenda-setting, while different scholars in different fields define salience differently, cognitive psychologists are of the view that accessibility and salience are the same concepts, which Scheufele (1999) criticises. For Takeshita (1997), even when the founders of the theory had no knowledge about cognitive psychology, they would agree that accessibility and salience are two different concepts. The researcher believes that the two concepts differ as a cognitive process involves responsive intellectual undertaking, and salience is about considering something as highly valuable or outstanding.

Proponents of the agenda-setting theory argue that the media have great influence on people's lives (Parichi 2016:13). However, it should be noted that different consumers use or access the media for different reasons. They can use the media for entertainment, education, or information purposes. They might want to gain something from the media, while some may use the media as mechanisms to escape from reality.

According to McCombs (1972), as much as the media can focus and emphasise on what they think is important and relevant for the public, individuals can still make their decisions, which is what the theory lacks to acknowledge. Scheufele (1999) argues that it is not what the effects of media are, and that the prominence of a message and the perceived prominence are not the same concepts. It implies that the media can report on something that they deem prominent but can be perceived as non-prominent by media users.

A hegemonic model in an information community can, unfortunately, be embraced by political parties in instances when they make use of information that is restricted to the public, which compromises accessibility of facts (Lilleker 2006). Agenda-setting of political news provides more work for news organisations (more research), but what is also key is that it is about how the public thinks about a particular issue.

2.8 FRAMING THEORY

Framing, as a communication and media tool, is mainly used by the media to set the tone of 'how' society should engage among themselves, or with politicians, about issues that affect them directly or indirectly. Society will think about the issues in a particular manner, according to how they are communicated by the media. The issues can include economic, historical, social, and political matters that contribute to how respective societies live. The media can deprioritise issues that do not drive engagement.

2.8.1 Seminal authors and bodies of work on framing theory

Framing theory has been used in several fields including media and communication studies (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000). As a result, it is difficult to trace it to a specific scholar. Todd Gitlin (1980) introduced the concept to the study of mass communication in his classic examination of how CBS trivialised a great student organisation during the 1960s turbulent (McCombs & Shaw 1993:1992). Gitlin (2003) asks critical questions regarding framing, around what might have changed in the media, and its impact on politics for example; thus, the change that might affect the process of framing.

Erving Goffman (1974), one of the most influential proponents of the theory sees framing as rooted on the subjectivity of reality, which, according to him, is heavily reliant on the context of the content. His study focused on explaining society from a perspective of interaction. When society interacts among each other or with the media, contextualising issues according to their experiences is important as that enhances understanding of an issue.

When analysing frames, Goffman (1974) pays attention to what transpired, how it transpired, and *not* why it transpired (Verhoeven 1985). Regarding frames, Parichi (2016:37) states that creation is shared, which enables "meaningful experience produced and consumed through interaction". An experience is labelled and defined in relation to aspects that control it through subjective interaction (Goffman 1974). Individuals do not rely on simple attributions of causality, but on broader interpretive structural outlines called primary frameworks (Goffman 1974:24). It is difficult for people

to interact on issues that they cannot relate to. Interaction is subjective or personalised as people have varying experiences and will understand issues differently.

Acknowledging the effects of the constructivist and natural world in framing, Goffman (1974) suggests that people can change what has been naturalised by society as they are not always bound to welcome what is provided within frames (Verhoeven 1985). However, for frames to be understood and be effective, news consumers have to be familiar with the society that produces them (Goffman 1974); and through their subjective interactions and experiences, connect with them according to how they perceive them.

Entman's (1993) study on media framing, entitled *Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm*, focused on how news stories are contextualised in contrast with agenda-setting, and what determines news values. While the media frame stories as desired by them, the public can also create their own frames by connecting news stories to their lived experiences. For example, if the media report on specific service delivery stories, the public can create frames based on how they have been experiencing service delivery. Entman (1993) uses the term "framing" to refer to the way in which the media shape reality through their representation pursuits. Entman (2004) later views it as a manner that a communication source explains and puts together any bit of communicated information. Frames speak to an angle used to disseminate specific information.

Entman (1993:52) argues that framing is about selecting certain aspects of a perceived reality and presenting them as salient in a communication text, in a manner that advances "a specific issue definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the feature described". In the analysis of policy, and in politics, framing will constantly be applied, meaning that they are omnipresent (Entman 2010:391). In politics, for example, framing is significant in promoting particular interpretations of reality while discouraging others. Framing in politics needs to encourage specific interests, beliefs, and perceptions about, for example, existing problems that need solutions.

Scholars such as Joseph Cappella and Kathleen Jamieson (1997); Doris Graber (1988; 1993); Shanto Iyengar (1987;1991); Iyengar and Donald Kinder (1987); Russell Neuman et al (1992); Pippa Norris (1995); and Thomas Patterson (1993) have recognised how important particular frames are in the news by paying attention to their outcomes for the public's interpretation of events and issues (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000). In news framing, the media can choose to be deliberately shortsighted as they focus on breaking and relevant news instead of 'basic' news that they do not deem newsworthy. As Iyengar (1990:19) affirms, the manner in which news stories are framed, impacts how they are thought about by the public or media consumers.

According to Miller (1997), framing entails how the content of a text is presented and the angle that the author chooses to take. When the media report on news, they must select aspects that are important in a particular story; therefore, some aspects that do not drive interaction are neutralised or entirely not reported on. For Miller, this is selective reporting, which can be subjective and biased. While Gitlin (1980:7) sees news frames as persistent choice, emphasis and ejection, Tuchman (1978:156) holds that they assist to restrict the accessible political alternatives. Depending on how news reports are framed, that can provoke the public to interact (among themselves, government, or the media) on public issues (Tuchman 1978:IV). Therefore, media framing can spark public debate that is necessary in addressing public issues.

Neuman et al (1992:60) describe frames as tools of concepts that the media and humans depend on to transmit, interpret, and assess information. According to Zhongdang Pan and Kosicki (Kosicki 1993:70), the analysis of framing "extends beyond the study of agenda-setting into what people speak or think about, by scrutinising how they think and speak about matters in the news." Framing theory is sometimes confused with agenda-setting theory. The difference is that, while agenda-setting tells the public what to think about, framing theory influences *how* a particular issue is perceived.

2.8.2. Secondary authors and bodies of work on framing theory

William Gamson and David Meyer (1996:276) examine what the process of "framing political opportunities within social movements" entails and noted that these opportunities are commonly the source of internal movement disputes about suitable

strategies to adopt. Politicians belonging to the same political structure can have different opinions on how to frame information for the media and public. If the said politicians do not have common understanding, that can cause internal conflict.

McQuail (2005) explains news framing as a way of presenting interpretations of events and items of fact. The theory assists the reader to understand how the media present different content (including political news) in a way that is unique to each media house, but interesting to the public. For Kinder and Thomas Nelson (2005), frames are discussions rooted in political discourse, and are primarily important in political debate. They add that frames enable citizens to better understand politics. Not only do the media frame political issues, but political parties can also frame issues in a manner that favours them or suggests that they are the only party that can solve existing social and political issues. Norris et al (2003:5) hold that whatever political differences a state may have, how the news is communicated and framed for public consumption, is up to the media; not the state, as the state does not have control over that. Various actors such as politicians, citizens, and the media, can use different frames to communicate or interpret messages.

Srinivas Melkote (2009) defines framing as the arrangement, treatment (prioritisation), production, and presentation of incidents and news objects by the media. In the process of news framing, the media need to produce content that reflect facts, not misinformation, disinformation, or malinformation as that can cause public unrest. The researcher for this current study understands misinformation as the unintentional distribution of false information; disinformation is the intentional distribution of false information, and malinformation is information that reflects reality, but distributed to cause harm on, for example, the image of political parties or political conflict.

Lilleker (2006) views framing as when news items and story content are thought of within a familiar context, and that frames can enhance understanding of news stories. The author holds that in studying the concept of frames, the media (in terms of how they present stories) are usually the subject of interest. In media framing, almost like agenda-setting, some facts that are not too interesting are ignored, and the focus can

be on facts that can drive engagement between the media, political parties, and the public.

The mass media play a role in democracy by using frames to connect the politicians, the society, and opinion supremacy (Chong & Druckman 2007). One of the roles of the media in democracy is to hold political leaders (especially electorates) accountable to the public on promises made to them about issues that affect them.

Sophie Lecheler and De Vreese (2019) in their *News Framing Effects* book discuss, among others, that the building of frames is dependent on the interaction of various actors such as journalists and editors, on how to approach the framing of issues, particularly in the news. The news can now be disseminated using technology, which is intensely and promptly developing (Lecheler & De Vreese 2019). The articles from the newspaper publications that the researcher for the current study is analysing, were distributed online, using technology such as publishing software and the Internet. Unlike print versions, technology makes it possible for news to reach the public quicker. Print versions are published at a specific time, but online content can be distributed as and when stories break.

According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), framing is one of the models of political communications. They add that the audience's understanding of the context behind a news report is dependent on how an issue is structured by the mass media (2007:11). News structuring involves the angle that the media outlet chooses to take, which serves a particular purpose for them. The angles that various media outlets choose to take can have varying effects on the media consumers.

Field et al (2018) emphasise the need to recognise habitual frames in the coverage of news, in order to enhance knowledge on the connection between framing and agenda-setting to control the attention of the public. Before framing takes place, the process of agenda-setting must first take place in a sense that the media first needs to tell the public what to think 'about', and then frame the news to 'how' to think about specific issues.

For Guber and Bosso (2007), one of the things that make good journalists and communicators is the skill to frame issues. How issues are framed by journalists or communicators, in general, can help the public make decisions on how to process specific information. However, when journalists understand the community or audience that they are working with in terms of their demographic details and interests, that can help them (journalists) to decide on the best ways to frame issues. The study of frames can be applied in systematic content analyses or interpretive textual analyses research (Weaver 2007). Applying frames in these research methods can enhance an understanding of the possible ways that society perceives media texts.

One of the powers of the framing theory is the recognition that it is widespread as all communication rests upon shared meaning between communicators such as members of society, individuals, organisations, and the media. From this perspective, if meaning is not identical, there will be challenges in communication between these communicators (Hertog & McLeod 2001).

2.8.3 Previous studies

Gamson et al (1992) provide examples of messages in media texts as words, sound, and images. They maintain that texts cannot be taken as explicit as they are communicated as they normally contain hidden messages. For hidden messages to be interpreted effectively, it is crucial for the audience to have active listening and active observation that can help them be cognisant of elements such as body language and what objects connotatively represent.

In a research article, Cappella and Jamieson (1996) writes that indefinite changes in frames that are applied in news stories by the media, have a bearing on how media users respond to media news and how their cynicism gets activated, especially when these frames are conflict orientated. In terms of political news by the media, cynicism is around policy, governance, and campaigns. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) also state that it is important to clearly understand the impacts of news content and news frames as that has a bearing on how the media users process the issues or news cognitively.

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Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) conducted a content analysis focusing on analysing the press and television news in terms of framing European politics. In this study, the scholars examined how varying media outlets use frames in their story reportage (Semetko & Valkenburg 2000:105). Different media outlets will have different frames depending on the agenda that they want to set about a particular issue.

Scheufele (2000) uses framing as one of the theories to look at the cognitive effects of political communications. The author insists that in studying media frames, it is also important to study audience frames. Audience frames involve how the audiences understand and construct issues disseminated by the media. Just like with media outlets, audience frames will vary according to communities and their varying or similar experiences.

In *Empowering the activist: Using framing devices on activist organizations' web sites*, Lynn Zoch et al (2006:351) insist that the type of information that the society receives indicates the great authority that the media have in this regard. They further mention that frames can be in the form of figures of speech such as metaphors, depictions, and visual images. What this means is that frames are not always denotative (obvious) but can have connotative (hidden) meanings.

Framing provides beneficial ideas for comprehending the interaction between media, public agenda, and public policy (Chari 2010). For example, the media can speed up or decelerate public agenda and policy issues by framing them according to how they perceive their parameter, which can force political parties to react to them.

Duan Kuan et al (2021) conducted a study that looked at the framing theory from a public relations perspective. It, however, relates to framing from communications perspective (PR is part of communications) in a sense that the authors explain that the theory is about persuading the public to focus their attention on specific news issues (2021:335).

In terms of the interaction between social movement and the news media, the use of the analysis of frames is fundamental in advancing the goals of the social movement and community groups through the media (Ryan et al 2010). Social movements need to

understand how the media frame stories around them. They then need to set their own agenda, which will contribute to how the media set the agenda on issues relating to them, and how they are framed in said media content. Porismita Borah (2011:249) in *Conceptual Issues in Framing Theory: A Systematic Examination of a Decade's Literature*, says while frames can be unique, some can be consistent. Frames can be consistent if communities share the same lived experiences, and the same information reaches them.

Irrespective of whether communicative texts aim to be persuasive or informative, whatever frames that are used will always draw attention to particular aspects of communicative texts over others (Ardèvol-Abreu 2015:424). Indicating that framing is about the choosing and emphasis of media texts, Nyabuga (2022:84) holds that pictures can be framed by carefully selecting specific ones over others and can be used to emphasise or communicate specific content which, in some cases, may have political or other meanings. Editors can choose to ignore pictures that relate to the story that they are reporting on and choose pictures that are controversial or serve a specific purpose over the main story. For example, if the media report on members of the EFF donating food at a community shelter but choose a picture that shows them fighting in parliament, the picture can frame the EFF as a violent structure, instead of a charitable structure.

The media are known as the main actors in framing news and information. However, the public can frame a subject, object, or communication according to how, for example, political parties portray themselves before the public. Rofhiwa Mukhudwana (2022) conducted an EFF related case study titled *Conspicuous and performative blackness as decolonial political branding against the myths of the post-colonial society*. In the study, Mukhudwana (2022) explored what 'blackness' in the context of South Africa means. She notes that this concept in the case of the EFF, is used as political branding by voters. It addresses the 'how' part in framing; thus, how the voters perceive the EFF's political brand. In this case, the voters have framed the party in a particular manner, probably based on how the party (and the media) have taken to represent or brand the organisation before society.

2.9 FRAMING AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Entman (1991) suggests five news frames; these include conflict, human interest, consequences, morality, and responsibility. This dissertation views these five frames from a political communication perspective. In terms of conflict, the focus is on the dispute within political parties; human interest relates to news reports that touch on the lived experiences and emotions of the public. Consequences relate to decisions that may be taken by, or within, political parties and the results thereof. As for morality, it speaks to the morality within political parties, or if there are decisions or policies that raise moral questions; and responsibility relates to available solutions to particular issues and the responsibility that can be taken by political parties. However, these may not all be applied to every political phenomenon due to their distinctiveness.

Based on the results from the content analysis of the *Framing [of] European Politics* as conducted by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000:95) on newspaper stories and television news stories, “[t]he news media mainly adopt the responsibility frame, followed by the conflict, economic consequences, human interest, and morality frames, respectively”. However, these attributes and frames can vary depending on the society or country being studied, and their political background. The type of media outlet and the issue being covered also contributes to the frame used in the news. The media can frame issues in ways that interest the audience and promote a specific understanding of an issue through the angle chosen. For example, regarding service delivery, the media can put emphasis on what the ruling party has not achieved, instead of what it has achieved. However, the angling of news content can either be biased or unbiased, depending on the agenda of the media institution that is doing the reporting.

Framing studies can put emphasis on alternative hypotheses; for example, the media may make specific predictions on a political issue but use a contrasting frame to communicate it (Van Gorp 2007). Alternatively, there are unique ways that the media can frame issues to make them dominant to suit their narrative or goal and apply a specific frame to address diverse issues. Some scholars who have studied frames have tried to associate the concept with words such as background, setting, context, or a phrase (Verhoeven 1985). Goffman argues that regarding politics, a single person finds

an already converted environment and uses a conceptual lens to frame a meaning of life. This meaning is constructed by the contact of the person's pre-decided view of life, "and the already existing frames he finds in the political environment" (Parichi 2016:37).

The theory of framing contributes greatly to text production and text interpretation; hence the choice of words is important in news reporting. For Manuela Colombini et al (2015), the theory helps to recognise how issue framing can structure events in the politics stream. In newspaper reporting, the structure of reporting on specific news speaks to the salience that is considered by the media. The media, in general, start by reporting on the most salient news as those making headlines, the rest are treated as normal news.

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007:11) state that in framing, the audiences' understanding of issues is influenced by how these issues are portrayed in the news reports. They further state that framing is often traced to news writers and the different media houses' editorials that determine how news frames are packaged. This decision is mainly taken by the editors instead of the journalists. In this regard, editors (as gatekeepers) hold the final decision regarding which, and how, a story will be reported. Entman (2010) asserts that the media can persuade the audience through the texts they produce. The media can choose to use words that have positive, negative, or neutral connotations, depending on what they want to emphasise and how they want to emphasise it.

Jason Bainbridge et al (2011) argue that when looking at the frame of the text, we should question why certain elements have been covered, but also what has been eliminated. In terms of text production, Anabela Carvalho (2000:24) remarks that framing involves "the construction and organising of opinions, facts, and value judgments in order to produce a definite meaning - and selection – in an exercise of inclusion and exclusion of these components". In this regard, framing can shape how the audience perceives an issue and how it should be handled.

Michael Schudson (2003) claims that there is a need to differently express the concept of biasedness to framing, seeking to distance news decision-making away from the idea of deliberate bias. He contends that to acknowledge that news stories frame reality means it would not be possible to avoid framing. Framing can promote biasedness in

cases where the media prioritise *their* narrative over reflections of the facts that are presented before them. If the gathered facts reflect reality but are ignored or reangled by the media, that could enhance biasedness.

Framing decreases the phenomenon to which evidence of selection can be read as inevitably that of deceit, pretence or prejudice of sole journalists (Schudson 2003:35). The author states that this further centres on the manner that journalists select specific traditions and patterns of the culture (generally) and news business in particular. The objective that media outlets wish to reach with a specific story centre around how they frame issues, not necessarily around information at their disposal as they must reconsider their angles to achieve their objective. This is where the principle of ‘what to include’, and ‘how to tell it’ gets activated.

The basis of the framing theory is the notion that the media produce news of chosen events by locating them within a field of meaning of their choice (Parichi 2016:36). According to Hillary Shulman and Matthew Sweitzer (2018), the media consumers have varying pieces of information stored in their psychology, with which they interpret differently according to the information at their disposal and social experiences. Framing is a useful theory for analysing how different newspapers represent political news in South Africa. For this study, the analytic approach will be in relation to how the selected newspapers frame the EFF through their content (words), and how the content or issues are likely to be interpreted by the reader.

2.10 CRITICISM OF THE FRAMING THEORY

Framing proponent, Goffman, has been criticised for subjectively focusing on qualitative participant observations over more ‘scientific’ quantitative options (Verhoeven 1985). Some scholars believe that a balance of both would have offered more reliable justification for the generalisation of findings, instead of also subjectively focusing on his preferred ethnographic methodical approach (Verhoeven 1985). However, this dissertation accepts that the exploring of the concept of framing can be achieved using both research methods (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods). For instance, analysing texts and looking at the quantity of newspaper articles that framed the EFF in

a particular way, and grouping them according to their connotations, be they positive, negative, or neutral.

According to James Tankard (2001), suggesting a label for a collection of frames presents a frame on its own that is difficult to solve. It cannot be concluded that the gathered data would be valid and reliable even when the theory generates results. It can, therefore, be difficult to identify framing in texts, as among other reasons, it is also often confused with agenda-setting. With analysing frames, Goffman focused on addressing the questions of 'what' and 'how', instead of the 'why' question. Some critics can argue that this could be restricting in providing clarity on, for example, *why* some words and images in news articles were chosen over others.

According to Parichi (2016:39) and Goffman (1961a;1971;1974), framing research overlooks other societies, cultures, and classes, and reduces the possibility of universalising its findings. Parichi (2016:38) states that it is because it is concerned with routinised occurrences and was restricted to Western middle classes. Therefore, some findings of this theory can be difficult to embrace as studying a specific community does not give room to generalise findings. Given the unique characteristics of communities, each community needs to be studied separately to get more valid and reliable results.

Entman's (1993) criticism of the theory is that it lacks to express how frames become entrenched within and make themselves manifest in a text, or how framing shapes thinking. He also contends that framing theory lacks clear conceptual definitions and a comprehensive statement to guide research. As such, generalising the theory can make it less reliable and less effective to apply. The connection between media texts and framing must be explored further to also include the questions of 'why' and 'when' frames are entrenched into media texts.

While various scholars came up with their own explanations and definitions of frames, these can be thought of as assumptions. Some scholars are of the view that frames are constructed and generated by scholars (Entman 1993; Van Gorp, 2007). For Thomas Koenig (2001:55), the complication of identifying and measuring frames makes it difficult to theoretically improve on its definition. Current and emerging scholarship need to keep

providing updated data that can effectively help identify frames in texts, and further distinguish it from agenda-setting.

Paul D'Angelo (2002) and Reese (2007) state that the majority of scholars who studied frames acknowledge that allegiances to different methodologies, epistemological approaches, and theoretical frameworks have not been bridged. These scholars call for a bridge in this regard for news framing to be fully understood. Another gap that must be identified is the questions of how media producers (journalists and editors) identify salience in political or news information before they distribute to the public.

In a political communications publication, Paul Brewer (2002) investigates the effects that framing has in the use of value language by citizens in expressing their perspectives on political issues, explaining that they make sense of issues through different values. The media, through persuasive frames, have the power to help the citizens to decide which values to embrace when making sense of issues.

Some researchers refer to framing as a 'fractured paradigm' (Entman 1993), as there is no consensus among researchers on how to define this concept (Scheufele 2008). The lack of consensus could raise arguments among scholars on whether this concept is relevant to use in research studies, or if it should just form part of the second level of agenda-setting.

Scholars such as Vincent Price and Tewksbury (1997), Scheufele (2000), and Scheufele and Iyengar (2014), have criticised the applicability of framing theory as it does not clearly outline the discrepancy between affirmation and equivalency frames in literature, leading to confusion. They also criticise the lack of detail on how cognitive mechanisms bring out effectiveness in frames. Based on these mentioned criticisms, the scope of unpacking and addressing these concerns must be adopted by developing and emerging researchers. That can help clarify the relevance of frames in communication texts. Also, if at all it can be used as an independent theory or merged with another proven theory such as agenda-setting and representation.

2.11 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2: Literature review – Part I

Chapter two, encapsulating part one of the literature review for this dissertation, focused on theories that are commonly used; therefore, relevant in communications and media studies. These theories are representation, agenda-setting, and framing. The theories were employed in this study to analyse the texts (words) used by the South African online newspapers, *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*, in representing the EFF. The analysis is based on exploring whether the published content is negative, positive, or neutral as regards the EFF political party in South Africa. The next chapter will be presenting the second part of the literature review by focusing on social semiotics as a theory to analyse the visual images of the said newspapers.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW – PART II

3.1 INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL SEMIOTICS

News articles in newspapers have images; these images provide more insights about the article; hence social semiotics will be used to analyse the images accompanying the sample of news articles collected for this study. Social semiotics is a concept of visual analysis, and photographs and videos can initiate theory building and provide in-depth insights to the study (Kingsley 2009). Furthermore, the researcher believes that the images that the newspapers choose to use contribute to how these newspapers represent their subjects. They can have negative, positive, or neutral connotations.

The concept of social semiotics can be used as both a theory and methodology. Simply put, Jeff Bezemer and Carey Jewitt (2009) state that social semiotics is interested in the meaning maker and meaning making. The images (visual representations) and words (written or spoken representations) used in newspaper articles, which can be seen as products of social practices, are examples of semiotic modes through which social meanings of newspaper reporting can be coded. For this study, the theory will be used to analyse specifically images, including their captions, which will provide an in-depth insight of the role that images play in newspaper reportage.

3.1.1 Seminal authors and bodies of work on social semiotics

Russian scholar, Juri Lotman (1975a; 1976b; 1977) is known to have developed the concept of semiotics. However, regarding social semiotics, scholars Mikhail Bakhtin and Valentin Voloshinov (Voloshinov 1973) were known to be the earliest proponents of social semiotics. Contrary, De Saussure (1998/2004) focused on semiotic conception which maintains that signs are used in media texts, and he has previously referred to social semiotics as sociolinguistics. Halliday (1978) produced a book titled *Language as social semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*, after which the concept was generally acknowledged.

Verbal and non-verbal texts are considered as the basic principles of social semiotics. Lotman (2013) adds behavioural patterns and social characteristics, which can appear in semiotic phenomena and language. This scholar wrote widely about the semiotics of

culture, behaviour, and social action (Lotman 1967; 1976; 1981; 1984; 1992; 2010). Lotman (2013) pays attention to semiotic features, objects, and relations that are adopted by the public or society as they identify and interpret social actors. Therefore, his version proves to be entrenched in ontological aspects of social semiotics. By looking at aspects such as behavioural patterns, it shows that social semiotics can carry latent meanings.

Utterance can be used as a basic unit of analysis in social semiotics, and a change of communicators or speakers delimits the boundaries of the utterance (Bakhtin 1986:71). Utterance, as a media text in a form of a spoken word, can be interpreted implicitly or explicitly in terms of meaning.

Voloshinov (1973) and Halliday (1978) focus on the concept of social semiotics from a linguistic point of view. Voloshinov (1973) sees signs as naturally ideological and that they cannot be separated from reality as they carry specific meaning. Uniformly, Halliday (1978) states that signs cannot be separated from social contexts and have multiple meanings. Social signs vary according to given environments. Meanings are multiple because they are interpreted differently by communication recipients. Halliday (1978) referred to the concept as social semiotic (singular) instead of social semiotics (plural).

Not just looking at the theoretical approach of the concept, Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress (1988), and Theo van Leeuwen (1996), extensively wrote about how social semiotics can be used to analyse media texts as a research methodological approach. For Hodge and Kress (1988), and Kress (2010), the intention was to reveal what communication is in its traditional perspective and explain the relationship between social semiotics and communications.

Hodge and Kress (1998) define social semiotics as a branch of the field of semiotics, which is interested in exploring and generating meaning within cultural and media texts. They highlighted the concept's connection to social contexts and realities. They hold that social semiotics is relevant to use to critically analyse qualitative content such as in visual, verbal, and non-verbal analysis of media texts (Hodge & Kress 1996). The

researcher holds that this concept is mostly relevant in qualitative research as the analysis results obtained are mostly descriptive, not necessarily numerical.

For Hodge and Kress (1988), social semiotics focusses on semiotic texts, forms, and practices which construct social meanings. For that reason, these scholars maintain that the social context of communication enables social semiotics to attribute meaning. Their argument is that in social semiotics, messages contain a source, context, purpose, and goal (Hodge & Kress 1998:5). Messages are not randomly selected but are chosen for their relevance and effects on the recipients.

In his publication, *Introducing Social Semiotics*, Van Leeuwen (2005) mentions semiotic principles as semiotic resources, semiotic change, semiotic rules, and semiotic functions. He defines a semiotic sign or semiotic resource as anything that includes human behaviour, physical activity, text (such as words and visual images), and artworks that have been constructed within a particular social context or social environment. Like Van Leeuwen, this dissertation contends that the concept provides an opportunity to investigate messages and context in communication; therefore, the answers are not ready-made as contexts are unique.

Social semiotics is often confused with the term semiology or semiotics. The confusion may be that they are interrelated in that they variously look at how signs manifest themselves in communication texts. The concept of semiology (not social semiotics) was developed by a linguistics scholar, De Saussure, who investigated the life of signs within a society (1974). He emphasised that language is a system of signs (De Saussure 1998/2004:60). On the contrary, Peirce (1965) termed this concept 'semiotic', which he focused on the knowledge of human perception and the limitations that signs have in communication texts.

Contributing to the field of semiotics, Thomas Sebeok (1998) invented the term 'biosemiotics', which is the merging of biology and semiotic studies focusing on prelinguistic meaning, production, and interpretation of communicative codes and signs in the biology domain. Sebeok (1965) also invented the term 'zoosemiotics', which looks at semiotic use of signs among animals. This, for Sebeok, was a unique way of moving

away from focusing on humans, but on these domains by expanding the analysis of semiotics to signaling and communication systems in these fields.

3.1.2 Secondary authors and bodies of work on social semiotics

In relation to socio-cultural systems, Tamara Dridze (1976) considers social semiotics as an applicable interdisciplinary approach to the construction and analysis of these systems. For these systems to be understood, the society or subjects that belong to them must be studied for proper analysis. Social semiotics, as analytical framework, acts as an intermediate mechanism that makes it possible to describe social relevance and functions of sociolinguistic entities (Searle 1995; 2008; Berger & Luckmann 1966). The social relevance and functions, therefore, need to meet each other half-way and merged so that they can be used effectively in communication texts.

In his book, *Social Semiotics as Praxis Text, Social Meaning Making, and Nabokov's Ada*, Paul Thibault (1991) extends the semiotic and linguistic theories. He provided clarification on the processes entailed in the formulation of human meaning by relooking at text building for a unifying discourse. The common texts that humans use are words, which is also the case with newspapers followed, of course, by images. These images are a crucial aspect of the text due to the visual perspective they offer. Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama (2001) look at social semiotics from a visual perspective (visual social semiotics). They explain it as a concept where semiotic properties or work contain visual texts (such as photographs or videography). In terms of semiotic resources, potential meanings in communication texts or communicative exchanges must be initiated by producers and media users. However, these communication texts or communicative exchanges need to serve beyond this expectation, as they are produced in the process of cultural histories with each having unique purposes and interests (Jewitt & Oyama 2001).

From an organisational perspective, Clarke (2001:591) highlights how the concepts of social semiotics contributes to developing “systematic semiotic frameworks suitable for theorising work practices”. The author holds that the text, as an operational semiotic of language, may be used to investigate the complexity of a particular organisation (2001:591). Each organisation has unique practices and a common language used in

their communication, and this can be analysed using social semiotics to examine how these unique practices and common language are used by employees.

For multimedia to be analysed beyond the central multimodality of divided works, to clearly recognise transmedia social meanings, and to understand the political economy of signs, as well as the comprehensive system of signs, social semiotics must be considered as the ideal foundation (Lemke 2009). Social semiotics holds the value of being able to ‘critically’ analyse, for example, multimedia, political, social, and historical content and contexts.

3.1.3 Previous studies

Russian scholar, Grigorii Tulchinskii (2021), produced an article entitled *Social semiotics: Communicative and socio-cultural practices. The Russian-speaking contribution to the development of social semiotics in 1970–2000s*. Tulchinskii’s intention was to illustrate how social semiotics offers systematisation of possibilities in the analysis of modern communication processes, and argued that in the process of communications, for people to exist socially, there must be co-existence of sociality (Tulchinskii 2021:2-3). Co-existence acknowledges that interests, experiences, and ideologies differ, but that should not cause conflict among societies.

Unlike most social semiotics researchers focusing on the concept by putting emphasis on signs and social environment, Susan Petrilli (2012) mentions that semiotics itself goes beyond that by also focusing on, among others, interactions among animals (zoosemiotics), the semiotics of plant life (phytosemiotics), and semiotics of sign processing machinery (machine semiotics). This proves that semiotics does not only affect or contribute to human relations and communications but can also have an impact on different subjects and be applied in various fields.

Suren Zolyan’s (2019) study highlights the interconnection between general sociolinguistics, social semiotics, and semiotics of culture. Zolyan (2019) argues that social semiotics is understood not as a branch of semiotics, but as an attribute in linguistics that is explained within a particular sociocultural context. Beyond linguistics, social semiotics branches into visual communication to analyse images and symbols,

for example. For this current study, it will not be used to analyse words, but visual images in the selected newspaper articles.

Irina Fadeeva and Vladimir Sylimov (2013) developed interest in social semiotics after they focused on understanding how the extensive system of signs and symbolic (non-literal) communication content of culture can be analysed. To provide clarification on system of signs and other communication forms that are analysable, there needs to be an acknowledgement that these signs systems and other communication forms may possess manifest and latent meanings not to be ignored.

Sotsialnaja Semiotika (2020) considers the unique role of social semiotics revealed as a branch of semiotics that focuses on how sign systems function, considering how transformation of society is impacted by communication processes. How communication processes are perceived and interpreted by society differs from time to time in terms of the periods when these processes take place. It is because resources from aspects such as communication that were available in earlier years, might be different to the resources that are available today and in years to come.

According to Ivan Fomin (2020), research that investigates the relationship between social and semiotic facets continues. He adds that most of the research projects that are currently being expanded on by scholars, are being carried out to investigate the relationship between forms of communications and forms of social life (Fomin 2020:35). Social life exists as people communicate with each other using different modes such as personal or technical communication. Therefore, the relationship between communication and social life cannot be isolated but complement each other.

According to Mikhail Ilyin and L'udmila Lacková (2020), social semiotics can be used as a prospective and developing methodological tool to enhance the science and knowledge described from a theoretical perspective. As we live in unprecedented and ever-changing times, social semiotics must continuously be deployed to investigate communication related phenomena as new communicative resources and signs might develop or be discovered over time.

Christiaan Cilliers (2014) conducted a study, entitled *A Semiotic Multimodal Analysis and South African Case Study: The Representation and Construction of Masculinities in Men's Health (SA)*. In his study, he discusses social semiotics and states that “[t]he practice of interpretation (semiosis) positions individual texts in the sphere of discourses that merge different interpretations by communities” (Cilliers 2014:23). If communities have different experiences and relate differently from a social or a cultural perspective, their understanding of texts are likely to differ.

3.2 SOCIAL SEMIOTICS AS A THEORY

The concept of social semiotics can be used as either a theory or a methodological approach. Social semiotics is perceived as the “theory of meaning” (Bezemer & Jewitt 2018), and how that meaning is constructed and interpreted in unique social settings. The similarity between the concept as a theory compared to a methodology is that it equips the researcher or media user with communication or social resources to enable the deconstruction (decreation) of signs available in texts that are being analysed. Communication texts are deconstructed to trace and classify semiotic codes. From a theoretical perspective, the emphasis is on the connection between signs and resources in texts to contextualise the social or cultural environment. Also, the emphasis is on how meaning is created socially using texts within society.

According to Hodge and Kress (1998:1), social semiotics, as a theory, recognises that semiotic systems and the social environment cannot be separated as they are deeply rooted in each other. Also, verbal, non-verbal, and visual social semiotic signs or resources are connected to cultural or social environments and construct social meanings across these cultural or social environments (Hodge & Kress 1988). Social semiotics investigates the manners in which the intersectionality of semiotic systems, such as images, designs, and language, can be analysed.

Hodge and Kress (1988) further mention that the production processes that the media undertake have an impact on the construction of intrinsic ideological meanings through the selection of, among others, camera shots and angles, settings, costumes and lighting. In newspapers, aspects that can contribute to constructing underlying ideological meanings include the image choice, the colour of the image, and the choice

of words used in the caption, headline or the body of the content. What this also means is that many aspects of social semiotics may be traced in newspapers as crafted, for example, by the editors and photographers in how they construct their publications for public consumption.

3.2.1 Social semiotics and meaning

In social semiotics, meaning and context cannot be isolated because context informs meaning. Social semiotics focuses on how meaning is constructed in verbal, non-verbal and visual forms within communication or media texts such as, for example, newspaper political advertisements. As such, the analytical method and theoretical framework of social semiotics is relevant to use in this current study as this dissertation acknowledges social meaning in the production of texts, including texts of a visual nature (images), present in newspaper articles such as the selected articles from the *City Press*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian*, written about the EFF.

Anthony Baldry and Thibault (2006) emphasise the need for understanding still sequential images. To understand non-motion images also means to understand that they carry meaning, which can be hidden or exposed. It means these still images can have denotative or connotative meanings, or both. Regarding denotation, images that the media choose to use have meanings attached to them; meanings that could be vague (Dyer 1988). With connotation, the images reflect and rework ideology by producing new meanings as it (ideology) is not neutral but subjectively set within societies (Dyer 1988). Moving images can be easier to analyse and can carry less connotative meaning than still images.

Denotative meanings are difficult to manipulate as they speak to what is actually or literally seen in the images. On the contrary, connotative meanings can be interpreted differently by different media users as they carry various possible meanings and are dependent on how they are contextualised. Barthes (1964;1977) purports that visual communication can be articulated at denotative or connotative levels. However, denotative, and connotative meanings are connected and, explicit as denotative meanings may be, connotative meanings impose “second meaning on the photographic message proper”, which also addresses the ideological meaning, according to Barthes

(1961; 1977). The connection between the two concepts of connotation and denotation is referred to as “a chain of related concepts” (Fiske 1990:88).

Contributing to the development of social semiotics, concepts such as symbols and signs have helped scholars make progress in the expansion of analysing semiotics beyond how language is used. Regarding visual images, social semiotics will be used in this dissertation to analyse them and explore if there are hidden or manifest meanings. Like Dyer, Barthes (1967; 1977) states that in semiology, visual images and words as texts can have denotative or connotative meaning. Thomas Andersen et al (2015) refer to meaning as “... a superindividual and intersubjective activity”. To uncover the denotative and connotative meaning in visual texts, there must be attentive observation and effective analysis.

Social semiotics cannot be divorced from clarifying social aspects of meaning, its construction, interpretation and transmission, and effects (Jewitt et al 2016:58). To understand the impact of media messages and the plurality of meaning in them, there needs to be an understanding of social semiotics in every (or a given) communication phenomenon. In communication, the status of who is communicating the message is important in its construction, and sometimes the status of the receiver of the message is important in interpreting the meaning behind the message. Regarding the communication recipient, it is important to note that the receivers no longer rely on spoken and written text only, but also on visual texts or unified communication to interpret meaning.

Thatelo (2016) maintains that in social semiotics, societal variables such as history, culture, economy, and politics are seen as important, and therefore, put into consideration in the process of textual analysis. It is also explained by Hodge and Kress (1998) that particular social contexts in communications enable social semioticians to attribute meaning to texts. For that reason, the social environment is important in the construction of meaning of a sign or resource in communication. In social semiotics, it is paramount to have a social perception of what meaning is and how it is made.

Martin Engebretsen and Helen Kennedy (2020) state that in social semiotics, meaning of semiotic material such as words and images, conform to three dimensions; these

being, ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and compositional meaning. Ideational meaning focuses on discourse issues. Interpersonal meaning focuses on social relations between participants in communications. Additionally, compositional meaning focuses on the connection between elements of semiotic material and communication texts.

3.2.2 Social semiotics signs, codes, and resources

In line with the critical approach of social semiotics, signs, codes, and other communicative resources must be studied to understand how they manifest themselves in media texts. Signs as components that bring together a material form (signifier) and a meaning (signified) are a starting point in social semiotics. According to Bezemer and Kress (2016:9), there are three characteristics of a sign in social semiotics, which are arbitrary (motivated), place, and affordance. Just about every sign-making process (whether interpretive and/or descriptive) executes some sort of semiotic duty.

Hodge and Kress (1988) affirm that the manners in which societies interpret texts, affect the social power of those texts. While sign-makers can explore and utilise the possibilities of semiotic resources to achieve their narrative, society can use the resources and modes available to them at the moment of making sense of a specific social phenomenon (Bezemer & Jewitt 2018). In social semiotics, the production of signs is dependent on what the sign-maker hopes to achieve, what semiotic resources they are using, and how they apply those resources to construct meaning. Society interprets texts according to the semiotic resources provided by the sign-maker (such as the media).

Semiotic innovation must be advanced by social semiotics; which is one of its aims, and to also visualise the manner that rules of sign-making may be divided or altered (Van Leeuwen 2005). Social semiotics' rules are socially made and are exchanged and depend on social interaction. Social innovation, such as online engagement, enhances social changes such as the manners in which communities socialise online. As much as media texts are interpreted differently by different societies, those from the same culture can use a similar set of rules that could help them fix the same meanings to the same signs, thus minimising communication breakdown.

Giorgia Aiello (2006) differentiates the notion of a code and a resource in social semiotics. She states that encoding focuses on how something is represented or portrayed, while decoding focuses on the interpretation of what is being communicated (Aiello 2006). The meaning behind what is being communicated is activated by producers (such as journalists, editors, and photographers) and by message consumers according to specific profiles, interests, and intentions because meanings are not permanently fixed. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) suggest that in semiotic resources – as means of communicative exchange (and beyond) – potential meanings in communicative texts such as images, must be activated by producers and viewers. It means that communication producers and their consumers can select specific interpretations over others, according to how they want to cognitively communicate or understand the texts.

According to Thatelo (2016), selected verbal, non-verbal, and visual resources such as words and images in media texts, enhance the media's capability to display latent social meaning based on the diverse social environments the media operate in. Latent meaning speaks to meaning that is not obvious and will probably be interpreted differently by its consumers. Latent meanings can be given different contexts in different communication practices. Briefly, context refers to “stable sets of circumstances” that actuate sense-making (Schirato & Yell 2000:14).

Newspapers, as communicative mediums, combine images with writings, which are both semiotic resources. It is, therefore, difficult to separate the two in newspapers, and it is important to understand how semiotic resources can be applied in different social and cultural contexts. For this study, using social semiotics to focus on images can contribute to the field of digital or photo and content journalism by providing a thorough account of social resources and their meanings. It can further enhance the proper description and interrogation of visual resources for future studies.

3.2.3 Other aspects of social semiotics in media texts

Social semiotics and traditional semiotics are different but may, at times, be confused as one and the same. Some of the differences include the fact that, unlike traditional semiotics, social semiotics recognises that social meaning derives from a social

environment; therefore, how the meaning is contextualised is dependent on the kind of environment. When using social semiotics for analysis, it is also important to recognise that whether the text is verbal, non-verbal, or virtual, the social environment is not fixed, but ever-changing.

Hall et al (2013) looked at what verbal, non-verbal, and visual messages imply in media texts. As we know by now, media texts can include political advertisements, or a news article written for mass dissemination via a medium such as newspapers or magazines. The said news article may be about, for example, politics or a political figure, as will be the case with the sampled news articles for this dissertation. In most of his earlier works, Hall (1973) argued that media users are not passive as they actively interpret texts communicated by the media and can construct their own meanings from those texts. Through its interest in the construction and interpretation of meanings behind media texts, this dissertation views media users as essential and unique producers of such meanings. Media users can act as producers through platforms such as social media, by engaging how they source particular media texts and whether these texts speak to their interests and needs. Media users can, therefore, directly, or indirectly suggest the kind of content that is suitable for them.

Regarding ideologies, Teun van Dijk (1995) notes that though not absolute, ideologies are generally revealed and reconstructed in non-verbal semiotic messages such as photographic communication and discourses. There is a need to understand how non-verbal texts such as images, are produced within particular discourses, and why specific texts are chosen over others. That could help to better interpret meanings in visual communications, as is a partial goal of this dissertation.

For Terry Eagleton (1991), ideology is a matter of discourse instead of language. He perceives this term as simplifying the classification of the various things we apply when using signs. Eagleton adds that it is about how language is utilised between specific groups of humans for the construction of specific impacts, and suggests that for a statement to be classified as ideological, it must be connected to a discursive context (Eagleton 1991). To have an accurate and deep understanding of the role of newspapers in society, or the effects that the newspapers have on media users, there

must be an understanding of how the newspapers attempt to construct reality. The social semiotic approach does not present actual reality of meanings produced by texts, but it can 'reflect' reality.

Adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) proposed social semiotics model, this dissertation will look at the sampled visual texts in terms of images and captions aligned with images; these are considered as signs, and will be analysed to observe the ideologies in the selected newspaper articles. De Saussure's (1916) view of signs in semiology is that the signifier as the form is defined by how it is connected to other aspects of other signs. On the contrary, the signified focuses on the content in the communicative text.

Gillian Rose (2015) states that some images, as examples of visual texts, descriptively illustrate something, while others have their unique messages or arguments. Hall (1997) notes, in this vein, that signs do not have permanent meanings. For example, the EFF mainly uses the colour 'red' for their political attire; the party explains this choice of colour as signaling the bloodshed of liberation fighters (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013). Some might associate the colour with love, others with danger. However, it is worth noting that such signs can be subjective as they do not reflect reality but its construction.

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), visual communication or visual texts are consistently coded, and the society or media users recognise or use codes that they perceive as valuable when they attempt to make sense of these visual communication and visual texts. This contributes to how media users understand communication and interpret its meaning. Visual structures possess specific interpretations that are created by social relationships and experience.

We live in a period where much information and news are produced and disseminated online and with notable visual elements that aid with enhancing the accessibility of the published information. It is, therefore, important to find critical instruments for people to interact with these kinds of texts (Engebretsen & Kennedy 2020). Information can be presented using various semiotic resources. In terms of images, their placement in newspaper articles is important. Newspapers do not randomly place images anywhere

in the article. The images are produced in terms of camera angle, colour, and placement, so that they serve a particular purpose. The purpose can include persuading the reader to go through the content in its entirety.

According to Barthes (1964; 1977), the beholder of the image receives two messages from the observation. These messages are simultaneously perceptual and cultural (Barthes 1964; 1977). Images choice by the media is never innocent; they represent and are often associated with something, which will be culturally and perceptually interpreted by the viewer according to a given environment. Unlike verbal texts, visual texts do not only carry social codes and social meaning, but they also possess specific cultural codes and cultural meanings, hence they can be interpreted culturally and perceptually.

Martin Lister and Liz Wells (2001) have argued that the relationship between images and their beholders can have psychoanalytic implications. In visual communication or visual analysis, the production elements of the image (such as colour, angle, and lighting), and how it is socially contextualised, is significant. It acknowledges that media consumers have different profiles and different experiences. Also, the period in which an image is produced can contribute to how it is experienced as we live in ever-changing times socially, technologically, historically, economically, and politically. For that reason, implications that are technological, political, or historical can be speculated when using social semiotics for analysis.

In terms of some aspects of visual production, Kress (2010) remarks that media users can variously articulate the meaning behind colour. For example, the use of black-and-white images versus images with other colour pallets in newspapers or on television, is purposefully done. With regard to camera angles, low camera angles typically create an idea of superiority, ecstasy, and victory or success, while the high angles create an idea of inferiority, misery, or unhappiness (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006). Aspects such as colours and angles, then, can be used to attract attention and deliver specific communicative ideologies. That is part of the nature of visual communications in social semiotics analysis.

For this dissertation, the social semiotics aspects to be critically examined are the textual and visual languages (also considered as ideology) that images use. These images, in turn, must be represented through language, which can be implicit or explicit, as we have noted thus far. Therefore, these visual production aspects make it possible to connect them to meaning and communication in media texts. Marx explains language as “a practical consciousness”, and ideology as “a false consciousness” (Hodge & Kress 1979). Social semiotics cannot be divorced from human semiosis in terms of the way humans communicate, construct, and interpret meanings according to unique social environments. As supported by Hodge and Kress (1988), human semiotic systems are inherently social in their content and state.

For Rick Iedema (2001), visual texts’ meanings can be subjected to critical analysis by deconstructing them in a systematic way. The researcher understands social semiotics as deconstructing texts and understanding the aspects and systems that are deployed in conveying communication and meanings. In social semiotics, critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be used as a complimentary approach to critically analyse social and semiotic aspects in media texts such as signs, discourse, and meanings.

Norman Fairclough (2010) explains that one of the characteristics of CDA is that it goes beyond providing general comments on discourse to include the analysis of texts in a systematic manner. CDA can help uncover underlying discourse and meanings in texts through a social semiotics lens. It does not only enhance the thorough analysis of written and spoken words, but also acknowledges that discourses can use variety of modes such as images as forms of communication. Social semiotics is essentially critical, so is CDA, and both provide profuse contextualisation of media texts for political and social meaning-making.

It is important to analyse images using social semiotics to check on how they were produced, and if in their production, they were manipulated. It is crucial to remember that visual communication and its resources influence how this communication is perceived and interpreted by its targeted consumers. For example, if newspapers usually select EFF related images that show them clashing with fellow politicians in parliament, the consumers of these newspapers could perceive the party as being

unruly and violent. However, the researcher will not check for technical manipulation as that might require an experienced photographer to check; for example, whether or not an image was edited using visual editing tools such as photoshop. The researcher will only analyse the various possible meanings behind the sampled images for this dissertation.

For Aiello (2006), Barthes's social semiotics work has been relegated, and in terms of denotation and connotation forms, the emphasis has been on the connotation in images. Even so, the arbitrary connection between denotation and connotation in images cannot be divorced (Barthes 1977). The connection provides further insight into what the images mean or what their possible interpretations are. Ernst Gombrich (1982) and Sonia Livingstone's (2002) state that visual artists use technical production of images to manipulate the visual perception of the viewers. This could be done by applying the principles of denotation (which do not always carry arbitrary meanings) and connotation (carrying vague meanings).

Part of semiotic visual analysis is interested in exposing and considering possible fabrication or deceitful communication (Cilliers 2014). Images can be manipulated using different editing software such as Adobe lightroom, photoshop, and ON1 Photo RAW. The manipulation of images through editing can distort the representation of the subject or object, as well as the possible messages composed in them.

Daniel Chandler (2001) proposes principles that can be adopted in analysing visual social semiotics. Firstly, semioticians such as Chandler suggest that people view the world through signs. Semioticians also attempt to clarify the meaning-making rhetoric of motionless visuals in communication. Secondly, people create meaning of signs in their individual and community social or cultural lives. Lastly, resources for constructing meaning are provided by semiotic systems (Chandler 2001). Regardless, journalists, news sources, and editors shape how the news is constructed, while the media consumers are social actors in the construction of meaning.

For Jewitt and Oyama (2001:136), images as visual social semiotic resources, provide a description of how said images can be communicated and utilised in communication. Visual social semiotics, in this study, will be used to look at the positive, neutral, or

negative representation of the EFF embedded in the content of the selected online newspapers. To make sense of the news stories and to interpret them in a manner that they can understand, readers rely on a combination of images, words, captions, and the headlines used in the newspapers. As such, this dissertation sustains a critical awareness that images can lead to varied interpretations among readers on the representation of the EFF by the selected online newspapers. Thereby, it is of value to critically analyse these images.

3.3 CRITICISM OF THE SOCIAL SEMIOTICS THEORY

As with all theories and scholarly propositions, the social semiotics theoretical contribution is not without criticism. According to Fiske (1990:53), in social semiotics, only a limited range of visual resources are available, and it is at times not easy to determine “how highly motivated or constrained a sign actually is”. This might be because some visual resources are purposively selected to create specific perceptions and emphasise specific meanings or ideology over others.

Jensen (1995), for example, expressed concern that social semiotics relates only to the creation of meaning, therefore, neglects media text audiences as cultural agents. Similarly, Iedema (2001) expressed concern that social semiotics is only involved in the visual and verbal structures of the media text and is, therefore, not concerned with the categories of audiences and their readings of both the visual, written, and verbal text. Social semiotics is also interested in non-verbal structures, and elements such as facial expressions and gestures can be analysed in images. However, the creation of meaning by media producers should not marginalise those with less resources such as electronic resources, including the less educated.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) raised issues about social semiotics assuming that texts can produce the exact meaning and effects that the authors intended towards audiences. Contrary, texts can have different effects on media users as their social environments are unique; therefore, they will not interpret meaning in a uniform manner. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) propose that these uncertain outcomes of social semiotics should be studied at the level of social action and their effects in the

production of meaning. Meanings are flexible and are because of social interactions or social relations between members of a society.

Hodge and Kress (1988) argue against linguist de Saussure's view of semiotics by referring to his view as a 'problematic legacy' that brings about linguistic challenges. According to them, De Saussure's model does not address creativity, movement, and change in language questions, "possibly in reaction to the diachronic linguistic traditions of his time" (Hodge and Kress 1988:16). De Saussure (1916) also did not extensively address the maintenance and link between the signifier (form) and the signified (content) regarding societies and cultures. Hodge and Kress perceived Halliday and most of his proponents as constrained by the dominant linguistic paradigm (Zolyan 2019). However, these authors maintained their research integrity by having a constructive dialogue across this initial distinction.

The researcher for this study accepts that further research needs to be conducted to uncover how and what media consumers do to interpret signs. Merely assuming how media consumers interpret signs could compromise the reliability of any research as the assumptions cannot be generalised without extensive research. Finally, more studies are needed to look at the extent to which visual communication (images) manipulate and persuade media users, and the extent of the effects thereof. It is an ambition of the current dissertation to make a small contribution in this regard.

3.4 CONCLUSION

As stated by Brooks and Hebert (2006), we live in a society that consumes a great deal of information, much of which they deem important is produced and disseminated by the media. Newspapers are a form of media that disseminates information to society. And, because we live in a digital world, online newspapers are even more easily accessible than print newspapers. The theories were chosen to better understand the research topic, and also shape the analytical framework thereof.

The study focusses on textual analysis of three online South African newspapers to establish how these newspapers represent the EFF; whether it is through negative, neutral or positive ideological connotations. This approach then also addresses a

Chapter 3: Literature review - Part II

prominent issue of media ethics, and whether the analysed newspapers adhere to their professional code of conduct. Among others, journalists and news editors must be objective, unbiased and have integrity. Irrespective of what journalists think about an issue, person, organisation, or event, every statement needs to be verified and confirmed as factual to uphold the truth. The production of news by online newspapers using digital resources should be an advantage for the public to access news fast, and to further democratise the news environment.

This study consists of a two-part literature review, where part one focusses on the representation, agenda-setting and framing theories (as captured in chapter 2). This current chapter, Chapter 3, focuses on social semiotics theory . The first three theories from chapter 2, namely, representation, agenda-setting, and framing are used in this dissertation to analyse the sampled newspaper articles' texts in terms of words or language.

Chapter 3 (Part II) of the literature review focused on social semiotics, which is to be used to analyse images (photographs and caption) in the South African online newspapers: *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*, in their news articles about the EFF. The four theories combined, assist to effectively investigate the portrayal of the EFF by the three mentioned newspapers in terms of words and images. The next chapter unpacks the research design and research methodology employed in the study.

4 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

For the researcher to get reliable and valid results, there must be a step-to-step plan of action for how the researcher plans to conduct and execute the study. This chapter highlights the interpretivist research paradigm that is adopted to explore the multifaceted meaning of texts in the *City Press*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian's* representation of the EFF. Using the textual qualitative research approach enables the researcher to produce descriptive and interpretive data revealing the underlying meanings of the content by the three online newspapers as the research population, in representing the object (EFF). The researcher's choices around these have been motivated and are guided by the research problem.

This study employs a mixed methods research approach as qualitative and quantitative methods can complement each other to produce consistent results that indicate reliability and validity thereof. However, the dissertation relies more on the qualitative aspect rather than the quantitative. As such, the qualitative method was heavily relied on to analyse and investigate the texts (words and images) of the newspaper articles from the *City Press*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian*, while the quantitative method helped to indicate the quantity of articles analysed, and how many were found to have represented the EFF in neutrally, positively, or negatively. The mixed method research is employed to establish facts and provide conclusion based on the results that were achieved, therefore, intensifying insights about the research issue.

4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A study's research design captures the manner in which the research idea is constructed into a systematic project or plan that can be carried out in practice by a researcher or team of researchers (Cheek 2004:761). For a research design to be understood, the researcher must show the interconnectedness of features such as the research paradigm in terms of ontology and epistemology, methodology, and sampling techniques.

4.2.1 *Ontology and epistemology*

For David Marsh and Paul Furlong (2002), while ontology and epistemology are connected, their distinctions must be clearly understood. Ontology focuses on the researcher's views relating to questions around what comprises reality and our understanding of existence (Marsh & Furlong 2002:18). The researcher will answer the research question for the purpose of this study by sharing views on how the three selected online newspapers represent the EFF, but these views will be based on the findings of the study.

On the contrary, epistemology focuses on what constitutes knowledge that is valid, and how that knowledge can be acquired. To acquire knowledge of whether the EFF is represented negatively, positively, or neutrally by the three newspapers, the researcher studied the texts of these publications to provide results that can be perceived to be valid. By employing epistemology in the study through analysing multiple articles of the chosen publications, the researcher acknowledges that studying one article of each would have produced distorted results as it would not have clearly indicated how the party was represented.

Alan Bryman (2004) describes a paradigm as a group of beliefs which dictate the studies that should be carried out by scientists in specific fields, the way those studies must be carried out, and how researchers should interpret research results. This dissertation used the interpretive paradigm through the lens of CDA as it is suitable for this research project to interpret the data that was collected from the selected South African online newspapers.

4.2.2 *The interpretive paradigm*

Wahyuni (2012:71) notes that in the interpretive paradigm, social actors and people's perceptions construct reality. In that sense, Athar Hussain et al (2013) state that interpretivist researchers maintain that understanding and knowledge are constructed from interpretations only, assuming that there are no facts. The writers of the articles of the selected newspapers draw attention to issues that they feel are important; in doing so, reality could be constructed subjectively by them.

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An analysis of media texts is then, by definition, grounded within the interpretivist paradigm. As Michael Crotty (1998) states, a characteristic of interpretivism is the study of texts to gain an understanding of the meaning within texts. The paradigm is about understanding subjective experiences rather than precise observation. Interpretivism is about integrating specific interpreted elements of the data or study with human interest, and more from a social perspective.

The paradigm is chosen because it allows the researcher to view the research issue through the perceptions and experiences of the participating objects of focus; these being the online articles from the three selected newspapers. The paradigm further assists the researcher to understand how the EFF experiences negative, neutral, or positive representation by the *City Press*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian*.

Using CDA as an element of the interpretivist paradigm, the researcher interpreted and analysed the linguistic aspects, specifically, the written texts from the selected newspapers to examine their meanings and draw conclusions without generalising the findings. The approach assists in obtaining greater understanding of the circumstances and their complexities in unique context (Creswell 2007).

By interpreting and analysing the newspaper texts through CDA, the researcher acknowledges that studying multiple articles, each of them could be constructed subjectively; therefore, have unique realities. The researcher further acknowledges that the study's interpretations for each publication are unique and other researchers could interpret the constructed reality differently. CDA is also suitable to use in this study as it largely employs qualitative research method through textual analysis of the three newspapers' articles, which cannot be quantified, but can provide deeper insights and understanding of the research issue focusing on the EFF's representation by these newspapers.

4.3 MIXED METHODS APPROACH

For Zina O'Leary (2004), a research methodology is a framework that is correlated with a specific set of assumptions that can be employed when conducting research. A mixed methods research approach – which is suitable for conducting social research – is

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employed in this study, which aims to investigate social constructs and visual representation. The researcher not only looks at texts in terms of words only, but provides an analysis of images (photographs) as well.

This study follows the mixed method approach to enhance the findings from this research project and to answer the why and how questions as they relate to the collected data in the study. The researcher understands mixed methods as the combined use of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

It was Creswell (2009) maintains that the mixed methods approach is not just about gathering and analysing data from two approaches, but it increases the chances of getting more relevant and credible findings than using them individually. This method enables the researcher to effectively investigate patterns of representation of the EFF by the selected online newspapers. It further enables specific perspectives on the said issue and to represent some of the qualitative results in a quantitative manner.

For this study, the researcher feels that the qualitative and critical analysis of the newspaper texts reveals the trustworthiness of the collected data, while the use of the quantitative approach indicates that the research question posed in the study is context relevant.

According to Creswell (2009), the qualitative method provides open-ended data, while the quantitative method provides close-ended data; thus, they provide varied information. Nonetheless, both methods have their strengths and weaknesses when used individually or collectively. Even so, the researcher holds that using these methods together to analyse how the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press* online newspapers represent the EFF can provide more insights of the research problem and help answer it more effectively.

While there are scholars who believe that one can either be an interpretivist or a positivist as a researcher, John K. Smith and Lous Heshusius (1985) state that qualitative research embraces a hermeneutic perspective where it attempts to interpret subjective experiences and interrogate the presence of a social reality. On the contrary, quantitative research usually embraces a positivist perspective where it attempts to

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discover objective truth and affirms the presence of an independent social reality (Smith & Heshusius 1985). However, since this study relies more on interpreting data in a qualitative instead of a quantitative manner, this is what led the researcher to embrace the interpretivist approach. Nonetheless, both methods (qualitative and quantitative) can be replicated by other researchers to test credibility.

Using mixed method in the study enables the researcher to produce descriptive findings of how the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press* represent the EFF, which also helps produce quantitative results of how many articles of these newspapers accounted for negative, positive or neutral representation of the party. In the researcher's understanding, it means these methods can enhance the understanding of the collected research data and the credibility of the conclusion reached.

This present study is an exploratory and descriptive mixed methods textual analysis. It is also cross-sectional as data was collected from the population at a specific point in time, from January 2021 to June 2022.

4.3.1 Qualitative approach

For Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (1994), Raj Arora and Charles Stoner (2009), and Creswell (2013), qualitative analysis has been trialed as a method that deeply explores and interprets issues and cannot be quantified. Simply put, qualitative research is an antonym of quantitative research where measurement cannot be applied. This approach usually describes and explores the ideas, feelings, and thoughts that people, or research respondents, have about a specific research issue (Angelopulo & Baker 2013). To provide insights of how the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press* represent the EFF, the researcher uses the qualitative method through CDA as one of the qualitative method's categories to critically analyse the newspapers' texts in terms of words and images.

The researcher uses this method as it is unstructured, uses meaning-orientated methodologies relevant for textual analysis and for the interpretivist paradigm that this study employs. Also, this research method is largely employed as the meanings of

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words or figures of speech used in the newspaper articles cannot be defined or explained using numbers (quantitatively).

The presentation of data in this dissertation is done in such a way as to show the interlocking details of the evidence in order to place the reader within the context of the research (Neuman 2003:142). For that reason, the researcher finds the qualitatively-swayed approach more flexible, exploratory, and responsive in terms of context to what is being researched. As Weil and McGill (1989:18) aptly note, qualitative research can help reveal new language that reflects actual lived experiences. Thereby, the data collected and examined in this study – using this method – could be done through language; whether oral, written, or visual, and did not have to rely on numerical data.

4.3.1.1 Criticism of qualitative approach

Bryman (2009) states that quantitative researchers often raise concerns regarding this approach by indicating that it lacks transparency, results are subjective and not easy to replicate. He further states that results from qualitative research are difficult or impossible to generalise. This dissertation accepts that sometimes qualitative data can be difficult to interpret as it is frequently based on a single or a few case studies, which can compromise obtaining reliable results. It is, therefore, important for any researcher to understand how to interpret data gathered through this approach to ensure that validity and reliability are not compromised.

4.3.2 Quantitative approach

In contrast to qualitative research approaches, quantitative research results or data are presented in a numerical or statistical manner. Bryman (2008:715) affirms that the quantitative approach is about the quantification of data that are collected and analysed. Quantitative methods use numbers rather than words and are able to generate exactly the same results each time (are replicable). For this study, the researcher compares the number of articles from the *City Press*, *Daily Maverick*, and *Mail & Guardian*, that represented the EFF in a negative, neutral, and positive manner. Where necessary, the researcher also checks how many times specific figures of speech or words were used in representing the EFF.

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Quantitative research can also be used to indicate various quantifiable aspects in a story or publication; for example, the number of stories that were published each week or each month with specific focus. However, that analytic approach is applied in this study. Statistics are also considered as texts and, in the case of newspaper reportage for example, they do not imply that the measurements in terms of the number of news articles do not necessarily represent reality of the statistics. Since statistics need to be interpreted, quantitative researchers attempt to make sense of reality using numbers. For example, regarding newspapers, the articles and statistics in them are considered as texts, which researchers seek to make sense of a specific aspect of the social world.

4.3.2.1 Criticism of quantitative approach

The researcher for this study is of the understanding that hypotheses stemming from quantitative research are less grounded; therefore, they can sometimes be difficult to obtain credible results. This can be supported by Alfred Schutz's (1962) view that qualitative researchers accept that quantitative "descriptions are too superficial". Herbert Blumer (1956) mentions that qualitative researchers criticise quantitative researchers for utilising irrelevant hypotheses. For that reason, unlike the qualitative approach, the quantitative approach can provide less detailed description of the issue at hand.

4.3.3 The advantages of mixed methods approach

Every research approach, irrespective of how many scholars use it, has its strengths and weaknesses. Mixed methods approaches are about merging qualitative and quantitative research approaches, which provides an opportunity to maintain the strengths and lessen the weaknesses in both approaches (Bergman 2008). Conversely, Burke Johnson and Anthony Onwuegbuzie (2004) further state that quantitative data could be utilised to add accuracy to qualitative data such as pictures, narratives, and words, by confirming or falsifying an empirically grounded hypothesis. In this study, the quantitative data that indicate how many newspaper articles represented the EFF positively, negatively or neutrally, validates the qualitative data that points out through textual analysis on the type of coverage by the publications.

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For Cronholm and Hjalmarsson (2011), when researchers embrace the merging of qualitative and quantitative research approaches, it can enhance a comprehensive and absolute range of research questions. Using a single method can provide less insights into the research issue of how the EFF is represented by the newspaper, but combining qualitative and quantitative methods can heighten understanding into this research issue.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) contend that mixed methods generate more complete knowledge relevant to inform theory and practice. The combination also enhanced how the research question was responded to. This dissertation accepts that the merging of these two approaches can advance the drawing to more valid and credible research findings and conclusions as they can provide mutual verification by revealing consistent findings.

Cronholm and Hjalmarsson (2011) argue that the two approaches do not necessarily represent different worlds that cannot be merged, but knowledge can be shared between the two worlds using relevant connotation and contexts, so that the real meaning of concepts is maintained. For that reason, evident in the analysis and findings, this dissertation holds that the two methods can complement each other very well and they mutually benefit from each other as they both dynamically respond to the 'how' and 'why' questions.

4.3.4 Criticism of mixed methods

Bryman (1988), and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) expressed concern that methodological purists do not recommend that a researcher integrates two methods, rather a researcher should use either a qualitative or quantitative paradigm. Learning the uniqueness of these methods individually and how they can be integrated can be overwhelming, tricky, costly, and time consuming for researchers as more resources (such as human resource) would be required.

Creswell (2003) and Bryman (2012) criticise the combination of these methods as they may, at times, possess epistemological assurance that contradict each other's views of how reality should be studied. While mixed methods can enhance insights into the

research issue, researchers are bound to learn how each method works so that they can be able to use and apply them effectively.

Just like Bryman (2009), Guba (1985) and Morgan (1998) hold a view that qualitative and quantitative research constitute dissimilar paradigms, therefore are incompatible. For Creswell (2009), not many scholars embrace mixed methods, nor do those who use this approach provide extensive feedback about their experiences of combining two different research methods or approaches. The researcher for this study affirms that lack of such feedback can further demoralise some researchers, especially emerging researchers who wish to embrace mixed methods; this leads to having scholars with little knowledge of how to integrate methods stemming from the two approaches. That said, this study remains convinced that the mixed methods approach was most suitable to lead to relevant findings in relation to the research problem. The section below discusses the research methods that were deployed to help the dissertation arrive at the findings that are presented in later chapters.

4.4 RESEARCH METHOD(S)

Norman Blaikie (1993:7) contends that a methodology is “the analysis of how research should or does proceed”. Methodology is thus primarily concerned with the way theories are formulated and employed within research and the justifications of the choices by the researcher in relation to the problem and goals of the research”.

4.4.1 *Mixed methods in textual analysis*

This study employed a mixed method textual analysis as a research approach. According to Norman Fairclough (1995:5), “[t]extual analysis can often give excellent insights about what is in a text ...”. Examples of texts, as was noted earlier in the dissertation, include photographs or images, statistics, and words, which are relevant in this study as both the written words and the accompanying images from the selected three online newspapers were analysed in terms of what they mean, and if they hold any negative, neutral, or positive connotations. For that reason, textual analysis is deemed relevant to analyse data using both qualitative and quantitative analytical methods.

Greene and Caracelli (1997) maintain that we need to be specific about what is being 'mixed' and the way it is being 'mixed'. For Rosaline Barbour (1988), when methodologies are mixed within an extensive qualitative and quantitative approach, it may provoke several issues as when working across approaches. 'Mixing' in research does not necessarily mean of methods only, but other elements (such as data collection and paradigm) may be considered for mixing too.

4.4.2 Close look at textual analysis

Textual analysis is a relevant methodology of gathering and analysing data such as texts in newspapers, television programmes, and magazines. However, it is important to note that readers and audiences are different; therefore, they will always have different ways of interpreting texts. This means that there can never be a single and correct interpretation of data or texts as it depends on how meanings are understood and interpreted by the diverse readers or audiences thereof. Even in terms of researchers, they can generate different analysis of a given text depending on their knowledge and background about that particular text, or their objectives and research questions might be different. This points to the complexity of textual analysis.

Alan McKee (2001) notes that there are great numbers of feasible interpretations, and some will be more suitable than others depending on circumstances. For example, a specific newspaper article can be interpreted differently by readers; some might find it to have a neutral representation of the subject, while others might perceive it as negative or positive. These are distinct and possible interpretation of the same article (text). However, the kinds of words and their meanings would be more likely to describe the ideological connotations in the article, which is the approach that this study adopts. Nevertheless, McKee (2001) also mentions that a researcher should never claim that an interpretation fully reflects reality, that it is 'accurate' or 'inaccurate', as every version of reality used to measure a text against is *itself* another representation and another text.

Different texts can describe the same object or the same event differently. For example, with newspaper reportage, different journalists can use different headlines (in terms of words) to report on the same story. If we were to think of a political story as an example, one journalist can use a headline that reads, "It is time for the EFF to rule in Limpopo",

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and another can use the headline, “The EFF bags the most votes in Limpopo”. These two stories report on, for example, local government elections and the political party that won the elections in the Limpopo province; therefore, the same truth or facts were described using different headlines.

Language and/in media texts are some of the most important aspects that we use to make sense of the world that we live in, which is what textual analysis is about. In terms of language or words, for example, a specific object can be referred to using a specific name but in different languages. The fact that the said object is presented in different languages does not mean it is not the same object, but means different languages were used to reflect the same ‘truth’.

Audience members are usually considered for interviews in cases where there is a need to understand the feasible interpretations drawn from texts. However, this does not apply in this current study as the texts are interpreted by the researcher, and not the audience members. Additionally, there were specific theories that the researcher focused on in the textual analysis of specific newspaper articles, which did not include classic audience theories.

For a researcher to effectively analyse texts, there needs to be understanding of the contexts behind them. McKee (2001:13) explains context as “other texts that surround a text” and gives practical information that can help make sense of it and provide guidance as to how to interpret texts. McKee (2001) also states the three levels of context; namely, the rest of the text (for example, how a specific subject would be contextualised in different time periods), the genre of the text (where notable standard rules of significance are used as codes to communicate between producers and the audiences or readers), and the wider public context in which a text is circulated (looking at a general context in which a text circulates). A valuable analytical approach to consider when attempting to critically analyse texts while fully considering the contexts from which these texts are produced, is the analysis method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) adopted in this study.

4.4.3 A brief note on critical discourse analysis

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Fairclough (1995) states that CDA is mostly utilised in the social science fields where oral and written discourses and texts are deployed by scholars as resources for research studies in their fields. Jan Ifversen (2003) notes that a text comprises of a specific integration of meaning, which has patterns of sentences. CDA, as a context-sensitive analytical approach, is relevant to use in the investigation of communication, discourse and language, and is one of the best forms of textual analysis. In the context of this present study, the method is used to analyse media texts (newspaper articles in terms of written words and images) to determine if the three selected newspapers represent the EFF positively, negatively or neutrally.

As Michael Quinn Patton (2002) mentions, this method enables in-depth exploration of communicative texts such as newspaper reports. The method is instrumental in helping the researcher uncover assumptions and latent meanings or messages in sampled texts. Among other things, it also enabled the objective and the description of manifest content of texts (Creswell 2007). Textual studies can also be used through figures of speech such as metaphor and hyperbole, which were thus also looked at when analysing the texts from the selected newspapers. Van Dijk (1995) notes that this approach is explanatory, practical, and descriptive, and seeks to uncover the implicit and explicit discursively enacted dominance or their fundamental ideology. It is, therefore, suitable for this dissertation to explicitly study the critical aspects of 'talk' and text that make up a newspaper article.

CDA is one of the approaches that has played a great role in the development of social semiotics (Bezemer & Jewitt 2009). Foucault (1977) explains discourse as knowledge that is socially constructed from some features of reality. This approach can assist to uncover the denotative meanings in speech (oral or written), and texts (visual or otherwise), and to unpack how knowledge is developed in particular social contexts and social actors such as in different societies and the press.

For the purpose of this study and as Van Dijk (1995) mentions, when using this method, researchers have to take an ethical stance (like being objective and honest) and describe unfair social or political practices (if any) in an explicitly critical manner. Embracing research ethics/integrity, the researcher analysed the newspaper articles in

an explicitly critical, clear, and democratic manner. In analysing the newspaper texts, the researcher commented on how readers are likely to read and interpret them, bearing in mind that depending on the readers' profiles (like social experience), the texts can be interpreted differently.

The researcher asserts that CDA is effective to using in this study to interpret the context of communication texts, and to also highlight that the language used by the newspapers was not innocent, but there is either neutral, negative or positive connotation attached to them. As the study emphasises on language, CDA enables a problem-orientated approach to unearth how the three newspapers represent the EFF.

4.5 SOCIAL SEMIOTICS AS A RESEARCH METHOD

Beyond just a theoretical framework, social semiotics was also employed in this dissertation to examine how the EFF is represented by the three selected online newspapers through the visual images accompanying the written texts. Hodge and Kress (1988:8) state that "text is only a trace of discourses, frozen and preserved, more or less misleading". They add that discourse fades abruptly, surrounding a flow of texts. While the approach can help to effectively study texts (such as words, images and captions), their design and interpretations, the researcher used it to mainly look at the choice of images and their captions used by the publications in representing the EFF.

The approach is suitable to study the context, ideology, and myths around the images. Social semiotics has various tools that can be used to analyse hidden and explicit non-verbal, visual (such as images), and verbal (such as words) media texts in, for example, political news captured in newspaper articles. The aim of social semiotics – which can be descriptive and interpretive – is to contribute to the innovation of semiotics or visualise ways in which the 'rules' of sign-making may be disconnected or transformed (Van Leeuwen 2005). For the researcher and the purpose of this study, signs were regarded as anything that holds meaning in the newspaper articles, which included images and words.

Using social semiotics in this study clarifies what is being communicating, in which environments, and how it is being communicated. This approach is relevant in

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understanding the uniqueness in which the selected newspapers communicate and how their communicative meanings are differently translated by media consumers.

Therefore, it goes deeper into providing context on specific reporting of the EFF by the online newspapers according to their distinctiveness. Therefore, this method enables the interpretation of representations' meanings found in specific media texts.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996:18) maintain that social semiotics deconstructs explicit and non-explicit ideological meanings from resources; said resources can be visual, verbal, and non-verbal, and contribute towards the formation of social meaning. In terms of images, which are non-verbal visuals, they can be used to represent specific events (such as political events), and political figures (such as political leaders), whether taken or drawn by a cartoonist such as South African, Zapiro. Therefore, Thatelo (2016:74) emphasises the importance of understanding how social semiotics transmits the fundamental, and clear, as well as "socio-cultural, political, historical, and economic meanings of verbal, visual, and non-verbal rhetoric".

This dissertation accepts that visuals, such as photographs in newspapers, can express both denotative and connotative meaning. In terms of denotation, for example, if a newspaper article has an image of a young white person holding the old South African apartheid flag, it may denotatively mean a citizen is holding up a flag perhaps of his or her country. The connotative meaning could be that the image promotes racism and racial division. This means that images can present different latent and manifest meanings, and they can be experienced differently in different contexts. Therefore, Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001:92) suggest that we question the type of symbolic and connotative meanings associated with these representations.

For Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), the dimensions of representation are very important in the framework of social semiotic research. There are elements that Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) identified as those of representation. These elements include narrative processes, settings, events, and participants. These scholars' work is relevant to this present study as they view social semiotics as a research framework that contributes to and allows for the analysis of implicit and explicit ideological meanings

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from visual, verbal, and non-verbal media texts such as political content in newspapers reportage.

The social semiotics approach is centred around formal properties of visualisation, social affordances and semiotic. This approach is relevant to use in relating texts to contexts to make sense of social and political meanings. While social semiotics looks at how language and different forms of communication are interconnected to make meaning, it has similarities with CDA as it views language and sign-making from a broad perspective significant to the transformation or regeneration of social structures. When analysing visual texts such as images, it is important to consider, among others, these texts' viewing contexts (the different contexts in which images are experienced), and their materials (such as size, angle, and location) (Lister & Wells 2001).

Rose (2015) asserts that images, equitable to visual research methods (VRM), can be used by researchers to do various things with various types of images. She adds that social science researchers, who contribute to visual culture (which is rich and complex), variously use images to make sense of the world. According to Rose, working with made images such as photographs – which were analysed in this present study – tends to be qualitative.

Images can be used to communicate specific messages, and to achieve different objectives such as to educate, inform, represent, and persuade. For example, a photographer can take a photograph of protests, which a journalist can use to support a particular story that they are reporting on. Another example, in a court of law, very often photographs are analysed and used as supporting evidence that represents or confirms specific claims or stories from either the plaintiff or the defendant. However, it is essential to check if such images were not tampered with. Just as Rose (2015) states, images can be distributed quickly and casually, many of the digital ones have been revised using visualisation software such as Photoshop. This software can be used to manipulate original versions of images, which then becomes problematic in many instances.

In social semiotics, the term that is key is 'semiotic resource', which refers to "actions and artefacts we use to communicate" (Halliday 1978:3). The term originates from the

work of Halliday who affirms that the grammar of a language is a resource for making meanings (Van Leeuwen 2005). The author posits that in terms of communication, the question of 'how' is important, but cannot be isolated from the question of 'what' and 'meaning'. Halliday further states that several visual and linguistic features can be integrated into one communicative act, which can therefore be expressed through, for example, facial expression and gesture. For us to understand how communicative resources are used to produce meaning, we first need to understand what is being communicated.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The researcher for this study understands data collection techniques as the approaches and resources that are used to gather data for a study. Using mixed methods textual analysis, the researcher used a personal laptop with self-purchased data bundles to access the Internet; This was, of course, very crucial for this study. The researcher subscribed to the websites of the selected newspapers to unlock access to all previous, current, and future news stories on the said newspaper websites. Ten articles per publication were purposively chosen for the purpose of analysis. By accessing existing records (published articles) from the websites of the selected South African online newspapers, *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*, the researcher was able to advance her argumentative pursuits.

The sampled newspaper articles were used to investigate how the newspapers in question represented the EFF in their content. Further, four theories were chosen for their relevance to use in the analysis of the study; namely, representation theory, agenda-setting theory, and framing theory were used to analyse texts in terms of the kind of words used. The fourth, social semiotics theory, was used to analyse images in terms of the photographs and captions that accompanied each of the news articles.

The content from the texts of the selected publications (comprising of words, images and their captions) was carefully read, explored, and objectively analysed to see if the EFF political party was represented positively, negatively, or neutrally. These online newspapers were selected considering their readership figures and that they are some of the largest South African online newspapers that produce, among others, political

and current affairs content. In terms of storing the data, screenshots of the articles were taken and saved on a laptop, an external hard drive, and under specific folders on a Google drive that is linked to a personal Gmail account to allow access easy, and to ensure enough backup.

Focussing on the timeline, January 2021 to June 2022, the researcher checked articles from the websites of these publications that ran with the EFF (or its member/s) in their headlines, and used such as primary data. Secondary data were other articles written by the same newspapers that do not necessarily focus on the EFF, but in their content, have a mention of the party or its members. Further, data that was relevant to the study and had already been collected by other authors was accessed from sources such as books, journals, and citations, to also be used as secondary data.

4.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

Trevor Bond (2003) states that validity is the core of any form of assessment that is trustworthy and accurate. He further indicates that reliability is when a test can be used by several different researchers and still get consistent and unvarying results. This present study is valid because the online articles were derived from reliable and recognised online sources and have information that is meaningful to the research statement and the objectives of the study.

The study is reliable as the researcher will provide the links to the online articles for the readers to confirm existence and consistency that will be articulated in the study. The research is valid and reliable as the data collected from the online platforms are available in the public domain (the Internet) for anyone to see and go through to confirm the statements made by the researcher. Finally, the study is valid and reliable since it is objective in a sense that the researcher does not draw any subjective conclusions, but gathers data and uses it as evidence of findings to draw objective conclusions.

4.8 THE POPULATION

Gertruida Du Plooy (2002:100) describes a study population as all possible units of analysis in relation to a research topic. Chris Welman et al (1994) further describe the notion of population as the study's objects of focus and may consist of individuals,

groups, organisations, human products and events or conditions to which they are exposed. The researcher thus views the population as the objects or subjects that are being analysed or studied in a research project. The population being the three online newspapers: *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*, were textually analysed in this study to uncover if how they represented the EFF.

4.8.1 Target population

A target population is defined as all possible units of analysis (actual) to which the researcher wants to generalise findings (Du Plooy 2009). The target population for this study was all digitally disseminated newspaper articles by the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*. A total of 30 articles, ten from each publication, were gathered to analyse their textual elements, specifically the stories published about the South African political party, the EFF, whether they were positive, negative or neutral reportage.

4.8.2 Accessible population

Du Plooy (2009:109) defines accessible population as the “units of analysis in the target population to which the researchers have access”. The researcher visited the websites of the three South African online newspapers, *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press* to access stories that ran with the third biggest political party in South Africa, the EFF in their headlines, and were textually analysed by the researcher to determine how they were represented by the newspapers in question. The period that was focused on was from January 2021 to June 2022.

4.8.3 Units of analysis

For Du Plooy (2001), units of analysis are the portable elements being investigated in a study. The units of analysis in the present study were the article texts from the three South African online newspapers, *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*, that focused on the EFF between January 2021 to June 2022. The researcher analysed the textual representation of the EFF from the selected newspapers in terms of words (headlines and paragraphs) and images (and their accompanying captions). The articles

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referred to are of political content, but do not include opinion pieces, advertisements, and political cartoons relating to the EFF.

4.8.4 Population parameters/characteristics

The researcher visited the websites of the three targeted online publications, being the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*, to access ten news stories from each publication. Eventually, a total of 30 articles published between January 2021 to June 2022 about the EFF were analysed in terms of images and words, to discover if the reportage was negative, positive, or neutral.

4.9 SAMPLING METHOD

Welman et al (1994) explain that a sample is the miniature resemblance of a larger population or its subset. A sampling method describes a technique that a researcher employs to sample the population for the study. The method can either be probable or non-probable (Patton 2002; Creswell 2013). In the case of this study, the researcher employed a non-probable method in the form of purposive sampling. This sampling method assisted the researcher to ensure that the research results were context-relevant in terms of how the population (newspapers) represented the EFF, therefore chose best-fit participants (relevant articles) that focused on the EFF's representation.

For Parichi (2016:134), a corpus is a concept in communication studies that is closely related to the social research concept of population. A corpus of texts will usually be accessed and crafted from a wide range of text genres, and, in this study, it was the genre of newspaper publications, namely: *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*. In terms of sampling, the researcher selected smaller and context-relevant representative units from the total number of texts that were collected, and they analysed them in such a way that the results could be intellectually linked to the rest of the corpus. Out of the total number of texts making up the broader corpus, ten from each publication was conveniently selected for analysis.

4.9.1 Purposive sampling

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Purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique that was suitable for this study as it is more associated with qualitative analysis and provided context-focused results for the study. On the contrary, a probable method is associated with quantitative analysis. However, since this study relied heavily on a qualitative approach than quantitative, this motivated the researcher to choose only this sampling technique. Klaus Krippendorff (2004) holds that when sampling data for textual studies, textual units that can assist to answer the research questions need to be selected. This study is textual, therefore, textual units (words and images) were selected and analysed to answer the research question to offer precise research results on the representation of the EFF by the newspapers in question.

In line with Ted Palys (2008), the researcher agrees that this sampling technique is better suitable to analyse media publications such as online newspapers, which is the case in this study. The researcher found this method to be more convenient in terms of accessing the targeted population of the study as it saved time and was less expensive given that the researcher did not have to travel to 'meet' the population, but conveniently selected specific articles from the websites, suitable for analysis on the EFF's representation by the newspapers.

The researcher attempted to obtain samples that appeared to be representative of the population and that would maximise understanding of the research problem. The researcher thus used personal judgement to choose units from the population that were information-rich data sources and relevant for the study. This sampling technique enabled flexibility when selecting articles for analysis from the three online newspapers being focused on.

For that reason, for a period between January 2021 to June 2022, the researcher focused on articles that reported on the EFF, which excluded opinion pieces, advertisements, and political cartoons. To ensure that the data was manageable, a maximum of 30 articles from these online newspapers were analysed and interpreted. The researcher was confident that data saturation would have been reached by this number of articles; that is, no new knowledge would be generated further than this number. When visiting the websites of these publications, the key word 'EFF' (or in full,

‘Economic Freedom Fighters’) was used to conveniently identify the news articles of interest to this study, particularly in the headlines of the publications.

4.10 ETHICAL ISSUES

After reading the university’s Ethical Clearance Policy (2016), the researcher applied for ethical clearance and received the certificate thereof. The policy is understood and helps protect the integrity of the researcher and study participants, especially in the case of human participants. Given that this study did not involve human participants, ethical aspects such as informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality did not directly apply. The data collected about the EFF from the three online newspapers (the population), are in the public domain for the reader to access and confirm the statements to be made by the researcher in interpretation and analysis chapters to follow. However, the supervisor’s advice and approval were adhered to in that all sources used in this study have been acknowledged to avoid plagiarism and to maintain research integrity.

In terms of respect, fairness, and objectivity, the researcher treated the targeted online newspapers with respect without undermining their work or reputation. Regarding fairness, the researcher treated all the publications equally and did not favour any over the other. To ensure objectivity, when the researcher shares personal opinions in her analyses, they were based on statements sourced from reliable sources. The researcher notes that the analysis of the newspaper texts represents the likelihood of how they could be interpreted by readers; therefore, applied critical analysing of the texts in a fair manner.

4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of a step-to-step plan of action of how the researcher conducted the study. It highlighted the research paradigm, approach, and methods that were employed to advance the study. The data collection, population determination, and sampling techniques, were also discussed. The researcher’s choices around these have been motivated and were guided by the nature of the research problem and the research questions at hand.

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While mixed methods research is employed, the study relies more on the qualitative method than the quantitative. The qualitative method is heavily relied on to analyse and investigate the contents (words and images) from the newspaper articles. A reliance on the quantitative method was done to indicate the total number of analysed articles and how many were found to have represented the EFF neutrally, or positively, or negatively. The mixed method research employed in the study proved to provide extensive insights about the research issue and how to respond to it; therefore, assisted in addressing the research issue. The chapter that follows focuses on presenting the data and interpreting it using the analytical methods indicated in the study.

5 DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION – PART I

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on presenting a portion of the data collected by the researcher; these being articles from the *Daily Maverick*. The researcher considered almost 30 articles and chose only ten from this publication that she found relevant to the research focus. The articles were analysed in terms of words (written text) and photographs (visual text) which the researcher refers to as images. The captions of the images were also analysed as they can be used to narrate what is happening in an image.

Regarding the analysis of texts, the researcher focused on the meaning of words and their denotative and connotative meanings in relation to how the EFF is represented by the news articles from the three online publications. The analysis of images is a social complex process and readers interact and interpret them uniquely. Therefore, images do not carry innocent messages and there is no fixed interpretation. The researcher has focused on the connotative and denotative meanings of the images, and briefly on the technical aspects of how they were shot or manipulated by the photographer. The analysed articles have been screenshot and their links are shared in an addendum towards the end of this dissertation, as well as in the sources consulted.

5.2 DAILY MAVERICK ARTICLES

The *Daily Maverick's* online articles feature some advertising space mainly at the bottom right section of the webpage just after the image linked to the news article. The author's bylines and dates of publication are written below the captions of the images. The captions briefly describe the story before the reader engages with the content. The articles begin with a teaser paragraph, in the form of a short passage that persuades the reader to go through the entire story. Just below it, there is an option to 'listen to this article', which is an audio recording of the story and some audios start with introducing the publication before delving into the details of the story. The images have been screenshot by the researcher up to either the captions or the teaser paragraphs. Where advertisement interruption occurred, the researcher ignored the adverts and only

grabbed until the caption as the analysis was not based on the advertisements. Below is a presentation and engagement with the ten news articles from the *Daily Maverick*.

5.2.1 Article one: Malema comes out strongly in favour of Covid-19 vaccine

5.2.1.1 Representation

The headline reports that Mr Malema supports the COVID-19 vaccine. It means he encouraged people to get vaccinated.

According to the teaser paragraph, the author of the piece seems to have assumed that Mr Malema would object to the use of the COVID-19 vaccine, but did the opposite. It means Mr Malema was pre-judged as an anti-vaxxer before he could express whether he was in favour of the vaccine. Regarding him in a negative view, the author Davis (2021), was disappointed when he learned that Malema supported the cause and indicated that he (Malema) will be the first to take it, while encouraging citizens to vaccinate and all the while ridiculing unscientific myths around the vaccine. However, some EFF supporters went on to the party's social media platform to express disappointment in Mr Malema as they thought he would oppose the vaccine.

When Mr Malema spoke about the issue, the newspaper describes his mood as unusually restrained, meaning it was unexpectedly controlled. It implies that he is perceived as usually uncontrollable. Mr Malema is quoted as saying that he would suspend party activities (possibly in-person activities) until the second wave of the pandemic has passed. The statement represents him as a responsible and caring political leader.

Mr Malema is quoted criticising the government for being 'irrational' by closing the African borders during the second wave of the pandemic. This, in a contradictory manner, represents Malema as an irresponsible leader, given that the movement of people across borders was, at the time, considered a super-spreader of the pandemic. However, it also presents him as a leader that understands that Africans who are stuck in other countries would appreciate being in their respective countries of origin with their loved ones during the pandemic.

5.2.1.2 Agenda setting

The article sets the agenda on how the EFF, especially Mr Malema, feels about the COVID-19 vaccine. It indicates that Mr Malema is in favour of the vaccine but continues to mention that it was presumed, by the author of the piece, that Malema would oppose the vaccine. The issue of vaccines has been controversial in South Africa, with some anti-vaxxers creating myths around it. Contrary, others feared experiencing health complications, while others vaccinated either as a personal decision or enforced by an organisation (De Vos 2021). By continuously writing about this issue, the newspaper created salience in relation to the issue and, this time, through an angle that positioned Mr Malema as promoting vaccination.

5.2.1.3 Framing

While the article criticises Mr Malema for calling on the reopening of African borders, it puts emphasis on him as a vaccine proponent. Davis (2021) reiterates that Malema encourages others to get vaccinated, and dismisses some unscientific myths that can cause fear of getting vaccinated among the citizens. The statements depict Malema as a law-abiding political leader (respects COVID-19 regulations) and that he uses his political influence to save lives by encouraging vaccination.

5.2.1.4 Social semiotics

Two images of Mr Malema are merged in this article. One is a high-resolution image indicating that he was talking as his mouth is open. Another on the bottom right corner is in low-resolution, showing Malema with his mask on; suggesting, thus, that he respects COVID-19 protocols and, as a leader, is setting an example that other people, too, should respect the protocols by wearing masks. For Cilliers (2014:141), colour expresses meaning and can enhance the credibility of the image. Colour as a semiotic code can be interpreted differently by different readers; therefore, different emotions can be attached to it. The original colours of the images under scrutiny have been manipulated by using black and white colour shading, which is not a bright colour and captures the salience of the issue being reported on.

5.2.2 Article two: *Julius Malema & The Age of Cowardly Leadership*

5.2.2.1 Representation

The headline uses the word “and” to associate Mr Malema with cowardly leadership. The idea of a ‘coward’ is generally associated with fearfulness or not being brave.

The author of this news article describes the EFF as highly hypocritical by speaking against corruption but, themselves, being corrupt; implying that the EFF are exemplars of corruption. The allegations of corruption are made against the EFF without the provision of substantial evidence. If there is no evidence of corrupt activities by the party or to indicate that they were convicted by law enforcement for corrupt activities, the statements remain baseless opinions and accusations. The article is written by the founder and editor-in-chief of the *Daily Maverick*, Branko Brkic. It implies, arguably, that he, Brkic, has the final say (gatekeeper) and decides on which stories should be published and from what angles.

The EFF is also accused, in this news article, of deploying people (who could be party members) to intimidate others, implying that the party leaders do not do it themselves but use others to do their ‘dirty’ work. Brkic (2021) mentions that when the perpetrators are detained, they are on their own; this depicts the party leaders as a collective of betrayers in that they use their members to fight their battles.

Assuming that the writer is talking about the EFF, he refers to his earlier quote from another article (Brkic 2018) wherein he stipulated that the party oppresses media freedom, are racist, and violent. The statement represents the party as silencing the media, not promoting peace among citizens of different races, and are aggressive. By mentioning that the party leaders throw their supporters under the legal bus, the article portrays the party as careless and exploits its supporters.

The EFF public marchers are said to be fighting a battle that they do not know anything about, just like their leaders do. It presents them as a senseless party. Aligning Mr Malema with other local and international leaders, it is said that he does not know what true leadership is and will never know; meaning he is not a true leader. The opposite of true is false. Therefore, Mr Malema is considered a false leader by the newspaper. False means faulty (full of mistakes) and flawed (with many mistakes).

The writer concludes by remarking “... con artistry that is today’s world”, which is used in the same sentence that paints Mr Malema and other political leaders as cowards and false leaders. The statement of ‘con artistry’ is used to describe these politicians. Interestingly, the newspaper does not produce any evidence that proves that Mr Malema is a con artist, and by law, this is defamation of character. The researcher refers to this as defamation of character as Mr Malema’s right to dignity as protected by section 10 of the South African Constitution (South Africa 1996), would have been violated.

5.2.2.2 Agenda setting

The article begins by narrating a story of a brave, true, and humanitarian leader: Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton, who is described to have truly led with humanity and care for his people. It then briefly talks about Mr Donald Trump and Mr Jair Bolsonaro who are described as cowards and selfish through questionable leadership to stay in power. Mr Malema, in this analysed article, is clearly aligned with these ‘cowardly’ leaders and not considered as a true and brave leader. These words reduce the value of Mr Malema as a political leader and are insulting, it can be argued.

5.2.2.3 Framing

The line, “True leaders never let their personal goals and ambitions cost the lives of the people who trust them with leadership” (Brkic 2021), suggests that the newspaper is doubtful that Mr Malema is a true leader, and is of the opinion that he does not care about the lives of the people. The article finally moves to Mr Malema by first mentioning some coward leaders such as Mr Jacob Zuma, Mr Ace Magashule, Dr Iqbal Survé, and suggesting that Mr Malema and Mr Floyd Shivambu take the crown, regarding being the most cowardly leaders who do not care about humanity.

The paragraph appearing right above the image of EFF marchers exposes that these marching members are at risk of contracting a deadly virus, which presents them as careless and irresponsible. This observation is indicated by a huge crowd with no practicing of social distance and without masks during the COVID-19 lockdown.

5.2.2.4 Social semiotics

Mr Malema's image is placed in the centre of the article. On his left are former white male political leaders from other countries, Mr Donald Trump of the United States, and President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil. Visually placing Malema alongside these leaders – who are referred to as cowards and false leaders – implies that the newspaper perceives Mr Malema to be in the same league of cowardly leadership. Malema's gaze in the picture is not directly towards the reader (that is, directly into lens) but suggests that it is directed to the crowd that he was addressing. His symbolic interaction is firm and commands respect.

In the article, an image of marching EFF supporters is used. It is evident that the marchers are the party's supporters as they are holding hands and are branded in EFF gear. They are shown to be marching with placards that read, "it is to save lives". The image shows a huge crowd with no social distancing and without masks during the COVID-19 national lockdown period, exposing the EFF marchers as irresponsible and law breakers. Further, the huge crowd contradicts the placards of "a march to save lives", as huge gatherings that did not comply with the pandemic regulations (no social distance and masks), at the time, seriously risked lives.

5.2.3 Article three: *Eight years later, Julius Malema's path to relevance is still characterised by peddling populism and violence*

5.2.3.1 Representation

At the time the article was published, the EFF was eight years old. According to the heading focusing on Mr Malema, it is indicated that what keeps him relevant is promoting (peddling) populism and violence. It, therefore, suggests that Malema is a populist and an aggressive person. According to the researcher, populism in the article is used to suggest that Mr Malema is an opportunist that targets people on the ground who are possibly dissatisfied with the government, to make promises that persuade these dissatisfied individuals to support him. The headline does not use words such as 'alleged', which means that they have drawn a conclusion in their statement based on their opinions about Mr Malema.

The words “miraculously complied” imply that the author of the analysed article expected the EFF to break the COVID-19 protocols. They further mention that the EFF previously held such big gatherings during the lockdown. The statements depict the party as lawbreakers and inconsistent.

Mr Malema is described as a pleaser and populist. For the researcher, pleaser implies a person who aims to impress, whether is through positive or negative acts. Populist, in terms of political communication, refers to a person who targets people who are overlooked by the elites, and presents themselves as a better option to represent the said overlooked people’s rights (Żuk & Szulecki 2020). The article also has a recording of the event for readers who missed it.

The analysed article reports on the founding rally that the EFF hosted in Marikana in 2013: “when the area was a no-go zone for ANC leaders after the fatal shooting of striking mineworkers the year before” (Du Plessis 2021). The statement represents the EFF as opportunists in difficult situations by holding their founding rally at an area where the ANC could not go to due to the massacre of miners that took place in 2012, whom their families are still demanding answers/closure from President Cyril Ramaphosa.

5.2.3.2 Agenda setting

The heading and actual article set the agenda of referring to the EFF as a populist and aggressive (violent) party that does not comply with the COVID-19 regulations, which contributes to increasing deaths from the pandemic. For the researcher, referring to the party as violent, also means that it is perceived as engaging in bullying. This statement by the newspaper “ ... there’s no clear evidence yet that a significant number of these died at the hands of state machinery. If this was the case, more information on it would have surfaced by now” (Du Plessis 2021), speaks about the 300 deaths that happened during the Marikana uprising; when critically considered, it is evident that that statement is opposing what Mr Malema implied when he suggested that the miners died at the hands of the police (state machinery).

Turning focus on the 2019 local government elections, the writer of the analysed article reports that the percentage of the electorate that the EFF represents is far “smaller than

the big dreams of its leader”, implying that the party is perceived as inferior, and its leader’s dreams are unrealistic.

5.2.3.3 Framing

The article mainly frames the EFF as non-compliers and inconsistent. Mr Malema is perceived as a coward because he called on President Ramaphosa to remove the soldiers from the streets/community and to address the masses himself. The president did that in Ethekewini where he addressed the clean-up team, while Mr Malema did not “address edgy residents” (Du Plessis 2021).

The previous big gatherings that the EFF held are described in the analysed news article as super spreaders that contributed to COVID-19 deaths, thus painting the party as careless and ignorant, as opposed to claiming to be ‘caring’ for the people. Mr Malema is mentioned to deliver mind-altering half-truths and contradictory statements, implying that some statements are false and inconsistent. While Mr Malema made different statements at the virtual event, the focus in this article is on his statements about the 2021 July unrest. In this regard, the EFF is represented as having contributed to inciting violence. These can be supported by such quotations from the analysed text: “ ... EFF sided with ‘the people who were engaged in the activities of looting and fighting to provide food for their children’ ” and “ ... No soldiers on our streets! Otherwise, we are joining” (Du Plessis 2021). However, the newspaper acknowledges that it is not clear whether the party condoned, among others, the looting of live ammunition, electrical appliances, and the spreading of social media messages that incited violence.

In one of the paragraphs, the party’s name is written in small letters “economic freedom fighters” (Du Plessis 2021), which connotes that the publication regards it as inferior. Denotatively, it could be a typing error or that the words are not used as the name of the organisation but as describing an action. In the same paragraph, Mr Malema is accused of being upset (offended) by the soldiers as he cannot control them. It depicts Mr Malema as a controlling politician. In the last paragraph, Mr Malema is described as a kingmaker, which speaks to wanting to have influence over who leads. He is also said

to be someone who “exploits a gap”; meaning he uses something or people not from the goodness of his heart but for his benefit.

5.2.3.4 Social semiotics

The image used is directly related to the event being reported on: the 8th anniversary of the party. Mr Malema was giving a virtual presentation as mentioned in the caption of the image. In some *Daily Maverick* articles, random images of Mr Malema that do not necessarily relate to the stories reported on, were used. The connotative message behind the image demonstrates (as mentioned in paragraph 5) that by holding a virtual celebration, Mr Malema was avoiding making an address “next to some wreck of a looted mall or address edgy residents” (Du Plessis 2021). It also arguably indicates Malema’s compliance with the COVID-19 protocols of not holding large gatherings. Mr Malema is portrayed in the image as if he is looking at the reader and that there is symbolic interaction between him and the reader. The symbolic interaction is in a form of appealing to the reader or audience.

5.2.4 Article four: Hawks investigating ‘Malema-linked’ fuel tender

5.2.4.1 Representation

The tender that Mr Malema is accused of being linked to, in this news article, is described as dubious; meaning suspicious, which could arguably depict the people linked (allegedly) to this tender as suspicious, too. The questionable payments that *AmaBhungane*, through the *Daily Maverick*, are referring to, are said to allegedly be fronts for Mr Malema. The analysed article thus depicts Mr Malema as secretive and corrupt.

5.2.4.2 Agenda setting

The headline reads that the directorate commonly known as the Hawks, that investigate priority or high crimes referred by the president’s office or the South African Police Service (SAPS 2014), are investigating a fuel tender that is connect to EFF’s Mr Malema. Using the investigation, the agenda that is set by the newspaper is to portray Mr Malema as a corrupt politician.

The newspaper claims that there is “considerable evidence” and that it earlier published detailed allegations indicating that Mr Mahuna and Santaclara Trading were used to benefit Mr Malema and his party. However, the researcher argues that if the evidence and allegations did not lead to the prosecution of Mr Malema and his colleagues, it means there was not enough evidence, and that the accused parties are innocent until proven guilty. The statements, therefore, remain unsubstantiated accusations.

Another ‘questionable’ tenderpreneur, Mr Matlebyane, has listed an address owned by Malema Munzhedzi Family Trust, as his residential and business address. For that reason, the newspaper believes that Mr Malema has control over Mr Matlebyane’s Santaclara business account. Beyond linking Mr Malema and Mr Matlebyane to the address, this dissertation purports that more evidence, such as Mr Malema’s bank statement which would suggest that he has control over the company’s account, should have been presented by the newspaper. In this regard, the corruption allegations are not supported by strong evidence.

5.2.4.3 Framing

The party is described to have been ‘kingmakers’, inferring the use of political influence on bringing someone into power. Their influence in a specific metro is questioned as it is not consistent (disproportionate) with its minority status. From the researcher’s perspective, the newspaper takes the EFF for granted by indicating that their status is of minority nature.

According to article author, Reddy (2021), what emphasises the party’s ‘dodginess’ is that some of the directors of the companies in question, are blood relatives to Mr Malema, and that another company, through its director, is linked to the party’s Mr Marshall Dlamini. However, Mr Malema did not deny his relationship with the questionable individuals and indicated that they are party members and party leaders but distanced himself from any involvement to their companies. Here, Mr Malema was bold, honest, and transparent about his connection to the directors of the companies.

The companies are generally considered to be EFF-linked, not just Malema-linked as Mr Malema and Mr Dlamini both belong to the EFF; therefore, represent the party. The

researcher disagrees with this conclusion in the newspaper arguing that what Mr Malema and other EFF members do in their personal lives, should not always be linked to their political lives.

5.2.4.4 Social semiotics

Reddy (2021) uses merged images of Mr Malema and his colleague, Mr Dlamini, taken by different sources. They imply that these individuals are the subjects of focus in the story. To also attest that the images were not taken at the same time, the camera angles used by the photographers differ. The gazes of the two men seem to be looking slightly to the audience or reader. The symbolic interaction of Mr Malema's image is feisty and unapproachable, while of Mr Dlamini's is friendly.

5.2.5 Article five: Behind EFF's anti-ANC vote: Julius Malema's big plan to topple Ramaphosa

5.2.5.1 Representation

In the headline, the word 'anti-ANC' is used to depict the EFF as a party that is against the leading political party in South Africa. The synonyms of the word 'topple' in the headline, according to Collins dictionary (2022) are 'fall over', 'fall', 'collapse' or 'tumble'. The word 'anti' means to oppose or be against something. From the researcher's politically contextual view, Mr Malema is represented as an opponent that plans to unseat President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The newspaper indicates that Mr Malema can fill the empty space (vacuum) of a leader with a national appeal. It notes that while Malema is anti-ANC, he is mostly 'anti-Ramaphosa' as the president previously expelled him when he chaired the party's disciplinary appeals committee. Therefore, the reasons given by the newspaper of why Mr Malema is anti-Ramaphosa depict him as a bitter person. Stating " ... the EFF was desperate for a display council to run while it tabled a set of national policy demands" (Haffajee 2021). The statement describes the party as having a desire (desperation) for a council seat by submitting several demands.

The newspaper raises concern on the growth of the EFF, thus representing them as a slowly progressing party. The analysed article also raises an issue of the non-disclosure by the EFF on their election campaign funders, which portrays the party as a non-transparent political party.

5.2.5.2 Agenda setting

The newspaper pre-sets the agenda regarding the 2024 national elections in relation to the EFF, by proposing (in the teaser paragraph) that Mr Malema voted with other political parties to collapse or unseat the current president from coalition governance for the EFF to gain power in the upcoming 2024 national elections.

5.2.5.3 Framing

The headline tells readers how to think about the EFF, by positioning them as anti-ANC and as a party that plans to collapse the ruling party.

The analysed article begins by reporting that the EFF voted with the Democratic Alliance (DA) to drive the DA into governance in large cities of the country. In the second paragraph, it is stated that Mr Malema mentioned that they (EFF) aim (mission) to release the ANC from power (unseat). The author suggests that Mr Malema takes advantage of the 'weakened' ruling party. Furthermore, the paragraph that follows reports on what Mr Malema said about his disinterest in forming coalition government with the DA, and that voting with the DA was merely to realign the EFF politically. The headline and the forementioned paragraphs frame the EFF as a politically strategic party.

Further, "The EFF's support for DA mayors will certainly weaken Ramaphosa's re-election bid" (Haffajee 2021). This statement puts emphasis on the EFF's strategy in weakening the president's re-election. Quoting the Ipsos research, the newspaper compares the positive trust index score of the three political parties, the ANC, DA, and EFF, noting that the EFF has the lowest score of the three. The emphasis is on the party's poor growth.

5.2.5.4 Social semiotics

The image's denotative meaning is that Mr Malema was addressing a crowd, considering that he was opening his mouth (speaking) and holding the microphone. The connotative meaning is that the photographer used black and white colour instead of actual bright colours. According to Van Leeuwen (2010:46-47), brightness in colour represents truth and very bright and optimistic values. On the contrary, darkness represents falseness and pessimistic or negative values. Therefore, the image portrays Mr Malema as inferior.

The group photo that the newspaper sourced from Mr Malema's twitter page has a denotative and connotative meaning. The denotative meaning is a group of male politicians posing for a photo. Considering that some of the individuals in the image are from other political parties (not the EFF) including the former Ekurhuleni Mayor, Mr Mzwandile Masina who, before the image was captured, experienced an unseating from his position, the connotative meaning behind the image could be that all individuals are smiling, and seem to be happy as they might have had a fruitful political engagement, perhaps regarding Mr Malema's alleged plan to dethrone the ruling party.

5.2.6 Article six: *Durban rally: Malema's EFF shifts focus to capturing KZN and driving out the ANC*

5.2.6.1 Representation

The 6th analysed article indicates that the gatherers (mainly EFF supporters) did not abide by the COVID-19 regulations given that they were not wearing masks and not practicing social distance. The connotative meaning is that the EFF is inconsistent as it earlier requested for the postponement of the 2021 local elections to avoid excessive spread of the virus, but this time they have organised a 'risky' gathering (Durban rally ... 2022). Also, the analysed article depicts the party's supporters as careless or irresponsible by not abiding by the COVID-19 regulations.

The article states that the EFF forcefully took (snatched) a municipality ward from the ANC, thereby communicating the party's growth. Using a word that articulates 'force', portrays the party as intimidatory and violent. Noting that "The vast majority of these

were enthusiastic young people” (Durban rally ... 2022), confirms Davis’ (2022) statement that the party mainly targets the youth.

Some of the EFF members are referred to as “Defenders of the Revolution”, and that portrays them as maintaining order. It is reported that Mr Malema’s speech criticised party members who wanted to benefit without putting in the work. The statement portrays Mr Malema as a leader who promotes accountability and is objective by not only criticising his opponents, but also members of his party.

Mr Malema is quoted as encouraging the party members to disrupt municipal council sittings and inspect the municipalities with a reason of raising issues of basic human rights such as water and sanitation. While it could seem that the EFF is provocative, at the same time, it represents Mr Malema as caring and willing to interrupt government sittings to address the needs of the public.

5.2.6.2 Agenda setting

The article sets the agenda by focusing on how the EFF is strategically attracting supporters for the 2024 national elections. For example, Mr Malema is quoted as suggesting that the EFF is unstoppable and frees (liberates) the poor; as such, indirectly encouraging the gatherers to vote for the party in the next national elections.

5.2.6.3 Framing

Emphasising on the Durban rally that the EFF held, the article suggests that the party used the said rally to take over (capture) the province and force out the ruling party. The teaser, first, and second paragraphs of the analysed text suggest that it is the party’s strategy to win supporters for the 2024 national elections. The text also quotes that this is what the party’s leader said to the gatherers at the ‘Thank You’ rally. The statements reflect the party as opportunistic and strategic. Another focus is on numerical data and words such as ‘tripled’, ‘impressive’, and ‘winning crucial seats’ that are used to report on the growth of the EFF in the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

An older lady is quoted, explaining how long and why she has been supporting the EFF, later turning attention to ridiculing the ruling party. The quotes, “This country will only

come right when he [Malema] takes over; this country will return to blacks only when the EFF is in charge” and where young attendees say “they were attracted to the party because they want ‘change’”, attest (emphasise) that the attendees have confidence in Mr Malema and the party and are willing to give them a chance to rule in South Africa by voting for them.

The quotation of one of the EFF youth members who clearly expresses her disappointment with the empty promises of the current government in relation to employment, shelter, and economic opportunities, indicates that she thinks the EFF could deliver those. It is positive framing and representation of the EFF as the media could have chosen to leave out these quotations that demonstrate confidence of the youth in the EFF.

5.2.6.4 Social semiotics

The article uses several images to narrate and support the story. The first image shows the EFF leadership at a rally in KwaZulu-Natal, wearing their political attire and smiling. According to the caption and body language, these individuals are singing on the stage, and the EFF leader is holding the microphone demonstrating that he is probably leading what the researcher would assume to be a struggle song. Their smiles and body language (dancing) suggest that the atmosphere at the venue was good.

The second image shows a group of people standing, with the caption stating that it is the EFF supporters that came in numbers to the rally. The researcher asserts that it is indeed the supporters, not just members of society as the image shows most of them wearing EFF shirts and some are holding the party’s banner. Some of the people in the photos are smiling, indicating that they are happy to be there. The female with black sleeveless t-shirt in sunglasses is holding her fist high with an open mouth. In most political demonstrations, it could mean that she is saying and demonstrating a liberation line such as ‘Amandla!’, meaning ‘Power!’.

The caption linked to the image, the facial expressions (smiles and singing), body language (dancing and stretched arms) captured in the third image, tells that Mr Malema and Mr Shivambu, as well as those in the background, are singing and are in a

good mood. Without uttering any word, is it evident that the words written on Mr Malema's shirt "Siyabonga Azania", meaning "Thank you, Africa", express gratitude to the masses, probably for their 2021 local government votes, which is part of what the article reports on.

The fourth photo denotatively shows many people that attended the rally. Connotatively, it demonstrates the party's growth by showing countless people who attended and that the party has many supporters in the province. The colour red that dominates the group, which is the main political colour of the party, shows that the masses captured in the image are not passers-by, but actual supporters in EFF clothing. Some are holding umbrellas and others covering their heads with the EFF banner, showing that it was a sunny day. However, the event was held during the COVID-19 lockdown, and the gatherers are many, not wearing masks, and not maintaining social distance, which is what the image could be connotatively exposing and portraying both the party and supporters as reckless.

The fifth image shows an elderly woman and a little girl who, according to the caption, are related. The denotative meaning is the two posing for a photo. The connotative meaning is that the EFF is for the young and old. Wearing the EFF headwrap and beret, respectively, and holding their arms slightly high, could mean that the elderly woman and little girl are saying a phrase such as 'Amandla', as a demonstration to pledge support for the EFF.

The sixth image shows young people smiling and dressed in EFF political attire, demonstrating that they are happy to be there and support the party. The seventh image, as evident in its caption, shows a group of EFF supporters dancing, which is a demonstration of them having fun while being dressed in the EFF gear. This could mean that they are proud to display that they are members/supporters of the party. The last image shows a group of EFF supporters with their hands up, singing and cheering, which is a demonstration of fun.

5.2.7 Article seven: *EFF's programme of action in 2022 signals a year of living even more dangerously*

5.2.7.1 Representation

Rebecca Davis' (2022) headline refers to the EFF's 2022 "programme of action as an indicator of a year of living even more dangerously". The party, through its programme, is depicted as harmful, which can be considered as a synonym of dangerous. The article mentions that the party will have "accelerated attempts to destabilise governance". The terms 'accelerated' means that the party has been speedily destabilising governance, and this time, they will increase the extent of weakening (destabilising) governance. In the researcher's view, the party is perceived as intense destructors.

The author of the analysed text states that the party has criticised the validity (legitimacy) of the South African judiciary and its entire criminal justice system. The EFF is portrayed as government critics, and by using the word 'intensifying', it suggests that the party will strengthen its criticism.

The EFF is said to have an objective to professionalise the organisation prior to the upcoming 2024 national elections. The statement portrays the party as taking their image, existence, and work seriously. An example of professionalising a political party includes compiling policies that can govern the party leaders and members.

Mr Malema is described as a 'provocative' individual, which the researcher understands as irritating, offensive, or maddening. Concerning the restaurants inspections, the EFF is accused of intimidating the local hospitality industry for employing foreign African nationals over South Africans, while the party pretended that the inspections were about monitoring labour conditions for foreign nationals. They are, therefore, portrayed as a pretentious and dishonest party.

Davis (2022) reports that the EFF leadership were against former President Jacob Zuma's arrest in 2021. The party could be perceived as inconsistent, given that they led the call to remove Mr Zuma as the South African president and accused him of capturing the state (Munusamy 2017). The party is portrayed as corrupt and fraudsters as they are accused of criticising the judiciary and those holding high prosecution positions because they, too, could be charged with corruption relating to the VBS

scandal. VBS is a South African mutual bank that was declared insolvent and bankrupt in 2018 following fraudulent activities that were allegedly committed by, among others, politicians, which the EFF was implicated in (Beyond reasonable doubt ... 2021).

According to the author of the analysed text, the party “relies heavily on the oxygen of publicity” (Davis 2022), meaning that it survives on public and media attention, thus rating it as invaluable in terms of politics. The author accuses the EFF of using violence to attract attention; for example, considering the ‘kill the Boer’ court battle that the non-profit civil rights organisation, AfriForum (About us 2006), has against the party. Apparently, the EFF uses the song to highlight white supremacy, but AfriForum sees it as inciting violence and hate speech (Evans 2022).

The party is accused of using violence to attract attention; and Davis (2022) questions how much attention the media is willing to give. Here, the party is depicted as using the wrong way or wrong principle to grab attention from the media and the public, as the media is likely to disseminate the ‘violence’ news.

5.2.7.2 Agenda setting

In this article, as indicated in the headline, the emphasis is on the EFF’s policy. Other than their policy, there are other matters that the newspaper could have selected to report on, such as the party’s initiatives. However, it chose to focus on their policy, which provides the reader with something to think about in relation to the EFF.

In the subheading, *Populism for the win*, the aspect of doubt is evident as the author quotes a statement by the fact-checking platform, *Africa Check*, where they question the credibility of the party’s membership figures. The article further reflects on the growth of the EFF for political control, particularly regarding the local government elections, stating that the party needs to improve its numbers. The third paragraph looks at the party’s wins and losses. The statements give the public something to think about in relation to the party’s membership statistics, and whether it has been victorious during the elections.

The analysed newspaper article concludes by setting the agenda (telling people what to think about in relation to the EFF) through counterarguing some statements made by Mr

Malema. For example, when Mr Malema referred to the ANC as the “source of instability in the country”, the newspaper uses this statement to question his current relationship with Mr Zuma. Also, the newspaper questions Mr Malema’s statement that the party is not anti-Indian, whereas he earlier stated that the party will not forget and forgive “what the Indians in Phoenix did to their people” (Davis 2022).

5.2.7.3 Framing

In Davis’ (2022) headline, she refers to the EFF’s 2022 programme of action as an indicator of a “year of living even more dangerously”. The terms ‘even more’ implies that Davis perceives that South African were already living dangerously; therefore, things are bound to get worse in relation to the party’s programme of action. The term ‘dangerous’ in the headline suggests that the party’s programme signals a year of harm. The angle that the writer chose is to put emphasis on the party’s programme as dangerous, which is ‘how’ the writer would like society to perceive the party or its programme.

The teaser and second paragraphs state that the EFF has populist policies; implying that the author frames the party as populist. According to Cas Mudde, the term populism in political science, suggests that society is split into two parts: these being ‘the pure people’ and the ‘corrupt elites’ (Molloy 2018). The term is mostly used as a political insult. Populism is perceived as a deterioration type of politics, and an “opportunistic appropriating of demands and struggles” (Essop 2016:35-36). Further, Moffitt and Tormey (2014) regard populism as a ‘political style’ that is connected to a specific performance of politics.

Based on the party’s inspection of restaurants in Gauteng and disrupting municipal council meetings and South Africa’s Chief Justice interviews, these incidents are framed as acts of intimidation, violence, and sabotage.

The article speaks on the celebratory events that the party held as a token of appreciation to the KwaZulu-Natal people. The statement frames the EFF as a grateful party to its supporters, and perhaps to prospective followers. It also highlights that, due to bad performance in the Limpopo Province, which is Mr Malema’s province of origin,

the party had to dissolve its structures. The researcher considers this statement as a way to mock Mr Malema that the people from where he originates (Limpopo), are not confident in his leadership, hence the loss during elections.

The party's policies are referred to as unashamedly xenophobic and that the party was negatively affected by them (policies) at the 2021 election polls. 'Unashamedly xenophobic' implies that the party is bold to express prejudice against citizens from other African countries. While the EFF embarked on activities of handing out school shoes and groceries and calling on the reopening of stadiums for big sports and entertainment purposes, the newspaper emphasises these as acts of embracing populism instead of applauding the party. Regarding their stance in terms of sports matches and stadiums, the analysed text refers to the party as a crowd-pleaser to attract, especially the youth. Mr Malema is accused of criticising Mr Ramaphosa as an 'anti-youth' leader during the post-SoNA debate, to draw the youth to him.

The EFF is said to have accused the police and the entire security cluster of corruption, so that they are perceived as victims of such. The statement frames the party as pretentious and misleading (the public) in their 'false' act as victims. There are other issues that Mr Malema focused on in the debate, but the newspaper emphasises on how dangerous the party's programme of action is.

5.2.7.4 Social semiotics

The image used in the article is of the EFF's leader, Mr Malema, in his political attire. Mr Malema expresses a serious facial expression, which is understandable since he was speaking at the 2022 State of the Nation (SoNA) debate in Cape Town. By understandable, the researcher means that at such a debate, they discuss serious matters, hence it would be unlikely to capture Mr Malema in a 'non-serious' facial expression. His hand gesture suggests that he is reiterating a point. However, in the caption of the image, the words "does not contribute" suggest that the party 'does not add value' to a much-needed debate where political life lacks (is devoid of) ideas and argument (contestation) over current and future progress (direction).

The article contains another image that shows the EFF party leaders outside the venue where the 2022 SoNA was held. Their facial expressions are serious and without smiles, with Mr Malema addressing the media or the masses, while being flanked by his colleagues on the sides. Facial expressions provide information about the mood of the subject. With his facial expression, it is highly likely that Malema's verbal tone was firm. Their serious facial expressions in the image can suggest that the party leaders are unapproachable and unfriendly in that moment. Both images have original and bright colours, which enhances the salience of the content. It further attracts the eye of the reader to want to read the story.

5.2.8 Article eight: DA, EFF, ActionSA – Joburg council set for showdown over city manager appointment

5.2.8.1 Representation

Mr Floyd Brink, who is described as a controversial individual, is alleged to be connected to Mr Malema and the party (EFF). Mr Brink was previously arrested on corruption allegations, which implicated Mr Malema and his associates. The content focusing on the connection between Mr Brink and Mr Malema depict Mr Malema and the EFF as corrupt too. The EFF is accused of aiming to 'obstruct', meaning to 'divert' or 'defocus', the appointment of the preferred candidate, Mr Johann Mettler, to push Mr Brink to be appointed as City Manager. According to the researcher, the statement implies that Mr Malema and Mr Brink are connected through alleged corruption. Also, it is as if the EFF has an agenda that they want to achieve in the City of Johannesburg through having Mr Brink as the city's manager.

Consider the following quote: "... our view is that forming governments with the EFF's support in Johannesburg and Tshwane was a mistake" (Reddy 2022). This passage quotes the DA expressing regret in forming governance relations with the EFF in the said metros. The quotation portrays the EFF as a party that other political parties find difficult to work with.

5.2.8.2 Agenda setting

This article reports on the appointment of the Johannesburg city manager and the conflicts/debates that arose among political parties on the issue. The article was written by a journalist from *amaBhungane*, an independent non-profit investigative journalism structure. As indicated in the headline, the focus was not only on the EFF, but two other parties. The researcher focuses on the content that speaks about the EFF. The word ‘showdown’ suggests that there is conflict or dispute that needs to be resolved through debate or votes, for example.

By writing about rumours that lack evidence, the newspaper (in)directly promotes them. For example, it indicates that when Mr Brink was appointed as the chief operating officer of city of Johannesburg in 2018, it was in the interest of the EFF for him to satisfy (appease) them. The statement shapes the perception of the public to think that the EFF is corrupt and that Mr Brink was there to serve them, not the residents of Johannesburg residents.

The agenda set by the newspaper wherein it portrays the EFF as corrupt and linking this idea of corrupt dealings to other parties, was re-angled by ActionSA’s Mr Herman Mashaba who denied the allegation of his connection with the EFF. Mashaba noted that they never discussed tenders together and he is not corrupt or connected to the EFF.

5.2.8.3 Framing

The first paragraph under the subheading, *Secret meeting*, indicates that the EFF banned investigative journalists, *amaBhungane*, from their event instead of responding to their questions around the alleged secret meeting. It is, therefore, perceived as a political party that was hiding something.

With the last subheading focusing on Mr Brink and Mr Malema’s relationship, it is reported that the corruption scandal that Mr Brink was arrested for implicated Mr Malema as having improperly benefited from a government tender of over R50 million. According to the article, this is included in the Public Protector’s report. This, then, depicts Mr Malema as a corrupt politician who unlawfully spends South African taxpayers’ money. However, the matter against Mr Malema was closed without him

being convicted (Reddy 2022). It means Mr Malema was cleared of any wrongdoing, or there was lack of evidence to support the allegations.

5.2.8.4 Social semiotics

The merged photos on display are of politicians, Dr Mpho Phalatse (former Johannesburg mayor) and the two above-mentioned men who are the main subjects of the debate regarding the city manager appointment in Johannesburg. With reference to the caption, the images were taken from different sources and at different times.

Dr Mpho Phalatse and Mr Floyd Brink's (right) images show them speaking on the microphone, which means that they were addressing a gathering or the media. With his mouth closed, Mr Johann Mettler was not speaking, probably posing for a photo, or the image was taken off-guard.

5.2.9 Article nine: EFF guns for Johann Rupert, demands land to be voluntarily returned to the people

5.2.9.1 Representation

In the headline, the word 'guns' suggests that the EFF targets (attacks) Johann Rupert on the controversial issue of returning land to the people without force. The word figuratively portrays the party as violent. The word 'demand', in the headline, and teaser paragraph is a synonym of 'command', and the researcher argues that the EFF is not negotiating or requesting Mr Rupert to return the land.

The article also reports that political analyst, Mr Ralph Mathekga, criticised the EFF on their 'land return' comments directed at Mr Rupert after they marched to his Remgro office in Stellenbosch. The line, "Not even a heavy downpour deterred them" (Cruywagen 2022), means that the marchers, led by Mr Malema, were unstoppable irrespective of any whether condition.

The analysed text states that "The party is demanding to know how much property is owned by Mr Rupert and how it was acquired" and that "...[t]hey want an audited independent report of Rupert's taxes and a public disclosure of all his offshore accounts" (Cruywagen 2022). These statements represent the EFF as invading the

privacy of others, which is against the law. While section 14 of the South African Constitution protects the right to privacy of the citizens (South Africa. Department of Justice: Sec. 4 1996), the party can argue that invasion of privacy can take place if it is in the best interest or protection of the public.

Mr Mathekga is quoted as comparing the march and the incidents by the EFF inspecting restaurants to establish which citizens are employed, as acts of intimidation and violation of law. The quotation portrays the party as violent law breakers.

5.2.9.2 Agenda setting

The headline sets the agenda on the issue of land expropriation without compensation by portraying the EFF as a confrontational party gunning for Mr Rupert. The party has been vocal about the land issue (Merten 2021) and has made it a public agenda. By reporting on this through the party confronting Mr Rupert, the article ascertains the salience of the issue on this public agenda.

5.2.9.3 Framing

The article takes the angle of framing the narrative in alignment with the controversial issue of land expropriation without compensation, which has been raised by the EFF on numerous occasions (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013). It focuses on the approach that the party uses, which is to 'gun for' a rich white man, Mr Johann Rupert. Stating that the party is gunning for a rich white man portrays the party as bitter and jealous of Mr Rupert's status and wealth. It also emphasises that the EFF fearlessly raises an issue that black people were previously snatched from their rightful land.

Some of Mr Mathekga's statements reiterate that he perceives the party from a negative perspective. For example, he believes that the EFF is a bomb waiting to explode; a "ticking time bomb" and he regards them as lawless. Generally, the newspaper focuses on the reaction and incidents by the EFF on the land issue, instead of the issue of black people not having or not being able to afford land in their own country.

5.2.9.4 Social semiotics

The image and caption depict marchers holding placards that have various messages written on them; some messages directed to Mr Rupert, such as “Rupert give back our land”. The researcher translates such placards, including “No land, no reconciliation”, to imply that if the ‘whites’ do not return the land, there will be no peace among the black and white South African citizens. The placards are written in bold, capital letters, and have exclamation marks, which connotatively communicate that the marchers are screaming and reiterating their message to Mr Rupert. The second image shows EFF marchers, some holding placards that encourage people to grab land “Wherever you see a beautiful piece of land, take it!” (Cruywagen 2022). It proposes that the EFF promotes lawlessness.

The third image shows what the caption refers to as ‘EFF supporters marching in the rain’; which is a denotative meaning. The connotative meaning is that some of the marchers are not in any EFF attire, meaning that they could be citizens that do not necessarily belong to the party, but support this cause by the party. The image and caption also demonstrate bravery and that no condition can stop the party from doing what they wish.

The last image in the article shows marchers who are not sad but, through their placards, are stating that “White people own 72% of the land in South Africa”, thus showing that they are not happy with the whites owning most of the land, as opposed to black people. For the researcher, this is an example that demonstrates lack of democracy and equality in South Africa regarding fair allocation of resources.

5.2.10 Article ten: *EFF snatches another ward from ANC – in Mafikeng*

5.2.10.1 Representation

According to Wayne Sussman (2022), the party’s win in Pampierstad in the Northern Cape Province gave support to and boosted the results obtained in another ward. Regarding the by-elections, the author acknowledges that the EFF won by a large margin, demonstrating the results in percentage figures. By focusing on the EFF’s significant voters and governance progress in specific wards, the article represents the

party as a progressive structure and implies that the confidence of voters in the EFF has grown.

Reporting on the by-elections, the EFF is said, in the analysed article, to have been a 'highly motivated' opponent and the author acknowledges that the party was not ill-mannered; thus, they were 'disciplined' during the campaign.

5.2.10.2 Agenda setting

The article reports on the local municipal elections, particularly in Mafikeng in the North-West. The headline as it reads, reports that the EFF forcefully took (snatched) another ward from the ruling party, the ANC, in the said location; basically, speaking about the victory obtained by the party in the area and that it is not the first ward to be won by the party.

5.2.10.3 Framing

Mainly, the article speaks about the growth that the EFF has had in the 2021 local elections; indicating that the party received the highest votes (69%) as compared to other political parties in Ward 5, Lomanyaneng: Mafikeng, in Ngaka Modiri Molema (Sussman 2022). The party is said to have 'overperformed' in this ward with 25% of the votes. The emphasis is on the impressive progress of the party in terms of increased supporters and local governance. For the researcher, the word 'overperformed' means that the party exceeded the expectations of the article's author from the *Daily Maverick*.

Further statements from the analysed article include, "Despite winning the district, the EFF was unable to leapfrog (bypass or progress over) the ANC in the ward" and "... beating the EFF by more than 1,220 votes" (Sussman 2022). Besides reporting on the voting results, the statements merely speak to the areas that the newspaper thinks the EFF should improve on. Additionally, stating that "The EFF finished well ahead of the other parties", is an acknowledgement of good performance in the ward by the EFF as compared to other political parties.

5.2.10.4 Social semiotics

The image that is used is of the EFF's leader, Mr Malema, speaking at the 2019 presidential elections manifesto in Soshanguve. It is expected that at any political party event, the party members will be branded in the party's attire. However, the article was written in the year 2022, but uses an old image from two years ago.

The image resolution is higher, but the people presented in it appear to be slightly smaller. The reason is that individual images in newspaper articles are mainly produced in higher resolution which produces better quality. With the group image, the subjects must be slightly smaller than in individual photographs. Sussman (2022) uses a group image that not only captured the speaker, but also a few people in the background.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on analysing ten *Daily Maverick* online articles based on their denotative and connotative meanings captured in the choices of words, images, and captions in relation to how these elements were used to represent the EFF. This was done to elucidate whether these articles were negative, neutral, or positive as regards their coverage of the EFF.

The analysed articles were screenshot, and their links shared below the screenshots. They are placed under Addendum A of this dissertation. The commonality that the researcher picked up with the articles analysed thus far, include: the journalists were just authors and relevant photographers were acknowledged, and they have social media icon links and the option to listen to the article. Also, they have links to previous stories, unique comment sections, and an option to subscribe or log in if already subscribed.

6 DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION – PART II

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on presenting data collected by the researcher in the form of news articles from the *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian* newspapers. The researcher studied between 25 and 30 articles from each publication and chose only ten from each that she found relevant to the research focus, resulting in a total of 20 analysed articles. The articles are analysed in terms of words (texts) and photographs (images) and their captions. The analysis is based on establishing if the words, images, and captions have explicit or hidden meanings and, as such, how these words, images, and captions are used to represent the EFF? This is done to elucidate whether it is through positive, negative, or neutral depictions that the EFF is represented and framed in the contents of the analysed texts. The presentation of data in this chapter starts with a focus on the *City Press* newspaper.

6.2 CITY PRESS ARTICLES

The *City Press* newspaper's webpage has advertisement space at the top, in the middle, and on the right side of the articles. Some of the advertisements randomly appear when the reader goes through the article. The publication dates are placed at the top left corner above the headline. Just below the headline on the bottom left, is the name of the publication and the author's byline, followed by the option to listen to the story. The photograph, name and contact details of the author, and the social media pages of the publication are shared at the bottom after the articles.

Most of the image captions hardly narrate a story but mention who or what is in the photograph. The images have been screenshot up to either the captions or the teaser paragraphs. Where advertisements interruption occurred, the researcher ignored the adverts and only grabbed until the caption, as the analysis is not based on the advertisements.

6.2.1 Article one: *EFF shares Zuma's reservations over Zondo commission's 'bias'*

6.2.1.1 Representation

The words from the headline, 'EFF shares', suggest that the party speaks on behalf of Mr Jacob Zuma, or has the same views as him about the Zondo Commission's unfairness. The word 'bias' already suggests that Mr Zuma's views about the commission are negative before we read the rest of the content in the article. The EFF would know Mr Zuma's views about the commission, either by engaging with him directly, or hearing these views from the media, and clarifying them in this article.

The first paragraph notes that the EFF disapproved (condemned) Mr Zuma's no-show at the state capture inquiry as per the Constitutional Court's ruling. It portrays the party as encouraging everyone to respect the law. It, however, mentions that the party shares the same negative views (echoed similar reservations) as Mr Zuma regarding the commission. The statement confirms that the EFF agrees that the commission is unfair but believes that Mr Zuma should have abided by the court's ruling.

Palesa Dlamini (2021a) reports that the party holds that the commission should not ignore former Eskom chief executive officer, Mr Brian Molefe's, submission regarding the corruption that was committed by specific ANC officials. This is an example that the EFF believes in accountability, including accountability from political officials. Dlamini (2021a) notes that the EFF is not happy about how Judge Raymond Zondo (Deputy Chief Justice at the time) handled Mr Molefe's submission and accuses Zondo of protecting the president. The analysed article indicates that the party promotes fairness and that the commission should hear all arguments and observe the evidence submitted to avoid making uninformed decisions. By suggesting that each person who is accused of corrupt activities should be called before the commission, the author implies that the EFF promotes fair treatment and unbiased proceedings of the commission. It further suggests that each accused official must come and account or have an opportunity to defend themselves before the commission.

6.2.1.2 Agenda setting

The article shares the EFF's sentiments about Mr Zuma on how he feels about the Zondo commission's subjectiveness, which is explained by the term 'bias'. The headline motivates the public to think about the EFF in relation to speaking for, or clarifying, how Mr Zuma feels about the commission.

Beyond setting the agenda that the party has negative views about the commission, the article specifically emphasises that the party is dissatisfied with the proceedings of the commission. For the EFF, the biasedness of the commission is seen in their alleged choosing of who to protect and who to crucify. The party refers to the commission as a 'factional instrument', suggesting that it is characterised by conflict and favouritism. To support their statement, the party mentions some ANC officials, including the president, who are protected by the commission. When the party mentions that "... protecting a cabal whose main interest and purpose is to safeguard the white capital establishment," they mean these ANC officials do not have the interests of African people at heart, but their own and white cohort.

6.2.1.3 Framing

By reading the headline before the content, the reader can assume two things from the word 'shares'. The first is to assume that the EFF are unpacking Mr Zuma's thoughts on the unfairness of the commission, or they have the same views as him that the commission is biased. The article frames the EFF as having negative views about not just the commission (as biased), but also about the Constitutional Court's ruling. They maintain that the ruling was ill-advised; implying, then, that it provided poor or unwise direction on the matter.

The EFF is quoted saying that they believe Mr Zuma's appearance at the state capture commission will provide him with the opportunity to defend himself against the allegations. The party is framed to believe that the state capture commission should be fair by allowing both the commission and the accused, Mr Zuma, to present their arguments.

6.2.1.4 Social semiotics

The image that is used is not of the EFF, but of Mr Zuma wearing a mask. It tells us that during the given period, the COVID-19 regulations still applied, and Zuma was complying with them by wearing a mask. The same can be said with the woman in the image's background.

The caption does not indicate where Mr Zuma was, but just states his name without mentioning who he is (position/status); for example, former president of South Africa. In the researcher's view, it denotatively means that it is the editorial style of the *City Press*. Connotatively, the newspaper does not attach the significance of Mr Zuma's previous position to him; thus, reducing him to a mere ordinary citizen.

6.2.2 Article two: *Malema accuses Ramaphosa of not caring about black people, asks the elderly to stop voting for the ANC*

6.2.2.1 Representation

The article focuses on Mr Malema criticising mostly the president, as well as the ANC, for poor service delivery. For Malema, it means the president does not care about black people, who are mostly at the receiving end of poor service delivery. This is indicated by some black people being historically disadvantaged. The focus portrays Mr Malema as caring for black people and ready to address their basic needs. It further depicts him as the 'voice of black people'. From the researcher's view, he is like a spokesperson speaking in favour of the people or organisation that he is representing.

Mr Malema is depicted as the president's critic based on the various statements that he made against the president. For example: "They stole the little that we had [...]"; "I see everything white in Ramaphosa"; and "... we have nothing, we have no land, no education, no power at all" (Nyathi 2021a). By 'we', the researcher believes Mr Malema refers to black people. The quotations represent Mr Malema as knowing and understanding the needs of black people, and as a political leader that addresses inequality in South Africa.

Nyathi (2021a) notes that the EFF was one of the political parties that were proposing the possible postponement of the local government election due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a week before the specific event where Mr Malema was delivering an address, an announcement of the elections going ahead was made (Khumalo 2021). Mr Malema and other opposition political parties were caught off guard, in this regard (Nyathi 2021a). Considering that the elections did not take place virtually, it meant that the South African population had to go to specific venues to cast their votes. At the time,

one of the COVID-19 restrictions was that there should not be huge gatherings at venues, and from the researcher's point of view, the number of voters cannot be minimised as political parties need substantial numbers to vote them into governance. Also, Mr Malema mentions that elections need rallies and door-to-door efforts as part of political campaigns (Nyathi 2021a). For that reason, the researcher believes that Mr Malema was criticising the government for not complying with the regulations; thus, risking the lives of South Africans. Also, he was discouraging unfair advantage (benefit) by other political parties such as the ANC, over other parties.

By quoting Mr Malema's statements – which directly speak to the headline – where he was addressing the elderly generation, "Where is your conscience? You are giving thieves an opportunity to steal the jobs of your children", Nyathi (2021a) portrays him as someone who accuses the elderly of not making wise decisions and not thinking about the futures of the younger generation.

Also quoting Mr Malema as saying, "Continue voting for lies. We are not going to lie because we want you to vote for us" (Nyathi 2021a), points to a positive and neutral representation of the EFF. It is neutral as the newspaper is quoting directly what he said, yet notably positive because it portrays Mr Malema as an honest person who is not desperate and also not prepared in order to lie to acquire votes.

The third last paragraph indicates that Mr Malema is disappointed (lamented) by the elders who come to the EFF when they need help but do not vote for the party when the time comes. It portrays Mr Malema as an observant person who feels like he is being used by the elders.

6.2.2.2 Agenda setting

The article's headline provides the public with what to think about in relation to the negative thoughts that Mr Malema holds about the president and the observation that Malema pledges with the elderly generation to refrain from voting for the ruling party. The pledge comes prior to the 2021 local government elections; therefore, what he is doing can be considered as an election campaign. The newspaper exerts pressure on

what the media consumers think about and, in this case, focuses on the South African judiciary and the EFF's view of it.

6.2.2.3 Framing

The researcher assumes that Mr Malema spoke about other political issues, but the newspaper chose an angle that highlights where Malema relates the president with black people, which is to accuse him of not caring for them. The researcher would translate this to mean that Mr Malema thinks the president does not have the interests of black people at heart, therefore, does not serve them.

According to the report, Mr Malema was addressing attendees during a Freedom Day event. His criticism against the president and the ruling party can persuade the public to think about whether the ruling party really liberates (frees) them and cares about their needs; hence, Malema arguably perceives the event not as a time to rejoice, but as “a meeting of survivors” (Nyathi 2021a).

Generally, the article quotes the positive statements made by Mr Malema and does not focus only on what might have been negative. Positive statements such as, “We stand for black people. We will help them so they can be liberated,” are an example indicating that Mr Malema cares about the majority (black people) and their freedom (liberation).

6.2.2.4 Social semiotics

The image used in the analysed article is of Mr Malema, in his party's attire. He is speaking on a microphone which, judging from its 'red' light, means it was on. For the researcher, his serious facial expression and hand gesture demonstrate that his symbolic interaction was firm and provocative.

The party's gear is usually worn when they are attending to political matters and events. Therefore, Mr Malema was at a political gathering. The researcher cannot say which gathering it was as the caption only mentions his name and the photo source, not where the image was taken or what was happening.

6.2.3 Article three: *Malema lambasts IEC for launching local elections season, says it endangers lives*

6.2.3.1 Representation

The article reports that the EFF opposes the holding of elections with a view that they are risky during the COVID-19 third wave. Addressing this, helps to depict the party as caring for the lives of South Africans and as a law-abiding party that respects the pandemic's regulations. It also suggests that the party is selfless by thinking about the lives (health) of the citizens before thinking about getting votes. Nyathi (2021b) quotes Mr Malema as saying that if the elections continue, he will not prevent his supporters from taking part; thus, partially depicting him as inconsistent. Also, it simultaneously depicts him as wanting the election process to be inclusive and fair.

6.2.3.2 Agenda setting

The article focuses on Mr Malema's criticism of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) for setting in motion the local government elections period. His view is that the decision will endanger lives. By 'lives', Mr Malema refers to South African voters or citizens. Mentioning that Zimbabwe is doing better than South Africa as regards COVID-19 vaccines, indicates that Mr Malema believes South Africa should improve this process, especially considering that South Africa's economic condition is better than Zimbabwe's. Malema further criticises government for ordering the wrong vaccines; and this positions him as being concerned about how these wrong vaccines could endanger people's lives and that the exercise was a wasteful expenditure.

6.2.3.3 Framing

Nyathi (2021b) emphasises that Mr Malema feels the elections will be impractical, unfair, and not free, due to COVID-19 restrictions. This highlights that Malema believes in free and fair elections; hence he calls on the postponement thereof. Mr Malema is quoted as raising a concern about the high cost of holding elections every second year between local and national elections (Nyathi 2021b). It reiterates that he wants taxpayers' and government money to be spent wisely. The statement also reiterates that political officials do not get the chance to work as they constantly have to campaign.

Mr Malema calls on the president to address the health minister's ordering of the wrong vaccines and the Digital Vibes tender corruption saga relating to COVID-19 personal protective equipment. The raising of these issues depicts Mr Malema as a political leader that believes in accountability of political leaders and handling corruption allegations in a consistent manner. For example, the rules of dealing with alleged corrupt politicians should be applied objectively and equally.

6.2.3.4 Social semiotics

In the image, Mr Malema is wearing a red shirt and a jacket over it, which could be hiding the party's emblem on the shirt. Nonetheless, red is the colour salience associated with the EFF. With microphones of different media houses in front of him, the image demonstrates that he was having a media briefing on the matter. Mr Malema's facial expression, such as eye contact and closed mouth, suggest that he was listening and waiting to respond to a question that probably came from a reporter in attendance.

The picture's caption notes Malema's concerns in that he feels the decision to launch the election season is costly and will marginalise political parties that have not campaigned, particularly the smaller parties. The statement depicts Mr Malema as considerate of smaller political parties and calling for fair election processes.

6.2.4 Article four: *Malema claims Ramaphosa will benefit from delays with mass vaccination*

6.2.4.1 Representation

Dlamini (2021b) states that Mr Malema claimed that President Ramaphosa is involved in COVID-19 vaccine and personal protective equipment corruption without producing evidence to back his statements. This depicts Mr Malema as anti-Ramaphosa and as defaming the president's character, which can be perceived as illegal.

Mr Malema is said to have made the claims forgetting that the 2019 American business magazine, *Forbes*, indicated that the president was in the top twenty richest South Africans, and, at the time, his net worth was R6.4 billion. The statement portrays Mr

Malema as jealous and as if he is counter stating what the publication said. Also, the statement is misleading as it suggests that rich people cannot be financially corrupt. It also connotes that the 'not-so-rich' and the poor are the only groups of people capable of committing such crimes.

Mentioning that EFF leader is calling on government to open the economy to enable citizens to work, illustrates that he does not want any citizen to struggle financially.

6.2.4.2 Agenda setting

The headline states that Mr Malema claims that the president will gain from the slowing up of COVID-19 mass vaccination. The word 'claim' means that it is not a fact but an opinion. It, therefore, means Mr Malema is making allegations. The second demand that the EFF made is referred to as 'shocking', meaning it was unexpected. In the same paragraph, the party holds that Helen Rees should be released from her duties as the chairperson of the Sahpra Board because she is allegedly interested in approving vaccines that are linked to pharmaceutical company, Aspen. Ms Rees' husband is said to have shares there, portraying the EFF as disapproving conflict of interest.

6.2.4.3 Framing

Dlamini (2021b) notes that Mr Malema was demanding that the vaccine roll-out be accelerated. The statement emphasises that Mr Malema cares about saving the lives of South Africans. While the march was held during the lockdown, it addressed COVID-19 related issues. Dlamini (2021b) states that Mr Malema ironically maintained that the march, which gathered a huge crowd, was not a super spreader. Ironically means the newspaper perceives his statement as coincidental and opposite to his actions. The connotative angle is that Malema contradicts himself by saying the march is to save lives while he risks lives with a crowded march.

Mr Malema's statement that, "it has become evident that the government is failing to provide vaccines to all South Africans" (Dlamini 2021b), illustrates that he does not want any citizen to be marginalised in the vaccination process. Noting that Malema encourages people to get vaccinated, demonstrates that he embraces the COVID-19 solutions as worthy of saving lives.

Mentioning that the EFF received support from the African Transformation Movement and late artist, Riky Rick, confirms that the said stakeholders believed in the party's cause and their demands relating to vaccines.

6.2.4.4 Social semiotics

The image used shows Mr Malema in his party gear addressing the masses in his capacity as the EFF leader. He is standing up and holding an unbranded microphone. It confirms that it was not, for example, a press briefing because Malema would have been seated, speaking into the media's branded microphones. His serious facial expression and hand gesture suggest that Malema's mood or tone is authoritative. The caption of the image confirms that Malema was not just addressing any crowd but his party supporters whom he marched with to the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority to address some COVID-19 related issues.

The second image shows a huge EFF crowd wearing the party's gear. Some are wearing masks, while some are not; demonstrating, thus, that some party supporters are irresponsible. The huge crowd and some non-mask wearers connotatively indicate that the EFF contradicts itself by holding placards illustrating that the march was to save lives, yet they, too, are risking lives by not complying with the pandemic's regulations. Some marchers in the image that are not wearing masks or any party gear, indicate that they might not be EFF supporters but support the cause by the party.

The caption notes where the party marched to and that they were demanding for specifically Russia and China vaccines to be approved. It asserts that the EFF is in support of the vaccination, believing that they would save lives.

6.2.5 Article five: *EFF off to fiery start in race to poll rescue*

6.2.5.1 Representation

Queenin Masuabi (2021) states that, as part of their campaign, EFF chairperson, Ms Victoria Mente, visited one of the underprivileged parts of the North-West Province. The first portrayal is a party that cares and embraces the underprivileged. The second

portrayal is a party that uses the opportunity to capture the poor to vote for them during elections.

Ms Mente is quoted as saying that the party is campaigning, and they do not want to hear about COVID-19 regulations, given that the elections were not cancelled. The party could be perceived as ignorant. However, quoting North-West residents' living conditions which the party mentions, such as unemployment, lack of water, and poor infrastructure (poor roads), positions the party as caring for the wellbeing (state of living) of the citizens, especially the marginalised poor.

Masuabi (2021) notes that the party called for a gathering at Lethabong village to provide the residents with an opportunity to talk about their challenges. This portrays the party as engaging and willing to listen and address the residents' challenges. When one of the residents spoke on the issue of drug abuse by the youth, Ms Mente is said to have mentioned that, as a parent, she also has a child who is experiencing that. It depicts her or the party as relatable. The author says the EFF aims to seize (snatch) seats from the ruling party, thereby portraying it as believing in themselves and competitive.

6.2.5.2 Agenda setting

The article reports that the EFF started with fire campaigning for the 2021 local government elections. The researcher translates 'fiery' as being used to refer to the party having started strongly in the election run (competition), describing the party as having a burning passion.

The focus of the article is on a visit by the party to the North West, Lethabong village, to hear about the challenges that the community face, and how the EFF can assist to address these challenges.

6.2.5.3 Framing

The article reports on the EFF running for their second local elections since its establishment in 2013. Masuabi (2021) starts with an angle of mentioning that the party was not successful in acquiring any municipal ward in the first election; pointing out the

party's weakness or failure. It can be translated as indicating that citizens were not ready to believe in the party. While the party did not win any municipal ward in their first local elections, Masuabi (2021) states that they had political influence on who should lead (were kingmakers) by working with other parties in particular metros.

Masuabi (2021) reiterates what the party has not been able to achieve (that is, its losses and failures) instead of what the party *had* achieved. She highlights that the EFF was unable to win any by-elections and says the party's explanation was that the young generation were unavailable to vote because elections day was not a public holiday. The statement portrays the party as creating excuses for their losses.

Noting that the party is unsatisfied with the online voting registration imposed by the IEC, thus, "vote rigging by the Electoral Commission of SA (IEC)" (Masuabi 2021), it means the party believes in free and fair elections.

6.2.5.4 Social semiotics

In the first image, Ms Mente is wearing the party's attire while talking to a woman who does not seem to be an EFF member, given that she is not wearing the party's gear. This is confirmed by the caption that the party's leader was talking to a resident from Rustenburg. Ms Mente is wearing a shirt written 'Our Land and Jobs now', which is clearly what the EFF believes is due to South Africans; therefore, advocating for those. The camera focuses on the resident instead of Ms Mente, demonstrating that salience was on what the resident was addressing.

The second image shows the Lethabong residents at a gathering which was called by the EFF to engage with them about their challenges. The unfashionable manner that the residents are dressed in is evidence that they are from poor backgrounds. The caption confirms one of the burning issues that was raised to be about drug abuse by the youth in the village, which can be considered as a social ill that the EFF aims to address.

6.2.6 Article six: EFF in Soweto hits Eskom with demands

6.2.6.1 Representation

A local EFF leader, Koketso Poho, is said to have read out the electricity related demands and dissatisfactions of the Soweto residents to Eskom. Therefore, Dlamini (2021c) represents the party as caring for the residents and demonstrating leadership by not only leading the march, but by directly addressing Eskom on the residents' behalf. For example, 'bemoan' means discontent or dissatisfaction, implying that the party demonstrated that if the residents are not happy, they too are not happy.

The EFF leader is quoted as telling Eskom that people in Soweto and Sandton cannot be charged the same rates because their standards of living are not the same. Such utterances reflect positively on the EFF because they are addressing a serious issue of inequality and equity and calling on government to create more employment opportunities. The analysed text depicts the party as having the best interests of the Soweto people and South Africans at large, at heart.

6.2.6.2 Agenda setting

The headline of the article announces that the EFF approached (hit) Eskom with commands (demands). To demand is to insist on getting something; therefore, the researcher argues that it is done by not requesting pleasantly. The article sets the agenda on the manner that the EFF handles service delivery protests.

6.2.6.3 Framing

Dlamini (2021c) incorporates a quote by a Soweto resident, Dorcas Nkosi, that they have had enough (gatvol) with the ANC, and agreeing with the demands and views raised by the EFF. She indirectly highlights that there are South African citizens who have confidence in the EFF political party in terms of representing their needs.

The march was held in October 2021, which was a few days before the 2021 local government elections that took place on 01 November 2021. Dlamini (2021c) questions if the party was doing it because of the forthcoming elections, suggesting that the move by the EFF to lead the march to address the concerns of Soweto residents can have a connotative meaning of being a strategic political campaign. The party's secretary referred to Dlamini's assumptions as an 'incorrect approach', which makes the party sound defensive.

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The marchers are reported to have blocked roads with, among others, rocks and burning tyres in the Soweto community. Considering that the march was led by the EFF, it portrays the party as intimidating and law breakers for restricting freedom of movement of people who were not part of the strike.

The second image shows that the marchers blocked public roads with burning tyres and rocks. However, the EFF's secretary is quoted saying that the party does not condone hooliganism. It depicts and frames the party as contradictory and throwing their supporters under the bus as they were leading the march.

6.2.6.4 Social semiotics

The image used in the article is of a group of people, each wearing some sort of EFF gear that illustrates that they are EFF members or supporters. Those not wearing any EFF gear, indicate that they are residents of Soweto who support the call by the party. The marching individuals are holding EFF banners and placards that demand the electricity power supplier, Eskom, to cease loadshedding and power cuts in Soweto.

The people in the images appear to be slightly small. This is because it is a group image; therefore, the photographer wanted to capture more people. If it were an individual or less than four people in the image, the resolution of the image would be higher, and people would appear slightly bigger.

The term 'disgruntled', in the image's caption, means dissatisfied; therefore, it confirms that Soweto residents are unhappy with Eskom's power cuts. It also confirms that the EFF is leading the march to Eskom in Soweto to address their concerns. The second image and its caption show that the marching residents blocked roads with rocks and were burning tyres. The connotative meaning is that the march, which was led by the EFF, was not peaceful and that they vandalised public roads, depicting the party as condoning violence and destroying state resources.

6.2.7 Article seven: *EFF blames ANC for failure to pass expropriation without compensation bill*

6.2.7.1 Representation

In this article, Norman Masungwini (2021) reports that the EFF believes section 25 of the Constitution – which speaks to the expropriation of land without compensation – should be reviewed to include a passage on providing free land to South African citizens. The author quoted Mr Malema referring to the move to amend the bill as a way to address the abnormalities of the colonial and apartheid practices. Malema, herewith, depicts the party (EFF) as caring for the economic wellbeing of the citizens and addressing the ‘thorny’ issue of inequality (for example, same allocation of resources irrespective of race or economic status) and equity (for example, prioritising the impoverished and marginalised over the wealthy when allocating resources).

With various reasons, the bill was opposed by other political parties such as the DA and the IFP. However, the EFF is reported to have blamed the ANC for not pursuing the issue enough to get its amendment approved. The denotative message is the author reporting on what the EFF said and holding the ruling party responsible for the failed amendment. The connotative message is that Mr Malema has opposed and blamed the ANC on various issues (Mokhoali 2021), confirming him as ‘anti-ANC’ and ‘anti-Ramaphosa’.

6.2.7.2 Agenda setting

The article reports that the EFF concludes that the ANC is guilty (thereby, blaming the ANC) of not approving the land appropriation without compensation bill. This is an issue that they, the EFF, have been boldly expressing their views on (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013). The issue is related to the EFF’s views that government should provide free land to South Africans as a basic service delivery. The word ‘failure’ in the headline points out that the EFF feels the ANC has not been successful as a ruling party.

To counter-argue Mr Malema’s blames against the ANC, Masungwini (2021) quotes ANC’s former leader, Mr Mathole Motshekga, stating that the ANC supports the amendment of the bill to correct the injustices of the past against South Africans. The statement connotatively points out that Mr Malema is wrong to blame the ANC as it also supports the amendment of the bill.

6.2.7.3 Framing

Masungwini (2021) reports that the EFF is unhappy with the leading party for faking (pretending) to South Africans that are considering passing the expropriation of land without compensation bill. This line, for the researcher, does not have a connotative statement as the author is merely reporting on the EFF's perception against the ruling party regarding the said issue.

However, it reiterates the lack of trust that the EFF has in the ANC to improve the state of living and provide basic needs such as shelter to citizens. Further, it highlights that relating to this issue, the EFF is mainly concerned about black people who do not own much land (Pretorius 2019).

6.2.7.4 Social semiotics

The author used the image of Mr Malema dressed in EFF gear and speaking into the microphone with the EFF banner behind him. The caption only notes his name. The article speaks about the party, EFF, in the headline, but it uses Mr Malema's image, meaning that as the leader of the party (commander-in-chief), he is considered the 'face of the EFF'. It also means Mr Malema was the one who spoke about the issue on behalf of the party. His hand gesture and facial expression depict a direct, firm, and confident symbolic interaction.

6.2.8 Article eight: *EFF rejects Cape Town City Hall as Sona venue*

6.2.8.1 Representation

EFF's Mr Floyd Shivambu and Ms Hlengiwe Mkhali are said to have disagreed to have Cape Town City Hall as a host venue for the SoNA. Their view was that it is not large enough to accommodate everyone. Connotatively, it represents the party's representatives as being considerate. Mr Shivambu argued that his suggestion is not against the COVID-19 regulations at the time, in terms of the acceptable number of people in a closed venue at the same time. This depicts Shivambu as having thought about the matter attentively and understanding that an alternative bigger venue will present less COVID-19 risks.

Mr Shivambu is quoted as saying that a hybrid event will be more costly. Quoting this statement depicts the EFF as having considered the financial impact of a hybrid event, and that they do not want state resources (money) and taxpayers' money to be wasted.

6.2.8.2 Agenda setting

The headline of the article reports that the EFF opposes (rejects) the proposed venue to hold the SoNA. It persuades the reader to read more to find out the party's reasons for rejecting the venue. The article focuses on the argument presented by the EFF in relation to opposing the said venue. It highlights that the party's argument is that the identified venue is too small to accommodate everyone, and that parliament members should also have a say and together they must reach a consensus on an alternative venue.

6.2.8.3 Framing

Bongekile Macupe (2022) states that the EFF's chief whip at the time, Mr Shivambu, is the one who opposed the venue at a meeting. However, the headline does not indicate that but rather states that it was the EFF. It demonstrates that since Mr Shivambu is a member of the party and holds a leadership role, he was speaking on behalf of the party based on a collective decision reached, and not a decision he made individually. Party leaders or members are, therefore, perceived as the party's ambassadors.

The word 'propose', in Ms Mkhali's statement that reads, "We are proposing that let's change the venue ... ", illustrates that the EFF's approach was peaceful and they were not demanding but suggesting. Quoting Mr Shivambu saying that the EFF never agreed to the venue and that parliament can produce minutes to prove otherwise, reiterates that he is willing to prove that the party is honest about having disagreed with the venue.

6.2.8.4 Social semiotics

The image used is not of the EFF but the proposed venue that the party rejects for the SoNA. The caption confirms what is indicated in the headline that the EFF is not in

agreement to have the SoNA hosted there. The researcher does not find any connotative meaning behind the image.

6.2.9 Article nine: *Malema gun case will finally be heard*

6.2.9.1 Representation

Lubabalo Ngcukana (2022) provides a brief background that the conflict between the EFF and AfriForum is not the first. He mentions the alleged hate speech case brought by AfriForum against Julius Malema regarding the ‘kill the boer’ song that Malema sang a while ago. While the author provides a brief background, the mentioning of the alleged case in connection with the song’s title portrays Mr Malema as a racially prejudiced individual.

The mentioning of the legal counts in relation to the gun case that Mr Malema faces, for example, “unlawful possession of ammunition and discharging of a firearm in a built-up area” (Ngcukana 2022), depict him as a reckless and unlawful person. Ngcukana (2022) states that the party’s members are among those who mostly filled the courtroom, portraying them as loyal and supportive to their leader.

In the researcher’s view that, reporting that Mr Malema was driven away immediately after his court appearance without addressing his supporters, can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, that he could have addressed the supporters to thank them for their support; therefore, was not appreciative for the support. Secondly, he avoided making comments on the matter and prefers it to be handled by the court, which portrays him as a person who is prepared to respect the law.

6.2.9.2 Agenda setting

The article reports on Mr Malema’s gun case. The word ‘finally be heard’ suggests that it is long overdue for the case to be heard or for him to have his day in court regarding the gun case. It also suggests that the newspaper was impatient, having waited for the case to be heard. The EFF is quoted counter-stating what AfriForum refers to as hate speech by suggesting that the organisation is racist.

6.2.9.3 Framing

Ngcukana (2022) reports that the gun case is a ‘battle’ between Mr Malema and AfriForum, suggesting that there is conflict between the two that needs to be settled in court. Mr Malema is referred to as accused ‘number one’; highlighting that the case was brought against him by AfriForum, not the other way around.

Ngcukana (2022) also quoted some statements by the party’s spokesperson, Mr Tambo, that the organisation is there to fight for their people (black people) and to better their standard of living. Here, the EFF is portrayed as a caring party that is prepared to serve the people. Quoting them speaking about their mandate, educates and informs readers who are not familiar with the party’s mandate.

6.2.9.4 Social semiotics

As indicated in the caption, the image used is of the subject being reported about, Mr Malema. The image used is not directly related to the focus of the story as Mr Malema seems to have been at a political gathering. His EFF attire confirms that it was a political gathering, and his body gesture with his arms slightly up, suggests that he was singing. His facial expression portrays a celebratory and happy mood. In the background, part of the banner is written ‘July’, which might be that the event he was attending was taking place in July.

6.2.10 Article ten: ‘Africa belongs to Africans’ – EFF calls for France to leave the continent

6.2.10.1 Representation

Mr Malema is quoted as saying that, while some African countries are currently independent, his concern is that they are still using the French currency (franc). For Mr Malema, this is one of the reasons for calling on France to leave Africa, and this positions him as a caring political leader who is concerned about the economic wellbeing of Africans.

Mentioning that Mr Malema also “spoke against xenophobia and called for unity on the continent”, Letsie (2022) portrays him as a peaceful person that believes Africans should not be divided. For Mr Malema, these are the keys to fighting what the

researcher would perceive as crimes against humanity; thus, colonialism and imperialism.

6.2.10.2 Agenda setting

The article reports on the view that the EFF holds regarding the African continent and here being people from the First World country, France. The researcher understands First World countries as developed and rich states. Letsie (2022) quotes that the African continent belongs to its inhabitants (Africans), and the French who the continent does not belong to, should depart from it. The agenda that the article sets is that the EFF is not welcoming of the French.

Letsie (2022) quotes Mr Malema clarifying that they (the EFF) are not only calling on France to leave, but also other First World countries such as Britain and Spain, because Africa is for Africans. It indicates that Mr Malema is not welcoming towards these privileged countries.

6.2.10.3 Framing

Letsie (2022) reiterates the economic wellbeing of Africans that the EFF is said to be unhappy about and maintains that it was caused by France. The memorandum highlights, for example, the colonial control that France has over African countries, and that the embassy is in possession of African mineral or fiscal reserves. Colonialism refers to the control or domination (mainly political, historical, and economic) of a group over another group's territory (Horvath 1972:46). In this case, the control that France has over African countries. Therefore, the emphasis is on the EFF addressing the poor economic status of Africans and that they long for it to be improved.

6.2.10.4 Social semiotics

The first image used is of a group of marching EFF followers. While the marching individuals appear in a small size, it is mainly because the photographer wanted to capture a huge group of people. The image narrates a great number of marchers and emphasises the salience of belonging to the party with their party attire. It demonstrates the magnitude of people who support the EFF's view that 'Africa belongs to Africans'.

The camera angle is straight on, suggesting that the photographer was walking in front of the marchers to get a clear and better-quality angle.

To make their message clear, the marching EFF members, according to the caption, are led by EFF leaders to the French embassy in South Africa. The placards that the marchers are holding confirm the headline that they are calling for France to leave the African continent. For example, “We want France out of Africa”. The placards also suggest that the party is unhappy with how France has treated Africans: “France is responsible for genocide in Africa!”, for example. The people captured in the image are also displeased about the wealth that France gained through Africans: “The wealth of France is on the backs of African people!” and “West Africa is not a colony of the French!”, for instance (Letsie 2022).

The second image and its caption show Mr Malema with some EFF representatives handing over a memorandum of demands to the French embassy representatives. In the researcher’s view, Mr Malema’s serious facial expression (from the side view), looks like he was addressing the French ambassador with a firm tone. Some EFF members can be seen flanking Mr Malema on the stage as he hands over the memorandum of demands. Overall, their facial expressions reveal that they were confrontational and authoritative.

The third image is of Mr Malema speaking into the microphone, indicating that he was addressing the masses. The researcher assumes that it was after handing over the memorandum of demands, considering that the image was used after the one of him handing over the memorandum of demands, and he was wearing the same attire that he was wearing during the march and the handing over. Towards the conclusion, the article has a video that shows what was happening at the EFF march. However, the researcher’s focus was on the texts and images (photos), specifically.

6.3 MAIL & GUARDIAN ARTICLES

The *Mail & Guardian* website has some advertising space on the top right side of the articles. The author’s bylines and publication dates are written below the headlines while the author names also appear at the bottom of the article. Above the headline is

the category under which the article is published. Most of the captions only mention the name of the subject, while a few mention what is happening in the image. Just below the caption are social media platform icons and the option to listen to the article. The researcher has screenshot the images up to either the captions or the teaser paragraphs. The sub-section below engages a discussion of the ten news articles from the *Mail & Guardian* that were sampled for analysis.

6.3.1 Article one: *Malema shores up Zuma's attack on the judiciary*

6.3.1.1 Representation

The first paragraph of the analysed article reports that Mr Malema released (unleashed) a threatening diatribe. Diatribe means a spoken attack. The statement portrays Mr Malema as intimidating or bullying the judiciary and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). Emsie Ferreira (2021a) reports that Mr Malema accuses the judiciary of thinking that they are untouchable and above the law. The word 'accused' portrays Mr Malema as making allegations against people or the judiciary without presenting evidence to support his claims. On the contrary, it depicts him as a political leader that believes the law and justice should be fair and apply equally irrespective of a person's status.

6.3.1.2 Agenda setting

The headline uses the words 'shore up', meaning to gather support. In the context of this article, the researcher understands the word 'attack' to mean to criticise. Therefore, the headline reports that Mr Malema supports/agrees with Mr Zuma's criticism of the judiciary, which is the legal authority of the country. Mr Malema previously called on Zuma to be charged with corruption (Pillay 2016). It is, therefore, ironic to find him agreeing with Mr Zuma on his views about the South African judiciary.

6.3.1.3 Framing

The emphasis in the article is on how Mr Malema agrees with Mr Zuma's view about the judiciary by attacking it and the NPA. Ferreira (2021a) states that Mr Malema leveled corruption claims against the judiciary and the NPA. For example, Mr Malema accuses these stakeholders of protecting the president and his cohort by falsely accusing their

opponents (Ferreira 2021a). This highlights the level of mistrust that Mr Malema has against the country's judiciary.

Still emphasising on corruption, Mr Malema is said to have accused President Ramaphosa of corruption on various issues, which depicts him as anti-Ramaphosa. The angle of the article concludes with a different direction, stating that some political analysts translate Mr Malema's tea meeting with Mr Zuma in Nkandla as an opportunity to convince him to appear before the commission. These political analysts consider it as a strategy to continue to disrepute (discrediting) the commission to divert its probe into his (Mr Malema) and other EFF leaders' business dealings. The concluding paragraph portrays Mr Malema as trying to distract the commission by raising doubt among citizens on its credibility. It also suggests that Mr Malema wants to play victim in the investigations against him and his colleagues, which could be perceived as if he is hiding something.

6.3.1.4 Social semiotics

As indicated in the caption, the image used is of the EFF leader, Mr Malema. Considering the background with bookshelves, it seems he was in his office. He is dressed in a red shirt that is not branded in his party's name, but red is the main colour used by the party. Mr Malema is holding his one hand up, with one finger up as well, suggesting that he was ready to respond to a question with confidence. He is wearing a small microphone attached to his shirt, which demonstrates that he was doing an interview; perhaps with the *Mail & Guardian* journalist working on the issue being reported. Malema's body language suggests that he was in a serious but relaxed mood.

6.3.2 Article two: *Malema back in court, as police say they followed protocol at Madikizela-Mandela's funeral*

6.3.2.1 Representation

Mr Malema is said to have refused to walk into the cemetery at Dr Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's funeral after a police officer told them they are allowed to enter the premises but not with their vehicles. It portrays Mr Malema and Dr Ndlozi as non-compliant and chaotic persons for attacking a police officer over that request. Eunice Stoltz (2021a)

says the police maintained that they were following the expected protocol for handling an official funeral which, among other expectations, is to ensure safety. By allegedly attacking a police officer over this request, depicts Mr Malema and Dr Ndlozi as not caring about the safety of attendees and disrespecting the police's jobs.

6.3.2.2 Agenda setting

Regarding the article's headline, it is evident that it focuses on the court appearance by Mr Malema in relation to an alleged attack of a security officer at the funeral of late ANC struggle icon, Dr Madikizela-Mandela. The headline states that police said they applied the conventional way of doing things (protocol). While an assault case was opened not only against Mr Malema, but Dr Ndlozi as well, the content of the analysed article focuses more on Mr Malema than Dr Ndlozi. It is because Mr Malema is the leader (CIC) of the EFF and is regarded as more newsworthy than other party leaders.

6.3.2.3 Framing

The article focuses on the assault case of EFF's Mr Malema and Dr Ndlozi, who allegedly attacked a police officer at Dr Madikizela-Mandela's funeral after they were allegedly refused entry. Stoltz (2021a) is correct to use the word 'alleged' to imply that the said politicians are being accused, and not yet found guilty. However, the allegations portray the party as bullies and disrespecting other people's jobs.

Cemetery officer, Mr Klingbiel is said to have kept video footage of the fight, which he claims he is not the one who leaked it to the media. Either way, the leaking of the video might have been a strategy to ridicule the EFF and portray them as bullies. On the contrary, the videos leakage might have been a way to expose the party's bullying tactics and unlawfulness. However, the researcher acknowledges that it is something that the newspaper quotes from the source, not their direct statement, which is an understandable editorial approach to report on what interviewees or subjects are saying.

6.3.2.4 Social semiotics

Dressed in his party's attire, the image used is of Mr Malema, although not related to the focus of the story, which is on his assault case being heard. It is a random photograph of him addressing a crowd at a political event, considering his dress code. While the focus is on Mr Malema, the background colour in the image has been manipulated and faded. This visual manipulation compromises the quality of the image.

6.3.3 Article three: *Gatvol Capetonians, EFF lash out at City of Cape Town for seeking damage claims of R1.4m*

6.3.3.1 Representation

The article reports on the legal claim that the City of Cape Town filed against the EFF which amounted to 1.4 million in damages from public infrastructure vandalism during the party's 2020 march. It indicates that the said march was violent, portraying the EFF as an aggressive and a non-law-abiding party. The researcher will not focus on the other group reported on, Gatvol Capetonians.

In the last paragraph, the EFF is quoted saying that they are ready to meet the city in court and that the city should "bring the merits" (Stoltz 2021b); implying that the party is confident about their innocence.

6.3.3.2 Agenda setting

The headline reports that Gatvol Capetonians and the EFF have had enough with the City of Cape Town's claim against them in relation to 2019 and 2020 marches that turned violent. However, the researcher focuses on the EFF only. In that vein, the analysed article asserts that the EFF is ready and not intimidated by the court.

6.3.3.3 Framing

Stoltz (2021b) quoted the EFF saying, "bring it on", suggesting that they are ready for the City of Cape Town's 1.4 million civil lawsuit against them. The words further depict the EFF as not ready to take accountability for their actions, should they be found guilty. Stoltz (2021b) uses the word 'alleged' to indicate that public infrastructure was damaged by the EFF. It implies that the claims against the EFF are allegations; therefore, no

evidence has been produced yet to confirm whether, indeed, the party is behind the vandalism. However, the statement depicts the party as unruly and aggressive.

6.3.3.4 Social semiotics

The image used in this news article is of a group of EFF supporters supposedly marching. The group seems to be gathered at a community and with their confrontational body languages, the researcher argues that they were not attending any political address but were marching. The researcher refers to them as EFF supporters as they are wearing various party affiliated attire and holding banners and placards.

One of the placards is written “Stop gender-based violence against women and children”. It implies that the party opposes gender-based violence and is raising awareness thereof. Most of the supporters’ shirts are written “Vote EFF”, thus implying that the party was using the march as a pre-election and marketing campaign strategy to draw more supporters. This can be supported by the fact that the 2021 local government elections were a few months ahead prior to this march (Koko 2021).

The caption of the images confirms what is emphasised in the article that the EFF allegedly damaged public infrastructure during a march in 2020. It, therefore, confirms that these are accusations and not yet facts, awaiting the court’s ruling.

6.3.4 Article four: *EFF loses high court bid to unseal CR17 campaign records*

6.3.4.1 Representation

The EFF’s bid to push President Ramaphosa to disclose his CR17 election campaign donors, was based on the Political Party Funding Act (2019), which maintains that political parties should disclose their donors. Here, the EFF believes that political leaders should lead by example and follow suit. This depicts the EFF as a party that believes that not only political structures as a collective, but political leaders, too, should uphold political principles such as the Political Party Funding Act, and should be accountable. It further depicts the EFF as believing in political transparency. On the contrary, it suggests that the EFF wanted to invade President Ramaphosa’s privacy.

6.3.4.2 Agenda setting

The article reports on the High Court's results regarding a case filed by the EFF against President Cyril Ramaphosa to disclose his CR17 election campaign records. The headline attests that the EFF was defeated; thus, they lost the court battle.

6.3.4.3 Framing

Ferreira (2021b) states that the EFF's bid was dismissed with costs, meaning that not only did they lose the court case, but also suffered a financial loss from having to cover the financial costs related to the case. The emphasis, in this regard, is on the defeat that the EFF suffered and the implications thereof.

6.3.4.4 Social semiotics

The image that Ferreira (2021b) used is of a group of ANC supporters wearing their party gear, and some are holding the ANC's posters and banners. The three women holding a big banner with the president's face on it all portray serious facial expressions. The woman on the left meets the gaze of the reader by looking directly into the camera lens, as if there is a symbolic interaction between her and the reader. However, it merely implies that she was looking directly at the camera. For the researcher, her symbolic contact is arrogant, and the same can be picked up with the woman on the right. The gazes of the women in the middle and on the right suggest that they were gazing at the person that was addressing them. While the caption confirms the headline that the High Court ruled against the EFF regarding the disclosure of the CR17 election campaign records, it does not use the EFF's image.

6.3.5 Article five: *Data shows EFF has lower negative sentiment online among voters than DA and ANC*

6.3.5.1 Representation

The word 'data' from the headline (Tandwa 2021b) proposes that research was conducted and results as well as conclusions were drawn based on the gathered data (information). Therefore, what the article presents is not an opinion, but presentation of statements proven through research. When the EFF receives fewer negative sentiments online, it demonstrates that voters are becoming optimistic about the party.

Evidence was collected online to understand the perceptions of the voters regarding the party. Lizeka Tandwa (2021b) notes that the EFF receives less pessimistic perceptions compared to other parties, thus depicting the EFF as an improving and competitive party in comparison with the first two biggest political parties in South Africa.

6.3.5.2 Agenda setting

The article highlights that the EFF is performing better in terms of online presence, marketing strategy, and studying of the voters. The analysed text focuses on the voters' interest in the party as compared to the top two political parties, the ANC and DA. This depicts the EFF as having a skilled marketing team and that its supporter base is growing.

6.3.5.3 Framing

The article reports on the EFF receiving more positive views from the voters as compared to the top two political parties. Tandwa (2021b) notes that "Positive sentiment for the EFF is almost 8%, close to that of the ANC" and "The EFF ... has more *Twitter* followers than the DA and ANC". The statements portray the EFF as progressive and competitive.

Tandwa (2021b) interviewed a digital media expert who remarked that political parties are not using modern marketing models to study and persuade the voters. The statement suggests that the EFF, unlike other political parties, is transformational and adjusts to modern ways of doing things (online). It implies that the EFF has better marketing strategies than other parties.

The expert states that the voters were interested in the EFF election donors and while the party did not disclose its donors, the voters' views were still positive, which is contrary to what the ANC and DA got. This emphasis depicts the party as secretive yet still able to grow its supporters and their confidence.

Considered in its entirety, the article emphasises that the EFF understands its target market, which is mostly the youth; and that the party uses the relevant digital platforms to study and attract them better than the other top two political parties. The analysed

text further emphasises on the EFF's supporters' growth, indicating that voters' confidence in the EFF is growing as it mainly receives positive views from them. When the sentiments of the voters are more positive, the party will most likely grow its numbers at the election polls.

6.3.5.4 Social semiotics

The researcher refers to the people in the image as EFF supporters, given that they are both holding the party's election campaign placards with Mr Malema's face. One is wearing the party's shirt, and the other is holding up an election poster with a smile. The dress code and facial expressions indicate that the voters are excited about the EFF and will probably support them in the next elections. If their sentiments about the party were negative, they would, for example, be tearing or burning the posters.

Behind the two posters at the front are the same placards. It means that the party had intensified their election campaign in the area by, among others, widely spreading election posters. Considering the camera's light, it implies that the image was taken at night, hence the darkness mainly in the background.

The photo's caption confirms that political parties are struggling to adopt digital techniques to examine "the behaviours, desires and interests of the voters" (Tandwa 2021b). Examining these help political parties to understand the challenges and needs of the voters. Also, it would help political parties to adapt to the digital world that we live in.

6.3.6 Article six: *What the EFF wants in coalition talks*

6.3.6.1 Representation

Indicating the impressive statistical information of the EFF in the City of Johannesburg and City of Ekurhuleni councils, Tandwa (2021c), in this analysed news article, depicts them as a progressive party (compared to before) and that they have a say in how the cities should be governed.

6.3.6.2 Agenda setting

The headline reports on the EFF's coalition demands, providing readers with what to think about. In this case, readers are swayed to think about the City of Ekurhuleni's governance and whether the ANC will lose this metro to another party.

6.3.6.3 Framing

Tandwa (2021c) notes that the ruling party might be compelled (forced) to surrender (give up) the City of Ekurhuleni as their talks with the EFF are progressing. Words such as 'forced' and 'give up' suggest that the EFF plans to snatch the city from the ANC. In the headline, the words 'what they want' suggest that the party is demanding, not requesting.

The EFF is said to want to govern in Ekurhuleni but are, in turn, willing to support the ruling party in Johannesburg City. It depicts the party as reasonable, temperate, and selfless as they could have wanted to rule over both cities.

Tandwa (2021c) quotes his source saying that "it was highly unlikely that the party [ANC] would give into many of the EFF's demands". For the researcher, this suggests that the ruling party is not comfortable with losing governance and mistrusts or is threatened by the EFF's demands. The statement, "It also demanded non-interference in the appointment of municipal managers and all other senior managers" (Tandwa 2021c), according to the researcher, suggests that the EFF wants to take full accountability for whatever transpires in the city.

6.3.6.4 Social semiotics

The image used is of EFF leaders, Mr Malema and Mr Shivambu, at what seems to be a political sitting. The close-up shot enables the reader to get a sense of the mood of the people in the picture. Mr Shivambu is listening attentively to Mr Malema. Mr Malema's eye contact and facial expression to whoever he was addressing, indicate a symbolic interaction of firmness and courage. The caption linked to the image does not clearly explain where they were or what was happening. It indicates that the party has decided to not continue with talks around possible coalition. Considering the content, the researcher assumes that the party was at a coalition meeting.

6.3.7 Article seven: *EFF axes Limpopo leaders over poor poll performance*

6.3.7.1 Representation

While the EFF, according to the headline and article's content, did not come out victorious in the Limpopo Province during the 2021 local elections, Harper (2022a) shares statistical information of the party's performance during the 2016 and 2021 local government elections. The statistics show that the party grew from 8% to 10.3% in votes, and from 826 to 1066 councillors (Harper 2022a). The information portrays the party as progressive and that more South Africans are starting to have confidence in the party.

Mr Malema is quoted as saying that EFF structures that do not produce satisfactory results would "face consequences", given that the party would not tolerate such results. Here, Mr Malema is depicted as a leader who does not tolerate poor performance and is keen to associate his party's brand with quality or positive results. On the contrary, the statement could be perceived as a threat to his structures.

6.3.7.2 Agenda setting

The article provides the reader with what to think about, which, in this instance, is the 2021 local government elections results and how the EFF deals with their leadership when they obtain poor results. The analysed article shares that the EFF lost thousands of votes and 25 council seats in Limpopo Province (Harper 2021a), implying that Mr Malema's party was outperformed by other parties in his home province.

6.3.7.3 Framing

The article's emphasis is on the election failure/loss that the party experienced in the Limpopo province and, as a result, the party relieved its leadership from their responsibilities. The denotative meaning is that the article is reporting on local elections results in Limpopo province.

The EFF is said to had used the same strategy in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape Provinces and that they improved going forward; therefore, the party was confident that the strategy would work in Limpopo as well. The connotative meaning is that the party

throws its leadership under the bus when things do not go their way. Another connotative meaning is that the leader of the party, Mr Malema, is originally from Limpopo, but his fellow residents do not trust him to lead them and address their needs; thus, they doubt his capabilities. The final connotative message is that, by dissolving the entire leadership in the said province, the EFF top leadership believes in accountability of their leaders and expect the best work ethic.

Mr Malema is quoted as saying that the party will continue to go to restaurants, security, farms, and bars to check on the number of foreigners hired versus South African citizens. This illustrates that Malema is addressing the unemployment issue faced by South Africans. In doing so, he says he does not blame the employed foreigners and will not chase them away as they did not hire themselves (Harper 2022a). The statement portrays Mr Malema as a leader that embraces other African nationals but believes in fairness in terms of employability of South African nationals.

The article concludes with Mr Malema accusing the popular and rich South African business family, the Oppenheims, of corruption, funding the ruling and opposition parties, and money laundering. However, he is not quoted sharing any evidence for his claims, thus portraying him as defaming the character of the Oppenheimer family.

6.3.7.4 Social semiotics

The image and caption communicate an opposite message from the headline. In the image, members of the EFF are shown singing and dancing with Mr Malema holding the microphone, showing that he is the one leading the song. Dressed in their party attire, their gestures and body languages suggest that they are celebrating.

The caption confirms the researcher's assumption that the depicted party members are celebrating. It states that the party was at a different location and province as opposed to the headline. They were in Tembisa to celebrate and appreciate their followers for support at the 2021 local government elections. This gesture by the EFF depicts it as a grateful party to their supporters, which the researcher believes could also be a good pre-election campaign for the 2024 national elections.

6.3.8 Article eight: *EFF holds gun to the heads of metro coalitions*

6.3.8.1 Representation

The headline for this news article states that the “EFF holds gun ...” (Harper 2022b); implying that the party was forcing those they were engaging with in coalition talks to do something, otherwise there will be consequences. The headline portrays the party as hostile. It also means the party wants things to be done *their way* and they were not negotiating, but imposing specific aspects.

6.3.8.2 Agenda setting

The article sets the agenda on what was transpiring at the coalition negotiations between the EFF and their opponent political parties. It highlights that the party was threatening to withdraw from the negotiations if they do not get what they want, which is a principal position in the City of Johannesburg. This depicts the party as bullies at the coalition negotiations.

6.3.8.3 Framing

The emphasis in the article is on the EFF forcing other political parties to agree with what they want, otherwise they threaten consequences. For example, the words ‘hold a gun’ and ‘threatened’ suggest that the party members attending these talks are bullies and demanding. The action of walking out of the negotiations portrays the party as disagreeing with what was being proposed by other parties and implying ‘it is either our way or no way’. As such, the quotes depict the party as dictators.

When the EFF disagrees with demands by other parties, it is portrayed as not willing to listen to other parties but expects to be listened to and for their demands to be met. It connotatively indicates that the party is confident that it can do a better job than other parties in delivering services to the public.

Mr Malema is quoted saying that the EFF had already given the other parties most of the municipalities; therefore, asking for a key position in Johannesburg is not much, according to Malema (Harper 2022b). He also says that they cannot do it alone as they (political parties) need to support each other. These statements indicate that the EFF has been reasonable at the negotiations and is not arrogant as they acknowledge that

political parties need to assist (support) each other, which would be in the best interest of the public. The researcher believes that the more the political parties support each other and not politicise public service, the more the public would receive improved services and their standards of living would also improve.

However, Mr Malema is portrayed as a person that blames others for the party's losses. It can be supported by Harper's (2022b) statement that he, Mr Malema, blames Dr Makhosi Khoza for their (EFF and DA) mayoral loss in eThekweni.

6.3.8.4 Social Semiotics

Harper (2022b) uses an image of EFF leader, Mr Malema. The use of his images in most of the articles suggest that whenever the newspaper reports on the EFF, it perceives Mr Malema as the face of the party. The reason is that he founded the party and is its leader (Parker 2013).

In the image, he is wearing an EFF beret and the party's banner is behind him. Mr Malema is talking into the microphone, suggesting that he was in a political gathering. His arm gesture portrays a symbolic interaction of intimidation to whoever he was addressing. Alternatively, it suggests that he was emphasising a point.

The researcher has ignored to analyse the other images of opposition political leaders at a coalition briefing, as they are not the subjects of analysis.

6.3.9 Article nine: *Budget 2022: EFF says foreign loans are 'a death trap'*

6.3.9.1 Representation

When the EFF refers to foreign loans as a 'death trap' and that, not the ANC, but the citizens will be affected, they might imply that these citizens will be impacted economically. The citizens will have to help pay back the loans through, for example, increased taxes. In this sense, the analysed article depicts the EFF as caring for the economic wellbeing of the country and its citizens.

Stoltz (2022) notes that the Assembly of Unemployed shares the same sentiments as the EFF regarding the austerity of the budget. The statement indicates that there are

people or organisations that agree with the EFF on their view regarding the wellbeing of the citizens; implying, thus, that the organisation is confident in the EFF.

6.3.9.2 Agenda setting

In the headline, Stoltz (2022) sets the agenda to focus on the 2022 South African budget views of the EFF in relation to foreign loans. According to the EFF, foreign loans are ‘a death trap’ that will burden the citizens and not the ruling party, indicating, as such, that the party cares about the financial wellness of the country. The statement implies that the ruling party will most probably be at the forefront of borrowing money from foreign banks and will not be affected as they will use the citizens’ money to pay back the loans.

6.3.9.3 Framing

The emphasis in the article is placed on how the EFF anticipates South Africans will be affected by loans made by the ANC with foreign banks. Stoltz (2022) quotes the EFF’s Sinawo Thambo saying that the party opposes economic liberation through foreign investment as it affects economic and employment progress. It indicates that the party (EFF) is keen to combat economic and unemployment challenges faced by the citizens.

6.3.9.4 Social semiotics

While the article reports on the EFF as a party, it uses the image of Dr Mbuyiseni Ndlozi at the budget speech venue with other politicians, which is confirmed by the caption associated with the image. Dr Ndlozi’s facial expression (smile) suggests that he is friendly, approachable, and in a good mood. The caption acknowledges the photographer, implying that copyrights apply and whoever uses the image must acknowledge the source (photographer).

The second image that is used shows a group of EFF supporters gathering. Their relaxed body language suggests that they are not marching but just gathering, perhaps being addressed. One of the placards captured in the image states that “The World Bank and International Monetary Fund are institutions of recolonisation”. Colonisation has to do with the oppression suffered by Africans at the hands of the Europeans who

allegedly settled in the African land and snatched it from its people to control them (Mufwene 2002:163). For that reason, it means the EFF does not want to see Africans returning to that 'dictatorial' state and the placard is a disclosure of the lack of trust that the party has in these institutions.

6.3.10 Article ten: *EFF strips ANC of majority in Northern Cape by-election win*

6.3.10.1 Representation

Paddy Harper (2022c) states that the EFF came out victorious in the by-elections by relieving the ANC from its control in ward three of the Phokwane local municipality, Northern Cape. The statement represents the EFF as a competitive party and that residents in the area trust it to represent their needs.

6.3.10.2 Agenda setting

The agenda set by the headline is on the victory of the EFF in the by-election against the ruling party in the Northern Cape. The word 'strips' is used to indicate that the ANC used to be in power in the said province, but the EFF snatched the majority votes. The focus is, therefore, on the growth of the party.

6.3.10.3 Framing

The article reiterates the success obtained by the EFF in specific wards of the Phokwane local municipality. It demonstrates that the party's campaign strategy was effective, hence the positive results. It also reiterates that the party is not stagnant but progressive. Further, residents in the municipality perceive the party as an alternative and believe in their approach on issues such as service delivery and migration.

Harper (2022c) writes that the EFF will approach other opposition parties for coalition governance in the municipality. The statement highlights that the party is selfless and cooperative; thus, it is willing to work with its opponents in the service of the communities. This portrays the party as caring and having the best interests of the communities at heart and that they are not politicising service delivery.

Harper (2022c) notes the challenges mentioned by EFF national spokesperson, Sinawo Thambo, in relation to why the party could not win the by-elections previously. For the

EFF, better engagement with communities is what improved their results (Harper 2022c). This demonstrates that the party reflects on, and assesses, their performances after every election with an aim to improve in future.

6.3.10.4 Social semiotics

The researcher believes that the group of people in the image are EFF supporters as they are wearing the party's gear. The body language of raising and stretching their arms, suggests that these EFF supporters had a gathering and with their mouths open, were singing. While the article reports on the success that the party had in the said municipality, the facial expression of the supporters is not celebratory but provocative.

The caption of the image confirms that through coalitions, the EFF will lead in Phokwane local municipality. The caption does not necessarily speak to what is happening in the image. The photographer of the image has been acknowledged, which is an ethical editorial practice. It means whoever uses the image needs to acknowledge the source to avoid copyright infringement.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter focused on presenting the data collected by the researcher, which are articles from the sources: *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian*. The researcher analysed a total of 20 articles in terms of texts (words), images (photographs) and captions. The advertisements that appeared in the articles were ignored as they are not the focus of the analysis.

The analysis was based on the denotative and connotative meanings of the words and images regarding how they were used to represent the EFF, whether they were negative, neutral, or positive. The analysed articles were screenshot, and their links shared below the screenshots. They are placed as Addendum B for the *City Press* and Addendum C for the *Mail & Guardian*. The commonality that the researcher picked up with the publication pages or articles include: the images were not taken by the journalist and the photographer has been acknowledged, they have social media icon links and the option to listen to the article, links to previous stories, unique comment sections, and an option to subscribe or log in if already subscribed.

Chapter 6: Data presentation and interpretation – Part II

The next chapter focuses on presenting the study findings based on the data analysis and interpretation presented in this chapter.

7 RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter advances from the data presentation and interpretation chapters and focuses on presenting the research findings based on the interpreted data in line with the corpus of analysed articles. As mentioned in previous chapters, the researcher analysed 30 articles (ten from each selected publication). These publications, namely: the *Daily Maverick*, *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian*, were deemed relevant given the research focus.

The findings from the analysed articles are supported by the researcher's critical focus on the words (written texts making up the news articles) and photographs (visual texts associated with each news article), which the researcher also refers to as images. Furthermore, the captions associated with the images were also closely considered in the presentation of the findings, as they are crucial elements that narrate what is happening in the context of the news story.

In this chapter which, as mentioned earlier, builds on chapters five and six, the researcher provides a summary of the analysed content, with the aim of elucidating whether the content can be interpreted as negative, neutral, or positive in its representations of the EFF. Before concluding, the researcher will briefly also quantitatively present findings in the form of tables that numerically specify how many articles per publication represented the EFF negatively, neutrally, or positively. The subsection below starts off engaging the findings drawn from analyzing texts from the *Daily Maverick*.

7.2 Daily Maverick articles

7.2.1 Article one: *Malema comes out strongly in favour of Covid-19 vaccine*

Based on the teaser paragraph and the rest of the article, it is evident that author, Davis (2021), had negative preconceived views about Mr Malema by expecting him to be a COVID-19 anti-vaxxer, which is opposite to how *Malema actually* reacted to the proposition of the vaccine. The author further expected Mr Malema not to control his

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moods by noting that “his mood was unusually restrained when making the announcement” (Davis 2021).

Davis (2021) acknowledges Mr Malema’s intention and willingness to suspend any physical, in-person activity by the party, which was part of the pandemic’s regulations to avoid public gatherings (South Africa. Department of Health 2022). However, Mr Malema’s criticism against government regarding the closing of African borders during the pandemic, as reported on by Davis, can be perceived as a logical argument to address how Africans will be economically affected by closed borders. On the contrary, the criticism can be perceived as illogical, given that movement at borders could intensify the spread of the pandemic.

The researcher argues that the fading of the original colour of Mr Malema’s image compromises the original quality; therefore, it represents the subject as inferior. These colours suggest that the image was visually altered either by setting the camera on black and white mode before capturing the image or using a specific software to change the colours post-production. Also, based on the abovementioned, Davis’ negative preconceived ideas about Mr Malema – which turned out to be opposite – partly positioned the politician negatively, but at the same time, Davis manages to capture Malema as promoting the vaccine as a crucial intervention to save the lives of citizens. Considering all this, the researcher finds the article to represent the EFF **neutrally**.

7.2.2 Article two: *Julius Malema & the age of cowardly leadership*

With the headline focusing on cowardly leadership, it associates and classifies Mr Malema into the category of such leaders. Brkic (2021) begins by briefly narrating Ernest Henry Shackleton’s story, referring to him as a true leader, but placing Mr Malema with cowardly (not brave) leaders. The writer further refers to the EFF as hypocritical and corrupt, although legal conviction had not been made against the party. Furthermore, implying that the party promotes intimidation and violence, Brkic (2021) notes that the EFF leadership deploys people to intimidate others. By linking back to his 2018 quote, Brkic (2021) alludes that the party oppresses media freedom, are racist, and violent.

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The writer further notes that the party members and leaders fight battles that they lack knowledge about. Brkic (2021) declares Mr Malema as a cowardly leader by placing his image with the label 'cowardly leadership'. The researcher finds the article to represent Mr Malema in his political capacity in a **negative** light.

7.2.3 Article three: *Eight years later, Julius Malema's path to relevance ...*

The article focuses on describing Mr Malema as a political leader that advances populism and violence. Author of the text, Du Plessis (2021), gives the impression that Malema is an opportunist who discredits the government to gain supporters for his party. The author does not use the word 'alleged' (meaning claimed) to describe Mr Malema as a populist and aggressive (violent), implying that he, Du Plessis, has concluded his perception about Malema. The author also finds the EFF's adherence to the COVID-19 regulations an ironic act, meaning he expected the opposite.

Framing Mr Malema as a dishonest promoter of false information, Du Plessis (2021) objects to Malema's 'baseless' claims that Marikana miners died at the hands of the police. Ironically, the *Daily Maverick* later released an article indicating that the police opened fired on the miners (Nicolson 2022). Speaking about the 2019 local government elections percentage of the electorates, the author belittles the EFF and Mr Malema and perceives the party as unrealistic by mentioning that what they represent is far "smaller than the big dreams of its leader" (Du Plessis 2021).

The caption for Mr Malema's image used in the article frames him as a coward by noting that he held a digital celebration to avoid making an address next to a messy location: "next to some wreck of a looted mall or address edgy residents", as Du Plessis (2021) puts it. The researcher believes that this article represents the EFF **negatively**.

7.2.4 Article four: *Hawks investigating 'Malema linked' fuel tender*

Mr Malema is accused of being linked to a suspicious tender, depicting him as a suspicious character, too. The publication indicates that there is evidence against Mr Malema and the EFF benefitting from the dubious tender while he, Malema, or any of the party members were never prosecuted for the alleged action.

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Article author, Reddy (2021), describes the EFF as ‘kingmakers’ and as a minority party. He questions their influence in a particular metro as inconsistent (disproportionate) with its minority status, portraying the party as inferior. Through blood relations, the author links the party leader, Mr Malema, to some dodgy companies. Since Mr Dlamini of the EFF is linked to some of these companies, their ‘questionable dealings’ are further linked to the party. Therefore, portraying the EFF and its leadership as suspicious and corrupt. As such, the article represents the said politicians **negatively**.

7.2.5 Article five: *Behind EFF’s anti-ANC vote: Julius Malema’s big plan to topple Ramaphosa*

Haffajee (2021) describes the EFF and Mr Malema as entities that are anti-ANC and anti-Ramaphosa and that Malema and the party aim to cripple the ruling party and the president. According to the author, the aforementioned anti-conduct was evident when the EFF voted with the opposition party at the coalition meeting. Mr Malema is represented as a subjective leader with a personal agenda against a party (ANC) that expelled him when he was its member. Among the author’s concerns regarding the EFF, are the party’s demands, slow growth, and questionable decision of not disclosing its election campaign funders.

Considering that bright colours represent truth and optimistic values (Van Leeuwen 2010), Mr Malema is depicted as inferior with black and white colours to fade the quality of his image. Because images are never innocent, it means that the author or photographer wanted to promote a specific narrative; perhaps one of inferiority or less valuable. The researcher, thus, finds the emphasis in the article to be **negative**.

7.2.6 Article six: *Durban rally: Malema’s EFF shifts focus to capturing KZN ...*

The article depicts the EFF as irresponsible by noting that the party did not abide by the COVID-19 regulations. This is also confirmed by the connotative meaning that the party is inconsistent by requesting for the postponement of the 2021 local elections to avoid excessive spread of the virus, but later organised a ‘risky’ gathering (Durban rally... 2022). At the time of the gathering, some of the COVID-19 regulations imposed by

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government included that a person must wear a cloth mask in public places, and social distance of at least one metre between persons must be maintained (South Africa. Department of Health 2022).

On the contrary, the party is described as protectors of the democratic system (defenders of the revolution) with a leader that believes that his party members should benefit through hard work and servicing the people. While it is questionable why Mr Malema encouraged his party members to disrupt municipal council sittings, the action can be considered as wanting to attract attention of the relevant stakeholders to address service delivery issues. To clearly indicate the growth of the EFF, it is described through words such as 'tripled', 'impressive', and 'winning crucial seats'.

The choice of images used is of happy facial expressions of the party leaders and their supporters. Other than the party leader, the many people wearing EFF-branded clothes also confirm that the party is growing. The party leaders' shirts are embroidered with words of appreciation to South Africans (*Siyabonga Azania*). The researcher finds that there is a balance of negative and positive representation which, in this analysed article, can be considered as a **neutral** representation of the EFF.

7.2.7 Article seven: *EFF's programme of action in 2022 signals a year of living even more dangerously*

In this article, Davis (2022) uses words such as 'dangerously' and 'destabilises' to describe the EFF and its programme of action. Further, the party leader, Mr Malema, is described as provocative, insinuating, thus, that the party is aggressive; the author says the party uses violence as an attention-seeking strategy. While Davis (2022) acknowledges that the party aims to professionalise itself, she questions its membership credibility using the *Africa Check* fact-checking platform.

The author of this analysed article views the party as a critic (commentator or attacker) of government but notes that through celebratory events after elections, it appreciates its supporters. The party is, however, politically insulted through the author's reference to it as populist, meaning they persuade the masses by disregarding the government.

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Using an image of Mr Malema displaying a serious facial expression, the caption devalues the party by mentioning that it is not valuable to much-needed current and future debate. Considering the words used to describe the EFF and its leader, the article represents the party **negatively**.

7.2.8 Article eight: DA, EFF, Action SA – Joburg council set for showdown ...

Article author, Reddy (2022), links Mr Malema to a corruption accused, Mr Floyd Brink, painting Mr Malema as corrupt too. Stating the EFF as opponents against DA's Mr Johann Mettler's appointment as Johannesburg City Manager and pushing for Mr Brink to be appointed to the position instead, reflects on the EFF as embracing a candidate who can serve their 'corrupt' or 'illegal' interests. Reddy (2022) supports his argument by connecting the two men in question to 2018 when Mr Brink was appointed as the chief operating officer of Johannesburg.

The author captures the thoughts of the DA expressing regret in forming governance relations with the EFF. The researcher considers this as a strategic move by the author to support his narrative. The article was written by a journalist from *amaBhungane*, an independent non-profit investigative journalism structure. For the researcher, the fact that this article by *amaBhungane* was published in the *Daily Maverick*, means the publication endorses the contents in the article. Mr Malema was never criminally charged with corruption in relation to Mr Brink's 'corrupt' actions. The focus of portraying Mr Malema and his party as corrupt represent them **negatively**.

7.2.9 Article nine: EFF guns for Johann Rupert, demanding land ...

Cruywagen (2022) depicts the EFF as aggressive, racist, and bitter by stating that the party is gunning for a white, rich man, Mr Johann Rupert, on the issue of returning land to its people without force. To support this narrative, the author interviews political analyst, Mr Ralph Mathekga, who is a critic of the party on the land issue. Land ownership has been a thorny issue in South Africa, especially considering the shocking statistics of Africans who own land in the country. In terms of farms and agricultural holdings, white people own 72%, coloureds own 15%, Indians are at 5%, while Africans are the lowest on the list at 4% (South Africa. Department of Rural Development 2017).

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Cruywagen (2022) also uses images of EFF supporters with placards written “Rupert give back our land”; “No land, no reconciliation”; and “Wherever you see a beautiful piece of land, take it!”. While these placards or images relate directly to what is narrated, the connotation of aggression, bitterness, unforgiving, provocativeness, and racist, represent the EFF **negatively**.

7.2.10 Article ten: *EFF snatches another ward from ANC – in Mahikeng*

Sussman (2022), in this analysed article, points to the party’s win in Pampierstad and links it to another ward; this way, the writer can highlight the EFF’s significant voter and governance progress. The party is also said to have exceeded expectations by ‘overperforming’. Of the three biggest political parties in South Africa (ANC, DA and EFF), the EFF indicated impressive growth in the 2021 local government elections by receiving 10% of the votes, up from 8% in 2016 (Sussman 2021).

The images used are not directly linked to the story, but are of the EFF leader, Mr Malema. These images can be considered relevant when reporting about the EFF as Mr Malema is perceived as the face of the party. Based on the year that the images were shot (2019), and that the article was written in 2022, it can be assumed that the images were archived by the newspaper. With the focus being to describe the victory of the EFF regarding the 2021 local elections, the researcher finds the article to represent the party **positively**.

7.3 City Press articles

7.3.1 Article one: *EFF shares Zuma’s reservations over Zondo commission’s ‘bias’*

The EFF is portrayed as a political party that encourages abidance by the law, given how Dlamini (2021a) notes the condemned Mr Zuma’s lack of participation at the State Capture enquiry. The party believes that appearing in front of the commission of inquiry, is the only way that the former president can be heard. Dlamini (2021a), however, notes that the party holds the same views as Mr Zuma’s: that the commission is unfair; and the EFF believes that the commission should hear all arguments and evidence equally. This depicts the party as promoting equality before the law. The party, therefore, promotes, among others, Chapter 2, Section 9(1) of the Bill of Rights, which stipulates

that “everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law” (South Africa. Department of Justice 1996: Sec. 9.1).

It is unlikely for political parties to openly criticise judicial arms such as commissions of enquiry and the courts. When the EFF criticises such, it demonstrates that the party is practicing freedom of speech and profusely analyses the proceedings of the commission. The researcher believes the article to be a **positive** representation of the EFF.

7.3.2 Article two: Malema accuses Ramaphosa of not caring about black people ...

Mr Malema is not convinced that the president, Mr Ramaphosa, and his party (the ANC), are inconsiderate of Black people’s basic needs considering the poor service delivery that these Black people are experiencing at their hands (president and ruling party). This criticism can be thought of in two ways, (1) portrays Mr Malema (the EFF) as anti-Ramaphosa and anti-ANC or (2) as caring about the wellbeing of African people. Municipalities are tasked with providing basic services to their respective communities. However, service delivery remains a struggle in South Africa, especially for the underprivileged and Black communities (Gossel & Koelble 2021). Assuming that Mr Malema is referring to Africans, he states: “... we have nothing, we have no land, no education, no power at all” (Nyathi 2021a). This statement also portrays him as a pro-black advocate.

Mr Malema also criticises the ANC for ignoring the COVID-19 regulations by declining a call by opposition parties to have virtual votes. This statement implies the party is keen to minimise the spread of the pandemic. The image choice of Mr Malema with a serious facial expression and hand gesture demonstrates that his symbolic interaction was firm and provocative, meaning that he takes service delivery issues seriously. Based on Nyathi’s (2021a) captured statements of Mr Malema at this Freedom Day event, whether it is the author’s intention or not, the article represents Mr Malema and the party **positively**.

7.3.3 Article three: Malema lambasts IEC for launching local elections season ...

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Nyathi (2021b) greatly focuses on the EFF's criticism of the IEC for setting in motion the local government elections period in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic's third wave. To minimise the spread of the pandemic, the EFF explicitly opposes the holding of physical, in-person elections. The party's other reasons are quoted as, among others, being against unfairness, unpracticality, and high costs of holding the elections. The Constitution's Section 190 obligates the IEC to ensure free and fair elections (South Africa. Department of Justice 1996: Sec.190), which is what the researcher understands the EFF to be calling for.

Mr Malema, however, declares that should the elections continue, his supporters will take part. The statement has connotations that Mr Malema is inconsistent and hypocritical, and that his call to minimise the spread of the pandemic, is conditional. Mr Malema is quoted by the author, therefore, his statements are not by the author as she reports on the views of the EFF leader. The researcher finds the article to have represented the party **neutrally**.

7.3.4 Article four: Malema claims Ramaphosa will benefit from delays ...

Dlamini (2021b) reports on Mr Malema's corruption accusation against the South African president, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, in relation to the COVID-19 vaccines and personal protection equipment. The author states that Malema's claims are not backed up by evidence, implying that Mr Malema is perceived as peddling propaganda against the president. He is further quoted as demanding that those he believes to be linked to the COVID-19 related processes, to be prohibited from engaging on the matter, indicating that he is against conflict-of-interest.

A demand by Mr Malema for the opening up of the economy and for the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out to be accelerated, indicates that he believes that the citizens should economically survive and enjoy equal access to healthcare (vaccines). Section 27 of the Constitution stipulates that "everyone has the right to access health care services, which includes non-refusal of emergency medical treatment" (South Africa. Department of Justice 1996: Sec.27). The COVID-19 pandemic fits the description as it was declared a state of emergency.

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In terms of especially the second image associated with the analysed news article, it shows a crowd of EFF members who are not maintaining social distance, and some are not wearing masks. They are holding placards about saving lives from the pandemic while they do not adhere to the regulations (no social distance and masks).

It can be argued that Mr Malema cares about the financial and health wellbeing of South African citizens and that he promotes ethical conduct of the committee leading the COVID-19 processes. However, the other focus is depicting him as a propagandist that is anti-Ramaphosa. Dlamini (2021b) balances his views about the EFF relating to COVID-19 matters, but most importantly captures how the gathering unfolded. Bearing this in mind, the researcher finds that the article represents the EFF **neutrally**.

7.3.5 Article five: *EFF off to fiery start in race to poll rescue*

Masuabi's (2021) emphasis is on EFF Chairperson, Ms Victoria Mente's, visit to underprivileged parts of the North West Province and engaging with residents about their social and service delivery issues. Ms Mente declares the visit as an election campaign and that they (EFF) do not want to hear about the COVID-19 regulations; this portrays the party as ignorant. The Electoral Code of Conduct by the Electoral Commission of South Africa (2022) on political parties and candidates, stipulates that the public have the right, among others, to join in any political campaigns, marches, or public meetings.

The party is also opportunistic by deciding to engage with a community that they are not directly governing just so they can highlight the failures of the ruling party. As a result, they (the EFF), plan to snatch the municipality with a belief that they can do better than the governing party. While Masuabi (2021) mentions that the party started with fire for the 2021 local government elections, she reflects on their failure to acquire any municipal ward in the previous elections, highlighting the citizens' lack of support and confidence in the party.

The images used demonstrate Ms Mente's visit and engagement with the poor residents, showcasing their struggles. They represent the EFF as an involved and caring political party that practically wants to see what the community is going through.

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This gesture by the EFF could be argued as part of opportunistic and strategic visits for election campaigning only, and not as genuine. Despite their campaign, Masuabi's (2021) emphasis is on the previous failures of the EFF, which the researcher finds as **negative** representation of the party.

7.3.6 Article six: EFF in Soweto hits Eskom with demands

The EFF is represented as a party that leads the conversation in addressing service delivery and basic human right issues such as access to electricity, which would improve the quality of lives of citizens. The party is also noted to address issues of inequality by disapproving of the fact that Soweto and Sandton residents can be charged equal electricity rates. Statistics South Africa (2016) reports that while 87,6% of households had electricity access in 2016, access was unique across municipalities. It means that, for example, the access to electricity that Soweto residents have is not the same as what the Sandton residents have.

The party also calls on the government to improve employment, which would also better the standard of the lives of citizens. Dlamini (2021c) notes that the party submitted a memorandum of demands to Eskom, implying that it was not requesting such services but demanding to have access to them. The author represents the party as fearless and caring for the underprivileged. Also, the party can be considered to promote the National Development Plan (2011), which anticipates "greater social equity regarding access to energy services by 2030".

The images chosen to accompany the article are of the EFF supporters in their party gear and residents of Soweto who are not wearing any political gear. This demonstrates solidarity between the party and Soweto residents. The second image of blocked roads and burning tyres demonstrates that the party demands attention from Eskom and the government at large by disturbing the day-to-day lives of the community and the operations of the municipality. While the images can be perceived as aggressive, the publication's photographer merely captured what transpired at the march. Based on the author's captured intention of the march, demonstrating a party that stops at nothing to address service delivery issues, the researcher argues that the representation of the EFF is **positive**.

7.3.7 Article seven: EFF blames ANC for failure ...

This article quotes Mr Malema as insisting to address the abnormalities of the colonial and apartheid practices (Masungwini 2021). These are practices which are related to past systems that oppressed and marginalised African people to advance western epistemologies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). The EFF, according to this article, believes that Section 25 of the Constitution (1996) – which speaks to the expropriation of land without compensation – should be reviewed to include providing free land to South Africans. The bill was opposed by other opposition parties, but the EFF stood for what they believed was right.

The ANC declared to support the amendment of the bill; however, the EFF is said to have blamed the ruling party for not pursuing this amendment to provide free land as a basic service delivery to South African citizens. The researcher assumes that this would apply mainly to marginalised groups such as the poor and black citizens, as black Africans are noted as the race that own the least (4%) land in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2016). While the EFF did not get sufficient support on the call for the expropriation of land without compensation, for the researcher, the main narrative of the article is that the party stood for what it believed was right, which is free land as a basic service delivery.

To demonstrate the seriousness of the issue, the publication uses Mr Malema's image with a hand gesture and facial expression depicting a direct, firm and confident symbolic interaction. Therefore, the researcher finds the article to have captured a **positive** representation of the EFF.

7.3.8 Article eight: EFF rejects Cape Town City Hall as Sona venue

According to Macupe (2022), EFF representatives disapproved of the Cape Town City Hall as a venue for hosting the State of the Nation Address (SoNA), with a view that it is not large enough to accommodate all attendees. Calling for a bigger venue also indicates that the party wished to abide by the COVID-19 regulations of maintaining social distance to minimise the spread of the pandemic.

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The EFF, through its representatives, is also mindful of avoiding wasteful expenditure of taxpayers' money as the party is said to have noted that the proposed venue would be too costly. The narrative in the article demonstrates that the party is responsible and considerate. The article thus represents the party **positively**.

7.3.9 Article nine: *Malema gun case will finally be heard*

The analysed article reflects on Mr Malema's court case in relation to the alleged hate-speech song, '*kill the boer*'. The song itself, and Malema's insistence on publicly singing it, portrays him as a racially prejudiced person; thus, not promoting a united nation. The article also focuses on the legal battle of Mr Malema's "unlawful possession of ammunition and discharging of a firearm in a built-up area" (Ngcukana 2022), depicting him as reckless and unlawful.

The publication seems to have been waiting impatiently to have Mr Malema's gun battle court case heard in court, hence stating in the headline that it will "finally be heard" (Ngcukana 2022). The article largely focuses on the EFF or Mr Malema's relationship with AfriForum, which seems to have been dominated by court battles. The article reports on Mr Malema as a political leader with hanging court cases and the proceedings of these cases. The author does not necessarily use negative labeling on Mr Malema but reports on actual incidents; therefore, the article represents the EFF **neutrally**.

7.3.10 Article ten: *'Africa belongs to Africans' ...*

When Mr Malema raises concerns about the use of currency use of First World Country currencies by African countries, he is portrayed as a leader that cares about Africa's economic state, which relates to the economic wellbeing of the people. However, Letsie (2022) further represents him as a political leader that is hostile and unwelcoming to these non-African countries by calling for their 'departure' from the African continent.

Mr Malema speaks against xenophobia and calls on Africans to unite to make it easy for them to fight crimes against humanity. The call comes after non-South African citizens continue to experience discrimination from the country's citizens, law enforcement agencies, and the private sector, among others (Landau et al 2005).

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In the images, the EFF leaders are seen to be leading the march calling on France to leave Africa, which is evident through their placards. They are captured delivering a memorandum of demands in unfriendly and serious facial expressions. The researcher believes that the article represents the EFF **neutrally** since it captures the events as they unfolded, and the writer does not necessarily promote subjective opinions.

7.4 MAIL & GUARDIAN ARTICLES

7.4.1 Article one: *Malema shores up Zuma's attack on the judiciary*

Ferreira (2021a), in this news article, focuses on Mr Malema's threats and criticism against the South African judiciary, portraying him as an intimidatory individual. She further quotes him as saying that the judiciary are not untouchable and above the law; meaning Mr Malema believes in equal accountability in the face of the law.

Mr Malema previously recommended for Mr Zuma to be criminally charged via judicial processes (eNCA 2014). Yet at a later stage, during the commission of enquiry into state capture, Malema holds similar criticisms as those of Zuma against the country's judiciary system in relation to the system's consistency in applying law. This notion has varying connotations, that (1) he is inconsistent, (2) has negative perception against the judiciary because they have previously ruled against him, and (3) is able to agree with his opponents in principle.

Ferreira (2021a) holds that Mr Malema is casting doubt on the citizens regarding the commission's credibility and distracting the commission from dealing with his and his party's business dealings. The statement regards Mr Malema or the EFF as having shady or illegal dealings to hide. Ferreira's views are not accompanied by evidence against the EFF; therefore, the researcher regards the views as subjective. The article represents the EFF **negatively**.

7.4.2 Article two: *Malema back in court ...*

Mr Malema and Dr Ndlozi are accused of attacking a police officer who was asking them not to enter the cemetery in their cars at Dr Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's funeral.

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As EFF leaders, these politicians are portrayed as disrespecting protocol and non-compliant.

The story pays attention to the assault case against the two EFF leaders without using the word 'allegedly attacked' the police officer, meaning Stoltz (2021a), as author of the article, perceives the EFF leaders as guilty before proven so by the court of law. Section 35(3)(h) of the Constitution holds that "every accused person has the right to be presumed innocent, to remain silent, and not to testify during the proceedings" (South Africa. Department of Justice 1996: Sec.355.3h).

Mr Malema's image in terms of the angle quality seems compromised, with items on the sideline slightly faded, proving to consider him as inferior. As such, the article represents the EFF leaders **negatively**.

7.4.3 Article three: *Gatvol Capetonians, EFF lashes out at City of Cape Town ...*

In the case of this news article, the researcher analyses only aspects of what Stoltz (2021b) reports on regarding the EFF and *not* the other group (Gatvol Capetonians). The story looks at the legal claim that the City of Cape Town filed against the EFF amounting to R1.4 million in damages from public infrastructure vandalism during their 2020 'violent' march. The claim against the party was based on allegations, which could mean that there was a lack of evidence that the EFF was responsible for the damages.

With the local government elections ahead during the march, as depicted in the used image, the EFF-imprinted shirts encourage people to vote for the party, while some of their placards condemn violence against women and children. The image used enhances election campaigning and condemns a serious social challenge of gender-based violence (GBV henceforth). This unlawful social ill has seen a disturbing spike as GBV related cases increased by 15.9% between July and September of 2022 as compared to the same period in 2021 (O' Regan 2022). However, the article mostly reports on allegations that depict the party as violent and unlawful; therefore, represents the party **negatively**.

7.4.4 Article four: *EFF loses high court bid to unseal CR17 campaign records*

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Supporting their argument using the Political Party Funding Act (2019), the EFF had demanded President Ramaphosa to disclose his CR17 election campaign donors, promoting transparency and adherence to the act. Transparency is important in this regard as the act prohibits particular donations from being made directly to political parties. However, the article turns its focus on the fact that the EFF lost the bid with costs at the High Court.

While the article and caption of the image focus on the EFF's case loss, it uses the image of happy ANC supporters to accommodate the article. Ferreira (2021b) does not promote personal opinions, but reiterates the High Court's verdict; therefore, the article represents the EFF **neutrally**.

7.4.5 Article five: *Data shows EFF has lower negative sentiments online ...*

Without reading the entire article, the headline in and of itself has a positive reflection on the EFF by stating that the party has lower negative sentiment online as compared to the ANC and DA. For the researcher, it means that the EFF understands how it should communicate with the public and how to behave online to attract voter support.

The article's content is supported by online research as shared by the author. To further support the credibility of the content, Tandwa (2021b) engaged with a digital media expert to analyse the EFF, ANC, and DA's online presence, marketing strategy, and the voter perception about the three parties. The positive analysis of the EFF relating to these aspects is also an indicator of the skilled marketing and online team that the party has.

The visual image used is of an EFF supporter (based on the party shirt that he is wearing) and an ordinary woman proudly lifting an EFF poster with its leader (Mr Malema) as the face of the party. The excited facial expression and posture of the woman suggest that she is confident to declare her support for the party. The article represents the EFF **positively**.

7.4.6 Article six: *What the EFF wants in coalition talks*

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Using statistical data, Tandwa (2021c) looks at councils' progress made by the EFF in the City of Johannesburg and City of Ekurhuleni, highlighting that through coalitions, the party partially runs these cities. Negotiating with the ruling party, the EFF is said to have interest in running one of the cities without interference, which would enhance full accountability with regard to how the city is managed. The party also notes that it is prepared to support the ruling party to run another city, thus portraying itself as a selfless party. Therefore, the EFF is prepared to ensure that political battles do not adversely affect municipal service delivery.

The image of Mr Shivambu looking at and listening attentively to what Mr Malema is saying displays solidarity and teamwork between these EFF leaders. In that vein, the analysed article represents the EFF **positively**.

7.4.7 Article seven: EFF axes Limpopo leaders over poor poll performance

The EFF did not win the votes in the Limpopo Province in the 2021 local elections. However, the author of this news article acknowledges that the party is progressive in terms of voter statistics. The growth indicates the citizens' growing interest and faith in the party and that they want to give it a chance to govern. However, the same cannot be said in Mr Malema's home province, Limpopo.

Mr Malema is quoted saying that structures that produced dissatisfactory results will face consequences, which eventually transpired, given that those leaders were released from their party responsibilities. The connotation of this statement is that he, Malema, is intimidatory but, at the same time, believes in accountability and associating his party to great achievements.

Without blaming foreign nationals for being employed in South Africa, Mr Malema intends to go to various industries to inspect if they hire foreign nationals or South African citizens, according to the analysed article. It implies that he is keen to address the issue of citizens' employment in the country. Not all foreign nationals came legally in South Africa and some of them are hired and exploited, which is against section 49(3) of the Immigration Act (2002) that posits that anyone who intentionally employs an illegal foreigner is in violation of the said act.

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While the article largely focuses on the defeat suffered by the party in the Limpopo Province, the image used is of a celebratory nature in Tembisa where the party was appreciating its supporters. Harper (2022a) shares the true reflection of the results and direct statements made by the party; therefore, the article represents the party **neutrally**.

7.4.8 Article eight: *EFF holds gun to the heads of metro coalitions*

Harper (2022b) focuses on coalition negotiations between the EFF and their opponent political parties. In the headline, the author portrays the party as demanding and hostile by using the phrase that the party ‘ ... holds gun ... ’. The researcher understands coalition as political parties willing to co-govern in municipalities in order to deliver services to the public or citizens.

The writer of the analysed article further states that the party threatened to withdraw from the coalition negotiations should they not get what they are demanding. This statement and the image of Mr Malema indicate that he was firm in making his point. The article represents the EFF **neutrally** as it reports on the proceedings of the coalition negotiations and the author does not share subjective opinions about the party.

7.4.9 Article nine: *Budget 2022: EFF says foreign loans are ‘a death trap’*

Stoltz (2022) reiterates the EFF’s objection of foreign loans with the party raising a concern that these loans economically affect South African citizens negatively. Other organisations that held the same views as the EFF on this matter provided support to the party. The author notes that the party does not believe that foreign investment will liberate South Africans economically. Ayadi and Ayadi (2008) maintain that external debt hinders capital formation in developing nations like South Africa.

Stoltz (2022) uses the visual image displaying Dr Ndlozi’s smiley and approachable facial expression. The researcher assumes that the party was attending the budget speech debate (discussing economic matters) at parliament. Through the words on the placards carried by the people in the second image: “The World Bank and International Monetary Fund are institutions of recolonisation”, it can be said that the EFF is backed by its supporters in believing that the two mentioned institutions are not there to liberate

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citizens but to oppress them. For the researcher, the EFF is perceived as a party that wishes South Africans to thrive economically and independently; therefore, it is represented **positively**.

7.4.10 Article ten: *EFF strips ANC of majority in the Northern Cape ...*

The article focuses on the victory achieved by the EFF against the ruling party at the by-elections in Phokwane local municipality, Northern Cape. Harper (2022c) exposes the competitiveness of the party and that the citizens or community members in the area perceive the party as reliable. In the 2021 local government elections, the party showed reasonable growth in that some of its members are public representatives and more had taken up council seats (Sussman 2021).

The author states that the party is progressive and applauds its effective campaign strategy. The party proves to be self-reflective by studying the election results, providing feedback and acknowledging that the victory is due to its interaction with the citizens. The image of a crowd looking confident and celebratory is evidence that the EFF members or voters are happy with the results. The article represents the EFF **positively**.

7.5 RESEARCH FINDINGS IN QUANTITATIVE DATA

7.5.1 Statistical information of analysed articles

The table below indicates the total number of articles analysed per publication, and how many represented the EFF negatively, neutrally and positively per publication. It also indicates the overall number of negative, neutral and positive representations from the total analysed data corpus.

Name of publication	Number of articles analysed	Negative representation articles	Neutral representation articles	Positive representation articles
<i>Daily Maverick</i>	10	7	2	1
<i>City Press</i>	10	1	4	5

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<i>Mail & Guardian</i>	10	3	3	4
Total	30	11	9	10

7.5.1.1 Figure 1: Overall information of negative, neutral, and positive representations of the EFF

7.5.2 Descriptive statistics

To arrive at descriptive statistics, the researcher calculated the number of negative, neutral and positive representations from the articles for each publication. These figures were divided by the total number of overall negative, neutral and positive representations across all publications. Finally, they were multiplied by 100 to arrive at a percentage.

7.5.2.1 Descriptive statistics for negative representations

For the *Daily Maverick*, there were a total of seven negative representations out of an overall total of 11 analysed articles that represented the EFF negatively:

$$7 \div 11 \times 100 = 63.64\%$$

For the *City Press*, there was a total of one negative representation out of an overall total of 11 analysed articles that represented the EFF negatively:

$$1 \div 11 \times 100 = 9.09\%$$

For the *Mail & Guardian*, there were a total of three negative representations out of an overall total of 11 analysed articles that represented the EFF negatively:

$$3 \div 11 \times 100 = 27.27\%$$

7.5.2.2 Descriptive statistics for neutral representations

For the *Daily Maverick*, there were a total of two neutral representations out of an overall total of nine analysed articles that represented the EFF neutrally:

$$2 \div 9 \times 100 = 22.22\%$$

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For the *City Press*, there were a total of four neutral representations out of an overall total of nine analysed articles that represented the EFF neutrally:

$$4 \div 9 \times 100 = 44.44\%$$

For the *Mail & Guardian*, there were a total of three neutral representations out of an overall total of nine analysed articles that represented the EFF neutrally:

$$3 \div 9 \times 100 = 33.33\%$$

7.5.2.3 Descriptive statistics for positive representations

For the *Daily Maverick*, there was a total of one positive representation out of an overall total of ten analysed articles that represented the EFF positively:

$$1 \div 10 \times 100 = 10\%$$

For the *City Press*, there were a total of five positive representations out of an overall total of ten analysed articles that represented the EFF positively:

$$5 \div 10 \times 100 = 50\%$$

For the *Mail & Guardian*, there were a total of four positive representations out of an overall total of ten analysed articles that represented the EFF positively:

$$4 \div 10 \times 100 = 40\%$$

Name of publication	Negative representations	Neutral representations	Positive representations
<i>Daily Maverick</i>	7 (63.64%)	2 (22.22%)	1 (10%)
<i>City Press</i>	1 (9.09%)	4 (44.44%)	5 (50%)
<i>Mail & Guardian</i>	3 (27.27%)	3 (33.33%)	4 (40%)
Total	11 (100%)	9 (100%)	10 (100%)

7.5.2.4 Figure 2: Negative, neutral, and positive representations of the EFF per publication

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Various strategies can be employed in which qualitative data can be numerated to create a single comprehensive dataset, that can include the number of times a qualitative code occurs (Driscoll et al 2007). In this study, the qualitative findings are interpreted as quantitative findings to further explicate, justify, and support the credibility of the research. For example, to determine how the selected online newspaper publications represent the EFF, the total number of analysed articles per publication is calculated against the total number of overall analysed articles to produce percentages, indicating the type of representation by the publications. Therefore, this enhances the study analysis to clearly indicate which publication represented the EFF neutrally, negatively, or positively, overall. The textual results (qualitative) also indicate that the results are measurable (quantifiable). The findings also align with theories, methodology, research questions, and data analysis techniques employed in the study.

The detailed description of the qualitative findings makes it possible to transfer the results into quantitative findings, making the study reliable and valid. This illustrates that qualitative and quantitative research methods achieve varying yet complimentary purposes within mixed-method designs (Kelle 2006:309). The merging of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms enables quantitative researchers to familiarise themselves with the findings from a numeric perspective, while qualitative researchers can familiarise themselves with it from a textual perspective.

7.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter focused on presenting the research findings based on the interpreted data after analysing the sampled corpus of articles. The researcher analysed 30 articles (ten from each publication); these publications being the *Daily Maverick*, *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian* that the researcher found relevant to the research focus. The findings from the analysed articles were supported through a focus on the words (written texts) and photographs (visual images) stemming from the scrutinised texts. The captions of the images were also considered in presenting the findings because they play a crucial role in narrating what the article is about.

The researcher provided a summary of the content and interpreted it as either negative, neutral, or positive representations of the EFF. At the end, the researcher presented

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findings in quantitative format via tables carrying descriptive statistics that specify how many articles per publication represented the EFF negatively, neutrally, or positively.

Based on the data interpretation and findings, the concluding chapter will focus on answering the research questions and assumptions, and also provide recommendations while paying attention to the limitations of this study.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the research findings chapter, this chapter aims at answering the research questions and assumptions based on the results of the study after analysing 30 articles of the *Daily Maverick*, *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian* online newspapers. After analysing the results that indicated which newspaper represented the EFF negatively, positively, or neutrally, this chapter will provide the limitations and recommendations of the study, as well as concluding remarks.

8.2 ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Considering the main research question: *How do South African online newspapers, Daily Maverick, Mail & Guardian, and City Press represent the South African political party, the EFF?*, The study question whether the three selected newspapers represent the party positively, negatively or neutrally. The results of the study revealed the following answers:

- **Positive representation of the party:**

The researcher found that not all analysed newspaper articles represented the EFF positively. Of the 30 articles representing the full corpus of texts, a total of ten of the articles represented the EFF positively. Of the ten aforementioned articles that represented the EFF positively, five (half) were by the *City Press*. This means that out of the ten positive representations accounting for 100%, *City Press* accounted for 50% of these positive representations.

The *Daily Maverick* had one positive representation out of ten, and *Mail & Guardian* had four out of ten. *Mail & Guardian* accounted for 40%, and *Daily Maverick* accounted for the remaining 10% in terms of positively representing the EFF.

These findings demonstrate, then, that the *City Press* accounted for the most positive representation of the party as it either reported a true reflection of EFF events or also shared some positive highlights of the party. For example, the *City Press* shared election achievements by the party, and when it covered EFF events, it interviewed EFF

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supporters who had positive views about the party, perceiving the party as, for example, fighting for human rights and caring for the poor.

- **Negative representation of the party:**

The researcher found that not all analysed newspapers represented the EFF negatively. Of the 30 articles representing the full corpus of texts, a total of 11 of the articles represented the EFF negatively. Of these 11 articles that represented the EFF negatively, seven were by the *Daily Maverick*. This means that out of the 11 negative representations accounting for 100%, *Daily Maverick* accounted for 63.64% of these negative representations.

From the 11 analysed negative representations, the *City Press* had one negative representation, accounting for 9.09%. The *Mail & Guardian* had three out of 11 negative representations, accounting for 27.27%.

According to the findings, the *Daily Maverick* accounted for most of the negative representation as it sometimes had 'pre-conceived' ideas about the EFF and its leader. In most of the articles, authors from the *Daily Maverick* seem to perceive Mr Malema or the party either as bullies; corrupt; populist; cowardly; inconsistent; or anti-ANC. Some of their speculations were not supported by evidence, yet as communicators, they lacked the ability to use the word 'alleged' where applicable in their content.

- **Neutral representation of the party:**

The researcher found that of the 30 articles representing the full corpus of texts, a total of nine of the articles represented the EFF neutrally. Of these nine articles that represented the EFF neutrally, four were by the *City Press*. This means that out of the nine neutral representations accounting for 100%, *City Press* accounted for 44.44% of these neutral representations.

The *Mail & Guardian* had three out of nine neutral representations, accounting for 33.33% of these representations. *Daily Maverick* had two out of nine neutral representations of the party, accounting for 22.22% of the forementioned representations.

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The *City Press* accounted for the most neutral representations of the party because, apart from either reporting EFF events exactly as they occur, the authors from the *City Press* did not promote their own views or opinions about the party, if the analysed texts are anything to go by. It indicates that the publication also avoided distorting content to promote a specific narrative or pre-conceived ideas. They further strike a balance between reporting negative stories and positive stories about the party.

8.3 ANSWERING RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

8.3.1 Research assumptions

8.3.1.1 Research assumption 1: There is editorial subjectivity in one or more of the selected newspapers in reporting on the EFF.

The researcher found that more than one publication had subjectivity creep into their reporting on the EFF. From ten articles of each publication, the researcher found the *Daily Maverick* to have been the newspaper that had been more subjective (negative) towards the EFF compared to the others. By subjectivity, the researcher asserts that the publication promotes underlying bias stereotypes about the EFF, labelling it as a law-breaking, careless, self-centred, unreliable and inconsistent party, among others.

The two other publications, *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian*, demonstrated a balance between subjective (negative), objective (positive) and neutral representation of the EFF in their writing and choice of images. Thus, they had less subjectivity as compared to *Daily Maverick*. Of the 30 analysed articles, 11 of them showed more subjectivity as compared to the rest in some cases. Of the 30 articles (representing 100% of the data corpus), *Daily Maverick* is at a high of 63.64%, with *City Press* being the lowest at 9.09% and *Mail & Guardian* at 27.27% with regard to negative portrayals. The *City Press* and *Daily Maverick* had less bias reporting as they avoided promoting specific stereotypes. However, where bias is applicable in their content, just like the *Daily Maverick*, there seems to be an underlying bias stereotype from journalists perceiving the EFF as bullies, untrustworthy, and corrupt, among others. The researcher argues that where subjective bias applies, it must be substantiated by facts and evidence such as court rulings declaring the party or its members guilty of criminal activities.

However, van Zoonen (2016) argues, in relation to contemporary journalism, that subjectivity does not oppose objectivity, and that they can dually be considered as ethical standards. The researcher argues that should there be subjectivity in journalism, it must be constructive. For example, if a journalist questions a political party's stature and capability because they do not empower their young members to lead, that is constructive subjectivity as for the organisation to grow further, it needs to ensure that its legacy is continued through youth leadership.

8.3.2.2. Research assumption 2: News prioritised by the media can set the agenda by shaping what the public think about in terms of political news.

The researcher believes that the news disseminated by the media as priority can motivate media consumers on what to think about regarding political news and political parties. Additionally, they can affect how these consumers (the public) behave towards political parties. For example, if the media set the agenda by prioritising the failures and weakness of the EFF over their achievements and strengths, that can affect voter participation and sentiment because of the picture drawn by the newspapers in these voters' minds. As a result, the EFF could attract less voters and not achieve victory during elections.

In this regard, issues regarding the EFF as depicted by the content in the analysed newspapers are linked to issue priorities of the public, and according to Kosicki (1993), this concept is called public agenda setting.

8.3.2.3. Research assumption 3: The representation of the EFF through texts by newspapers can frame issues in a way that is appealing to the audience and promote specific understanding of issues.

The framing of issues by newspapers can promote a specific narrative about the EFF in the minds of the public accessing these newspapers. According to Ardevol-Abreu (2015), this is the concept of frame settings where information framed by the media can impact individual or public attitudes, opinions, and behaviours. The angle that the media chose to report their stories can attract the attention of the media consumers and promote specific attributes to contribute to how the consumers translate media

messages. For example, if the media associates the EFF with attributes of aggression, racism, and not caring for citizens, that is how the public will understand the behaviour of the party. Another example, frames can be ironic as the media can publish a story about the growth and victory of the EFF during elections but support it with a different narrative of using social semiotics related resources, such as images, showing the party being aggressive during a protest or parliamentary seating.

8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The collection of data (relevant articles) was not as easy as the researcher anticipated. Other than paying a monthly fee for subscriptions to the targeted newspaper websites, tracking the relevant articles using the keyword 'EFF' was slightly difficult as the period of the articles was not in line with the research period. Some of the articles that were in line with the research period were not just about the EFF but also covered other political parties or advocacy groups. However, the researcher focused on the content that was directed at the EFF. It could be ideal for online publications to group their stories according to subthemes. For example, most publications have political or entertainment sections or themes; within them, they can have subthemes such as 'EFF stories' to enhance readers' search options.

The editorial teams from the targeted publications were not interviewed about their experiences of covering political news and engaging with political parties. They were further not interviewed about their choice of images that accommodate their stories. This is because the study was mainly a textual analysis without conducting interviews.

While different theories were used to analyse the newspapers' texts and images, media consumers such as ordinary readers or EFF supporters were not interviewed about what they think about the media coverage of the EFF and how they translate the images used by the publications. The data collection technique employed by the researcher was not through conducting interviews but textual analysis.

As per the researcher's intention, the study focused on newspaper publications as the medium for analysis and neglected other media genres. Also, in terms of said publications, the researcher focused solely on online publications and not print. John

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Pavlik (2001) writes that new media technology using the digital format are swiftly rewriting the traditional assumptions of newsroom institutions and structures. The researcher notes that the media keep evolving especially electronically; therefore, Fourth Industrial Revolution and digitisation have become the new normal for distributing and consuming news. Online articles do not have geographical restrictions as media consumers just need to have access to necessary devices and the Internet. This also highlights the importance of improving online literacy and diminishing digital divide. However, since print media still exists in South Africa, future studies can embark on similar research but focus on print media.

There is limited research on how South African political parties are represented by the South African media, including publications. Other literature that the researcher used had to be borrowed from studies abroad. There is also limited research on how political parties are represented by the media using social semiotics as a study method to analyse, especially images.

The researcher chose to study the third biggest political party in South Africa and did not consider the first two biggest political parties, ANC and DA. Among these parties, the EFF raised concern about media subjectivity when reporting about them as compared to other political parties. The party was also accused of oppressing the media's freedom of information (*news24* 2018). Future research can focus on the first two biggest political parties' media representations, and perhaps on why some old parties (small) are not of much interest to the media.

The study did not extend to analyse how media representations of the EFF affect the behaviour or participation of voters towards the party. The researcher did not want to scatter the research focus but aligned the analysis to the indicated focus. The researcher, therefore, suggests future studies to analyse how media representations of political parties affect voter participation.

Most studies that analysed the representations of political parties or leaders by the media used qualitative research methods. Perhaps such studies can be extended to translating the data or results into quantitative research findings by deploying mixed

methods, which was applied in this study. These study limitations also serve as ideas to be considered by other researchers and scholars for future research studies.

8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Duggan and Martinelli (2008:2) maintain that media slant, which has to do with how the media filter political reality and political issues (whether implicitly, positively, or negatively), significantly affects private decisions and voting outcomes. This dissertation recommends scholars to produce more theories on how political parties are represented by the media in South Africa and abroad. The studies should also go beyond qualitative research methods (textual or content analysis), to include quantitative results such as graphs indicating the coverage over a specific period and the impact that such coverage has on voter participation during election periods.

Researchers could employ other study methods such as participant observation by participating in media activities, asking questions, watching, and learning how they (media) prioritise and arrange their stories. This would provide first-hand understanding of their choice of words (or angle) and images.

To understand how and what media consumers think after consuming political news, further research can be conducted focusing on, for example, audience reception; or in-depth interviews could be carried out to analyse how the audience receive and interpret media messages through texts and images on newspaper articles (Livingstone 1998). Furthermore, impact studies could be embarked on to examine how political news contributes or impact the citizen's daily lives. Perhaps such studies could diminish media subjectivity to promote journalistic values such as objectivity, honesty, and ensuring that the news is in the best interests of the public.

Comparative studies between South Africa and other countries must also be employed to produce further literature on how political parties are represented by the media. In-depth interviews can be conducted with participants such as the individuals on editorial teams to elucidate their motivations behind the choices of words and images when reporting on political news. Also, these approaches will be valuable to check how media

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houses benefit from the angles they use to disseminate stories. For example, if their choices improve readership and sales.

More research must be conducted to analyse the representation of political parties by the media using semiotics models such as multimodal analysis to analyse visual components (images). This would help media producers and consumers understand that images also carry hidden and explicit meanings.

8.6 CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on analysing online newspapers, *Daily Maverick*, *City Press* and *Mail & Guardian* in relation to how they represent the EFF as a political party. The analysis was based on 30 articles in total; ten from each publication, to explore whether their representations of the party were neutral, negative, or positive. The researcher found that almost half of the analysed articles across all publications have been subjective and represented the EFF negatively. On the contrary, some articles depicted them positively and some neutrally.

The 30 articles representing 100% of the data corpus were analysed to determine whether they represented the EFF positive, negatively or neutrally. *Daily Maverick* topped the negative representation at 63.64%, followed by *Mail & Guardian* at 27.27%, then *City Press* at 9.09%. *City Press* is the highest with neutral representation at 44.44% followed by *Mail & Guardian* at 33.33%, then the *Daily Maverick* at 22.22%. The *City Press* was also the highest with positive representation at 50%. With more negative representations than neutral and positive content, this raises an alarm on the subjectivity of the newspapers or media in general and encourages calls to scrutinise if the subjectivity is constructive. For the researcher, one of the ways that the media can avoid subjectivity is to stick to factual information and not their (authors/editors) opinions about political parties, unless they are writing opinion pieces.

The study used mixed-methods research to present the findings and drew conclusions based on the results. However, much information and results were presented in a qualitative form as the study was largely qualitative than quantitative in nature. The qualitative approach was relied on to analyse the texts and images of the newspaper

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articles, while the quantitative approach assisted with indicating the number of articles (even in the form of percentages) that represented the party neutrally, negatively, or positively. The use of mixed methods contributed to available theory on how political parties are represented by the media. However, the researcher saw a gap in studies that employed mixed methods for such studies; therefore, this makes the study unique.

The research topic was important to study as it contributes not only to the field of political communications, such as how politics are linked to the media or how political parties communicate with the public; it also contributes to studies that look at, among others, media ethics in terms of scrutinising if the media embraces ethical and objective dissemination of news to the public. Couldry (2013) refers to ethics as “discourse attentive to issues of good and dispositions aimed at the good”. Objectivity, which is about fairness, is one of the key conducts expected from the media as it relates to ethics.

The study also provides clarification on the dynamics of media messages; for example, what messages are disseminated, how they are angled and what impact they have on political parties, the public, and the media itself. Duggan and Martinelli (2008:3) hold that “unbiased media outlet is never socially optimal”. For the researcher, for these outlets to remain socially optimal, they must prioritise specific issues over others, and each must have a unique way of angling stories.

Regarding media reporting, different media use different styles of reporting the same news. For example, how newspapers report news will be different to how they are reported on television (for the eye) and on radio (for the ear). For the researcher, it means it is important to understand how different audiences process news from different media platforms.

Whether the media represent a political party neutrally, negatively, or positively, the depiction has an impact on the identity and reputation of the party. For Lucarelli et al (2011), political identity is a process of how a group (political party) recognises (identifies) itself. For example, if a political party has built an identity of promoting and protecting the rights of all citizens irrespective of race, but the media depict the party as racist, that will affect the identity that is known to the public. It would also affect the

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image of the party (reputation) and how the public perceives it based on specific news or narratives promoted by the media.

It is, therefore, important to recognise the interconnection between political parties, the media, and the public. For example, for the political parties to gain exposure and communicate effectively with the public, they need the media to do so (Gackowsk 2013:45). Therefore, the media connect political parties with the public by mediating conversations between them; meaning, the public also relies on the media to be informed about political news and how they impact their daily lives. Overall, how the media represent political parties through texts and images, and how they set the agenda and frame political news, could determine the kind of relationship and trust the public build with the media and especially with political parties.

8.7 SUM UP OF THE STUDY

The study demonstrates what the political communication subfield entails by making it legible to the context of the study. The analysis indicates that political communication has advanced to online media, and it inspects the results that this has for the media (*Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*) as they decide on which news to cover and from which angle, and also how these affect their depiction of subjects (the EFF).

The researcher did not merely mention concepts in the theoretical framework, literature review, findings and the rest of the study, but engaged with them to provide motivation of how they were relevant in studying the representation of the EFF by the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and *City Press*. The study has revealed the nature of the relationship between the EFF and media, indicating that there have been ‘trust issues’ between them even before the study period, which focuses on articles between January 2021 to June 2022. The results of the study uncover if the EFF falsely accused the media of representing them negatively, and if the media adhered to journalistic and press ethics of unbiased, factual and fair reporting of a subject.

Based on the study results indicating that some newspapers accounted for more negative than positive and neutral reporting, they reveal that the EFF was correct to

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think that they were represented negatively by some newspapers. This highlights that where the selected newspapers reported negatively on the party, they compromised journalistic or media ethics of truthful, objective and fair reporting of the EFF. However, it is worth acknowledging that some newspapers accounted for more positive and neutral reporting of the party, meaning that their reportage on the EFF was not distorted and they maintained ethical journalism.

The study is, therefore, important in highlighting that while political parties should not censor the media, but enable media freedom, the media should not also abuse their freedom by subjectively reporting on political parties, but they should be factual and consistent irrespective of who they are reporting on. The researcher holds that this study is impartial as the analysed articles by the selected newspapers were sourced from the original population's websites; therefore, the analysed texts could not have been distorted by the researcher. Also, the data shared by the researcher regarding the analysed texts can be confirmed by various commentators as the links to the articles have been provided in the study, and they are available on the public domain to confirm credibility.

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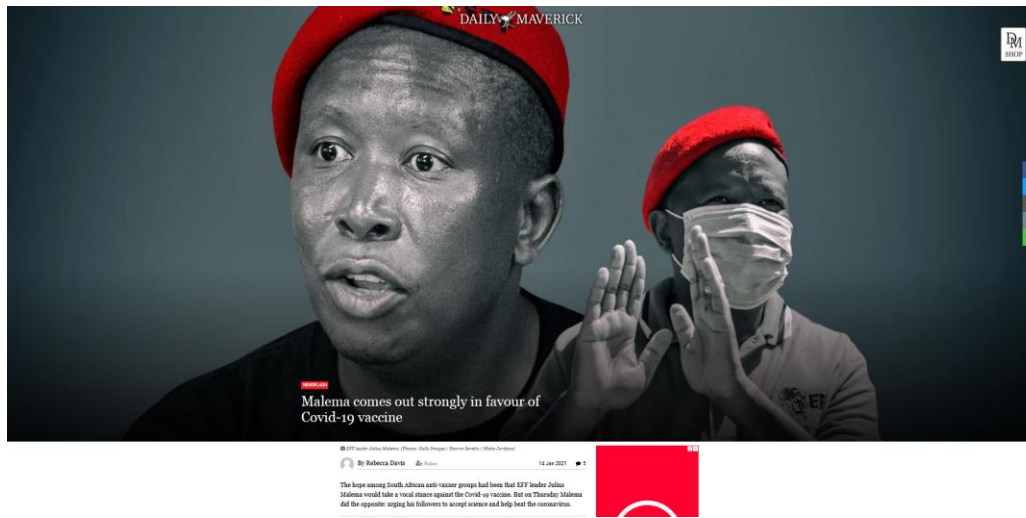
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ADDENDUM A: DAILY MAVERICK ARTICLES

Article one



Link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-01-14-malema-comes-out-strongly-in-favour-of-covid-19-vaccine/>

Article two



Link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-06-27-julius-malema-the-age-of-cowardly-leadership/>

Article three

EFF ANNIVERSARY

Eight years later, Julius Malema's path to relevance is still characterised by peddling populism and violence



EFF leader Julius Malema gives the party's virtual eighth anniversary speech on 26 July 2021 in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng. (Photo: Gallo Images / OJ Robert)

By Carien du Plessis Follow 27 Jul 2021 16

Leader of the EFF Julius Malema used the party's birthday to challenge President Cyril Ramaphosa to 'remove the soldiers from the streets and confront the people of South Africa'. It remains to be seen if the pleaser and populist commander-in-chief will persuade the people of South Africa to take his bait in greater numbers.

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Article four



Hawks investigating 'Malema-linked' fuel tender

Leader of the EFF Julius Malema (Photo: Daily Maverick) (Photo: Andrew Goniwe) - EFF MP (Photo: Gallo Images)

By Sibah Dedy Follow 27 Oct 2021 19

Dodgy payments, first revealed by amaBhungane in September 2020, were at the time the strongest indication of the EFF taking kickbacks in months where it emerged as kingmaker after the 2020 local government elections. Now the Hawks are asking questions.

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Article five

ANALYSIS

Behind EFF's anti-ANC vote: Julius Malema's big plan to topple Ramaphosa



By Ferial Haffajee 25 Nov 2021

Here's why Julius Malema voted to topple the ANC from coalition governments this week: The party wants power in the 2024 election – even with a faction of the ANC.

In the upset of upsets this week, the EFF voted with the DA and propelled it into government in the country's big cities. It saw ANC mayoral candidates fall like skittles. What was behind this move?

A red rectangular logo for IFSA Private Equity. The text reads: "IFSA PRIVATE EQUITY LET'S TALK ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS In person PROSPERITY ROADSHOW With Simon Brown from MoneywebNCW".

Link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-11-25-behind-effs-anti-anc-vote-julius-malemas-big-plan-to-topple-ramaphosa/>

Article six

READY TO POUNCE

Durban rally: Malema's EFF shifts focus to capturing KZN and driving out the ANC



By Daily Maverick Reporters 09 Jan 2022

The Economic Freedom Fighters and its leader Julius Malema are eyeing KwaZulu-Natal as a growth point to amass support in the run-up to the 2024 national elections.



Link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-01-09-durban-rally-malemas-eff-shifts-focus-to-capturing-kzn-and-driving-out-the-anc/>

Article seven

POLITRIX

EFF's programme of action in 2022 signals a year of living even more dangerously



EFF leader Julius Malema at the debate on the 2022 State of the Nation Address at Cape Town City Hall on 14 February 2022. The EFF does not contribute to opening a debate that is so badly needed in a situation where political life is devoid of ideas and conversation over present and future directions, says the writer. (Photo: Gallo Images / Jeffrey Abrahams)

By Rebecca Davis Follow 19 Feb 2022 31

What we can expect from the EFF this year: a move towards even more populist policies; accelerated attempts to destabilise governance and ensure the EFF's proximity to state resources; and an intensifying attack on the legitimacy of the judiciary and the South African criminal justice cluster as a whole.

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Article eight

AMABHUNGANE

DA, EFF, ActionSA – Joburg council set for showdown over city manager appointment



From left: Johannesburg Mayor Mpho Phalata. (Photo: Gallo Images / Luba Lesellie) Johann Metler. (Photo: Twitter) / Floyd Brink. (Photo: Gallo Images / Sharon Serele)

By Mical Reddy for amaBhungane Follow 09 Mar 2022 3

As the race for the position of Joburg's city manager heats up, fractures are showing in the DA-led coalition that governs the metro. The DA accuse their partners in ActionSA of siding with the EFF in attempting to shoehorn Floyd Brink into the post. Brink was once alleged to be close to the EFF and is now implicated in a damning forensic report.

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Link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-03-09-da-eff-actionsa-joburg-council-set-for-showdown-over-city-manager-appointment/>

Article nine

MARCH ON STELLENBOSCH

EFF guns for Johann Rupert, demands land to be voluntarily returned to the people



EFF leader Julius Malema leads a march of hundreds of supporters into Stellenbosch on 6 April 2022. On the anniversary of the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck in South Africa in 1652, the party demanded that billionaire Johann Rupert give up some of his land. (Photo: Gallo Images / Brenton Geach)



By Vincent Cruywagen Follow

06 Apr 2022 5

HAPAG-LLOYD.COM

Still tired of

Link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-04-06-eff-guns-for-johann-rupert-demands-land-to-be-voluntarily-returned-to-the-people/>

Article ten

DAILY MAVERICK

DEFEND TRUTH

MAY BY-ELECTIONS

EFF snatches another ward from ANC – in Mafikeng



Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party president Julius Malema addresses supporters during the 2022 presidential elections manifesto launch at the Giant stadium in Dushanqwe outside Pretoria, on February 2022. EPA-EFE/STR

By Wayne Sussman Follow 05 May 2022 0

The EFF followed up its by-election win a fortnight ago in Phokwane with a barnstorming victory over the ANC in Lomanyaneng in Mafikeng, North West.

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Link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-05-05-eff-snatches-another-ward-from-anc-da-loses-ground-to-actionsa/>

ADDENDUM B: CITY PRESS ARTICLES

Article one

01 Feb 2021

EFF shares Zuma's reservations over Zondo commission's 'bias'

City Press Palessa Dlamini

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Jacob Zuma

POLITICS

Although the EFF has condemned former president Jacob Zuma's decision to defy the Constitutional Court's ruling that he should appear before the state capture commission of inquiry, the red berets have echoed similar reservations to Zuma over the proceedings being marred by a factional approach.

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/eff-shares-zumas-reservations-over-zondo-commissions-bias-20210201>

Article two

28 Apr 2021

Malema accuses Ramaphosa of not caring about black people, asks the elderly to stop voting for the ANC

City Press Mandisa Nyathi

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Julius Malema. Picture: Gelfo Images

POLITICS

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/malema-accuses-ramaphosa-of-not-caring-about-black-people-asks-the-elderly-to-stop-voting-for-the-anc-20210428>

Article three

10 Jun 2021

Malema lambasts IEC for launching local elections season, says it endangers lives

City Press Mandisa Nyathi

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Julius Malema said elections were costly and that it would be unfair for parties to go into elections without campaigning, especially the smaller parties which are relatively unknown. Photo: EFF/Twitter

POLITICS

EFF leader Julius Malema has reiterated his party's call for government to postpone elections and has argued that free and fair elections will not be feasible under lockdown.

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/malema-lambasts-iec-for-launching-local-elections-season-says-it-endangers-lives-20210610>

Article four

25 Jun 2021

Malema claims Ramaphosa will benefit from delays with mass vaccination

City Press Palesa Dlamini

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Julius Malema addressing thousands of EFF members who marched to the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority in Pretoria, the protests was themed "march to save lives" and demanded the approval of the Chinese and Russian Covid-19 vaccines for use in the country. Photo: Tebogo Letsie/ City Press

POLITICS

EFF leader and commander in chief Julius Malema has accused President Cyril Ramaphosa and his administration of intentionally dragging their feet regarding Covid-19 vaccine acquisition and roll-out, as they stand to gain financially from government's sluggish vaccination programme.

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/malema-claims-ramaphosa-will-benefit-from-delays-with-mass-vaccination-20210625>

Article five



Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/eff-off-to-fiery-start-in-race-to-poll-rescue-20210918>

Article six



Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/eff-in-soweto-hits-eskom-with-demands-20211028>

Article seven

07 Dec 2021

EFF blames ANC for failure to pass expropriation without compensation bill

City Press Norman Mesungwini

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Julius Malema. Photo: Gallo Images

POLITICS

The EFF has accused the ANC of not being interested in passing the amendment of the section 25 of the Constitution, saying the ANC pretends otherwise to the South Africa public.

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/eff-blames-anc-for-failure-to-pass-expropriation-without-compensation-bill-20211207>

Article eight

13 Jan

EFF rejects Cape Town City Hall as Sona venue

City Press Bongekile Macupe

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Cape Town City Hall not an option as Sona venue for EFF. Photo: File

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/eff-rejects-cape-town-city-hall-as-sona-venue-20220113>

Article nine

28 Feb

Malema gun case will finally be heard

City Press Lubabalo Ngcukana

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NEWS

The battle between EFF leader Julius Malema and AfriForum plays out again this week – at the East London Regional Court.

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/malema-gun-case-will-finally-be-heard-20220228>

Article ten

26 May

Watch | 'Africa belongs to Africans' – EFF calls for France to leave the continent

City Press Tebogo Letsie

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POLITICS

"When we say we don't want France in Africa, it doesn't mean we want Britain, Spain and other countries. They must all follow each other with their tails between their legs, leaving the continent of Africa, because Africa belongs to Africans," EFF leader Julius Malema told hundreds of party supporters on Africa Day.

Link: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/watch-africa-belongs-to-africans-eff-calls-for-france-to-leave-the-continent-20220526>

ADDENDUM C: MAIL & GUARDIAN ARTICLES

Article one

POLITICS

Malema shores up Zuma's attack on the judiciary

Emsie Ferreira 17 Feb 2021



EFF leader Julius Malema. (Oupa Nkosi/M&G)

Link: <https://mg.co.za/politics/2021-02-17-malema-shores-up-zumas-attack-on-the-judiciary/>

Article two

POLITICS

Malema back in court, as police say they followed protocol at Madikizela-Mandela's funeral

Eunice Stoltz 9 Mar 2021



EFF leader Julius Malema. (Delwyn Verasamy/M&G)

Link: <https://mg.co.za/politics/2021-03-09-malema-back-in-court-as-police-say-they-followed-protocol-at-madikizela-mandelas-funeral/>

Article three

NATIONAL

Gatvol Capetonians, EFF lash out at City of Cape Town for seeking damage claims of R1.4m

Eunice Stoltz 12 Apr 2021



Public infrastructure was allegedly damaged by the activist group in 2019 and by the Economic Freedom Fighters in 2020. (Photo by Brenton Geach/Gallo Images via Getty Images)

Link: <https://mq.co.za/news/2021-04-12-gatvol-capetonians-eff-lash-out-at-city-of-cape-town-for-seeking-damage-claims-of-r1-4m/>

Article four

EFF loses high court bid to unseal CR17 campaign records

Emsie Ferreira 20 Jul 2021



The Pretoria high court on Tuesday dismissed with costs the Economic Freedom Fighters's bid to force the disclosure of details of donations to President Cyril Ramaphosa's campaign to claim the leadership of the ANC in 2017. (Delwyn Verasamy/M&G)

Link: <https://mq.co.za/politics/2021-07-20-eff-loses-high-court-bid-to-unseal-cr17-campaign-records/>

Article five

POLITICS

Data shows EFF has lower negative sentiment online among voters than DA and ANC

Lizeka Tandwa 21 Oct 2021



Online traffic: The Economic Freedom Fighters campaign trail. Political parties are using outdated methods to reach voters and to assess their behaviour, desires and interests. Photo: Photo Delwyn Verasamy

Link: <https://mg.co.za/politics/2021-10-21-data-shows-eff-has-lower-negative-sentiment-online-among-voters-than-da-and-anc/>

Article six

POLITICS

What the EFF wants in coalition talks

Lizeka Tandwa 8 Nov 2021



The EFF has decided to close all talks with the ANC. (Photo by Shrawaz Mohamed/Oranobis Agency via Getty Images)



Link: <https://mg.co.za/politics/2021-11-08-what-the-eff-wants-in-coalition-talks/>

Article seven

POLITICS

EFF axes Limpopo leaders over poor poll performance

Paddy Harper 25 Jan 2022



Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) supporters at the Siyabonga Rally at Winnie Mandela Sekhukhune Sports Ground on November 20, 2021 in Tembisa, South Africa. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) thanked Tembisa residents for their recent support at the polls. (Photo by Papi Morake/Gallo Images via Getty Images)

Link: <https://mg.co.za/politics/2022-01-25-eff-axes-limpopo-leaders-over-poor-poll-performance/>

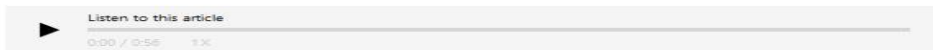
Article eight

EFF holds gun to the heads of metro coalitions

Paddy Harper 29 Jan 2022



EFF leader Julius Malema. (Photo by Gallo Images/Sharon Seretlo)



pposition-led coalition governments in the Gauteng metros and in KwaZulu-Natal face collapse, with the **Economic Freedom Fighters** threatening to pull the plug on their current partners for denying the party a key post in the City of Johannesburg metro.

Link: <https://mg.co.za/politics/2022-01-29-eff-holds-gun-to-the-heads-of-metro-coalitions/>

Article nine



Link: <https://mg.co.za/news/2022-02-23-budget-2022-eff-says-foreign-loans-are-a-death-trap/>

Article ten



Link: <https://mg.co.za/top-six/2022-04-22-eff-strips-anc-of-majority-in-northern-cape-by-election-win/>

**Schedule of Revisions Completed Post-Examination
Masters/PhD**

(Please enumerate and describe, in the form below, the concerns expressed or revisions required by the examiners as well as how the concerns/revisions were addressed/effected in the revised dissertation. Please add numbers if more are needed.)

Student Name: Mrs Nancy Mapule Legodi

Student Number: 49200550

Degree: Master of Arts in Communication

Title of Dissertation: A textual analysis of three, South African, online newspapers (2021-2022) on the representation of the Economic Freedom Fighters

#	Concern Expressed/Revision Required (verbatim, source, by whom, page reference)	My understanding of the concerns	Actions taken (detailed description, new page reference if applicable)
Concerns: Examiner 1			
1	Intensify argument of why the research problem is a problem and the importance of conducting the study	It strengthens the focus and importance of the study	The supporting statements were applied especially on the introduction of chapter one and other parts such as the concluding chapter eight
2	Remove some sections such as sub-questions and other irrelevant paragraphs	Deleting these sections helps the study not to lose focus	The sub-questions, advantages of social semiotics (as it was already stated in the section), and answering of sub-questions were removed in chapter one, four and eight respectively
3	Site primary authors' works directly and not as cited by other secondary authors	It helps to directly grapple with the arguments from the text by the primary authors	The researcher worked on this recommendation throughout the study
4	Explain why specific methods were chosen and their relevance in the study	Instead of focusing on what the methods entail, explain their choice and benefits for the study clearly	Most definitions/explanations were removed, and the researcher focused on why the methods were chosen/their relevance for this study (from page 81)
5	Draw up conclusion of the study reporting on what happened and why	This indicates if the candidate understands the results of the study and can highlight its importance	Under the last chapter, the sum up of the study was provided as a new section (page 200)
#	Concern Expressed/Revision Required (verbatim, source, by whom, page reference)	My understanding of the concerns	Actions taken (Detailed description, new page reference if applicable)
Concerns: Examiner 2			
1	Intensify argument of why the research problem is a problem and the importance of conducting the study	Providing a clear rationale strengthens the focus and importance of the study	The supporting statements were applied especially on the introduction of chapter one and other parts such as the concluding chapter eight
2	Provide the history and ideological learning of the relationship between the EFF and chosen newspapers	This helps to motivate why the EFF and the newspapers were chosen for analysis and if the researcher understands the relation/history between	The information was supplied in chapter one: background and context, as well as the concluding chapter eight (section 8.6 and 8.7)

		the two parties	
3	Provide information on the construction of the EFF	It is important to highlight how the focus subject (EFF) was formed and their history thereof	A new section (1.2.4) on the reflection of the construction of the EFF was supplied on page 13
4	Blending of the theoretical framework and literature review	The researcher must interconnect the theoretical framework and literature review	The researcher provided the blending of the theoretical framework and literature review in the introduction of chapter two (from page 19). The researcher supplied information to the effect that the theoretical concepts and the theory sections overlap in some cases
5	Checked for inconsistency in the in-text referencing, sources consulted, as well as grammar	The researcher must be consistent in the citing technique both in-text and in the sources consulted, and the grammar must be on point if the work will be for public display	The researcher fixed the citing/referencing inconsistency both in text and sources consulted. While the dissertation was edited by a profession, the researcher still proofread the study to fix any grammatic error they could notice
#	Concern Expressed/Revision Required (verbatim, source, by whom, page reference): Supervisor	My understanding of the concerns	Actions taken (Detailed description, new page reference if applicable)
1	Check for inconsistency mistakes of referencing techniques	The style of referencing must be consistent throughout the study	The researcher fixed the referencing inconsistency mistakes throughout the study, including in the sources consulted
2	Cite primary sources directly	Do not site them as if they are secondary authors, but engage directly with their work to provide solid argument	The researcher engaged more with the primary sources' work and cited them directly throughout the study
3	Proofread to see if there are any grammatic errors	Formal language must be used without significant grammatical errors	The researcher proofread the study to fix any grammatical error that they could notice
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A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THREE SOUTH AFRICAN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS
(2021-2022) ON THE REPRESENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM
FIGHTERS

by

NANCY MAPULE LEGODI

submitted in accordance with the requirements for

the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

Communication

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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