



**An analysis of *The New Age*'s framing of Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections**

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## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it any university for a degree.

Philani Nombembe

A square image showing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to be 'Philani Nombembe'.

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## Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
Cope	Congress of the People
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
NDP	Nation Development Plan
TNA	<i>The New Age</i>
UDM	United Democratic Movement

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## **Abstract**

Former South African President Jacob Zuma told a judicial commission investigating allegations of state capture that *The New Age* newspaper was his idea and that by facilitating its establishment, he hoped to create a less “negative” publication about his government.

The Gupta family, who founded the now-defunct publication, had a “half-full glass” editorial posture toward Zuma's government.

This study examines *The New Age's* framing of Zuma’s campaign trail in run-up to the 2014 general elections. It aims to answer the question: How did *The New Age* frame Jacob Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections?

Using the framing theory, this study uses *The New Age* as a case study and conducts a qualitative content analysis of 150 articles related to Zuma’s campaign, published between January 11, 2014, and May 6 2014. The articles were analysed using thematic analysis. The results show that the good-story-to-tell frame, which was prevalent in Zuma’s speeches during the study period, dominated *The New Age's* coverage of his campaign trail. *The New Age* also adopted the vilification frame, also sponsored by Zuma and his associates, to interpret the campaign message for the readership. The articles were also framed around Zuma being an electable, experienced leader and a nation-builder. The positive frames were complemented by Mandela, transformation, apartheid and jobs frames. The results suggest that *The New Age* lived up to Zuma’s expectation of positive news in its coverage of his election campaign.

By studying not just how a newspaper framed a candidate's campaign trail, but also the frame sponsors, this study enhances the discourse of news framing of presidential election campaigns, which is scarce in Africa, and notably in South Africa.

There have been few framing studies focusing on frame sponsorships and the relationship between media frames and general political and social power issues. Therefore, this study departs from the norm. This is also the first study to examine how *The New Age* framed issues.

This study looked at an essential part of the media: an editorial posture and how it relates to the framing of a political issue in the South African media. As a contribution to knowledge, the study discovered that Zuma's association with *The New Age's* founding owners resulted in the frames that journalists adopted in their coverage of his election campaign.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1. Introduction**

“Former President Jacob Zuma testified before the Commission that *The New Age* newspaper was his idea. He said there was a need for a different perspective in the news that would not be so ‘negative’ and critical of the government and one that would not only cover big national news, but also province-specific coverage. He said that he suggested this to the Guptas who said they were interested in going into this business. Mr Zuma said he even came up with the name *The New Age*.”

Chief Justice Raymond Zondo

This chapter provides an introduction to the study and outlines the main research question along with the study’s objectives. The chapter begins by giving a brief background of news framing studies. It also briefly touches on studies that have explored the news framing of presidential election campaigns. It then delves into the literature on the politician whose presidential campaign is the subject of this present study. It also gives a brief history of the publication chosen for this study

### **1.2 News media and politics**

Studies have proved that mass media have an important role in politics, particularly in election campaigns (Muñiz *et al.*, 2017:740; Dunaway & Graber, 2022; Gaber & Fisher, 2022; Safiullah, *et al.*, 2022). By promoting certain framing in their presentation of issues and candidates in political campaigns, mass media provide the electorate with access to political debates ((Muñiz *et al.*, 2017:740). The relationship between news media and politics has received intense scholarly attention since the emergence of the field of media studies in the 1960s (Kafle, 2009; Negrine, 2003; Kunkel, 2020). This is because the media are an important medium of communication that reach masses of people, and therefore politicians’ interest in influencing the messages transmitted by the media generates scholarly interest (Robinson, 2001; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2008; Strömbäck & Shehata, 2010;575; Strömberg, 2015; Kalogeropoulos *et al.*, 2022:3; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022). Several studies have focused on newspapers’ coverage of political campaigns (Mondak, 1995; Druckman, 2005; Gentzkow *et al.*, 2015; Köstler & Ossewaarde, 2022). Scholars have also been seized with research into the

influence of newspaper ownership on their coverage of political issues (d’Haenens, 2022; Ottinger & Winkler, 2022; Pasti *et al.*, 2022).

This research seeks to examine the framing of former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections by *The New Age* newspaper. It has been confirmed that the newspaper was Zuma’s idea, and his link with *The New Age*'s founders is not a secret (Southall, 2011:619; Zondo, 2022).

It is therefore worth considering how the South African media environment looked like when *The New Age* debuted.

### **1.3 Brief history of the South African press**

Research shows that the history of South African print media spans three distinct epochs – colonial, apartheid, and democratic (Wigson, 2001; Tomaselli, 2002; Wasserman & De Beer, 2005; Van de Waal, 2008). Compared to radio and television, the press is South Africa's oldest news medium (Wigson, 2001:34). From inception, the press had a strained relationship with the various governments that ruled South Africa, according to Wigson (2001:37).

As Roelofse (1996:70-71) points out, the five themes that have shaped South Africa's press history have been tension between the government and the press, language and racial divisions, the perception that the press threatens peace and security, and the struggle of journalists against undemocratic laws. The themes in the development of the press identified by Roelofse (1996) do not follow a single path. However, Wigson (2001:37) divided the history of South African press into four distinct strands, namely English, Afrikaans, black and alternative press.

According to Rabe (2020:45), the English press developed as a result of imperial capitalist interest linked to “white power structure”. Rabe (2020:45) contends that the Dutch-Afrikaans press was established as a mouthpiece of Dutch-Afrikaner interests which led to Afrikaner nationalism after the South African War with the Afrikaans press, itself being part of a white Afrikaner nationalist power structure. Rabe (2020:45) asserts that the black press developed from its missionary station origins into African nationalism. The 1930s and 1990s saw the rise

of an alternative press or “progressive” press, challenging Nationalist hegemony (Wigson, 2001; 52-53; Tomaselli, 2002:114). The four strands highlighted by Wigson (2001), that run like a golden thread through the history of South African media, are examined in more depth below.

### **1.3.1 The English press**

The South African newspapers first arose some 150 years after Jan van Riebeeck seized the Cape (Wigson, 2001:35). Wigson (2001:35) suggests that the Dutch East India Company's conception of the press as a potentially radical weapon delayed the advent of newspapers in South Africa.

The British takeover of the Cape of Good Hope from the Dutch in 1806 paved the way for the English press. In 1824, Thomas Pringle established a liberal press in the Cape (Tomaselli, 2002:112). However, an uneasy relationship between Pringle and the governor Lord Somerset threatened the independence of the press (Tomaselli, 2002:113). One of the issues that enraged Somerset was Pringle's coverage of the local customs office's malfeasance in the disposal of slaves, which resulted in the governor censoring him (Wigson, 2001:35).

According to Tomaselli (2002:113), the continuous battle between Pringle and Somerset set the tone for the South African liberal press tradition's claims to legitimacy. After Somerset left the Cape in 1826, the British government changed its mind about press freedom (Cutten, 1935). This led to the signing of Ordinance No. 60 in 1829, which became known as the Magna Carta of South African press freedom (Rabe, 2020:43). Bureaucrats could no longer impose sanctions against publications on the spur of the moment. They had to demonstrate that the press assertions were, in fact, untrue (Wigson, 2001).

The Magna Carta brought in a slew of new news outlets across the country (Rabe, 2020:45). In summary, British colonialism brought experienced editors who laid the foundation for the sophisticated press that South Africa has today (Roelofse, 1993:73; Wigson, 2001:37). Through the commercialisation of newspaper production and distribution, advertising revenue was also introduced. Colonialism, however, established British culture in South Africa

through the media, resulting in English journalists disregarding the misery of Afrikaners and dismissing the black majority's right to self-determination and political independence (Roelofse, 1993:73). In Wigson's (2001) view, the Dutch/Afrikaans press developed in response to the liberal English press's coverage of slavery, friction between Dutch farmers and locals, and missionary work.

### 1.3.2 The Afrikaans press

The growth of the Afrikaans press diverged from that of the English press in several respects. According to Roelofse (1996:75), the Afrikaans newspapers were founded by ministers of religion who served as editors rather than professional journalists. The editors (Roelofse, 1996:75) were guided by Calvinistic ideals rather than journalistic ethos. According to Roelofse (1996:75), the founding of the publications was motivated by the Afrikaner cause rather than their commercial value. This only changed with the expansion of the Nasionale Pers into the Transvaal in the 1970s, which resulted in the demise of several Dutch and Afrikaans newspapers (Roelofse, 1996:75). The Afrikaans newspapers also acted as cultural and political advocates and supporters of the Afrikaans language and political independence in areas where Black Nationalism appeared to be a threat (Roelofse, 1996:75; Rabe, 2020:48). Unlike the English press, which concentrated on British issues, the Afrikaans press was committed to Afrikaners and South Africa (Roelofse, 1996:75).

Josephus Suasso de Lima is regarded as the doyen of Dutch newspapers in the Cape of Good Hope. As the founding editor of one of the earliest journals in Cape Town, *De Verzamelaar*, in 1826, he established himself as a forerunner of South African journalism (Pheiffer, 1977:23). Fifty years later, the first Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Patriot*, was published in Paarl in 1876 followed by its successor, the *Ons Klyntji* (Pheiffer, 1977:23).

In 1925, Afrikaans became an official language in South Africa and its speakers strategically exploited print media to further their cultural and political goals, according to Tomaselli (2002:114).

South Africa's apartheid government was formed in 1948, more than two decades later (Dubow, 2014). During the height of British imperialism, Afrikaner nationalism evolved as an ethnic ideology (Van der Waal, 2008:61-62). According to Van der Waal (2008:61-62), the growth of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism in the nineteenth-century Cape was motivated by



White Afrikaans speakers' alienation from English imperialist and exclusivist social, economic, and political domination. Afrikaans newspapers, together with the National Party and Afrikaans churches, among other organisations, played an important role in the formation of Afrikaner ethnic consciousness (Tomaselli, 2002:114; Van der Waal, 2008:61-62). Apart from having a crucial role in the National Party's ascension to power in 1948 and the establishment of apartheid, Afrikaner-owned newspapers and publishers, according to Tomaselli (2002:114), played a key role in South Africa's exit from the British Commonwealth in the 1960s.

As the Afrikaans press developed, Christian missionaries established press geared at black audiences (Switzer, 1984). According to Rabe (2020:45), black newspapers evolved from their missionary station roots into African nationalism. The development of the black press is discussed below.

### **1.3.3 The black press**

While the English and Afrikaners had their newspapers in South Africa, the African Christian community press had been in operation for 150 years (Switzer, 1984:455). The black press, which flourished between the 1830s and the 1880s, was first controlled by whites but was eventually edited mostly by black converts (Switzer, 1984:455).

Before the introduction of democracy in 1994, there were three phases of ownership for black-aligned media in South Africa. The black press was owned by missionaries, black moguls and white companies (Switzer and Switzer, 1979:4; Johnson, 1991:16). Between 1830 and 1880, the missionary period of black press ownership lasted a half-century (Johnson, 1991:16). Between 1880 and 1930, blacks owned the black press for a half-century (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:4). Meanwhile, from 1931 until 1977, white ownership of the black press lasted nearly another half-century (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:8).

According to research, the ownership of the black press influenced editorial stances and content. Missionaries, for example, took a Calvinistic approach to news reportage (Johnson,

1991:16). Black press proprietors attempted to counter white dominance by advocating for Africans' rights and political participation (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:4). The impact of white ownership on content was also noticeable in the third phase of black press ownership. Switzer and Switzer (1979:8) state that the white owners introduced non-partisan and impartial journalism modelled after the American and European journalistic culture. According to Tomaselli (2002:114), the black press set the groundwork for the progressive and alternative presses, which resisted nationalist dominance and monopoly capital. The alternative presses are discussed below.

#### **1.3.4 Alternative press**

South Africa's second half of the twentieth century was marked by social and political strife (Wigson, 2001:54). Even though such events were newsworthy, the majority of the mainstream press offered little or no coverage of the several political and social activities (Oosthuizen, 1991:46). At the time, the term “mainstream media” referred to newspapers controlled by South Africa's four major media conglomerates: Times Media, Argus Group, Nasionale Pers, and Peskor (Wigson, 2001:52). The newspapers' failure to cover the events spawned the alternative press, (Wigson, 2001:55).

According to Wigson (2001:55), the formation and growth of the alternative press appear to match the battle against apartheid.

According to research, South Africa's alternative press emerged in three stages. The first period was distinguished by opposition and resistance between the 1930s and 1960s, followed by the time between the 1960s and 1970s, which was marked by a growth in black consciousness, and the age between the 1980s and mid-1990s, which saw the intensity of the struggle climax (Louw, 1989:26-27; Johnson, 1991:24).

Following the inauguration of South African President FW de Klerk's reform program in February 1990, which cleared the way for the country's democracy, the alternative press, which prominently reported on the battle, progressively deteriorated (Wigson, 2001:55). The decline of South Africa's alternative press was caused by two events: the loss of exclusive coverage of the struggle against apartheid when political parties and trade unions were unbanned, and the withdrawal of foreign financing after apartheid was ended (Wigson, 2001:55). This (Wigson, 2001:55) made it much more difficult for alternative newspapers to

thrive, because their working-class readers are often impoverished, with little incentive to attract advertisers.

South Africa's media environment shifted significantly after the country gained democracy in 1994 (Wigson, 2001). The growth of South African press after democracy, during which *The New Age* was launched, is examined below.

### **1.3.5 Post-apartheid press landscape**

Democracy in South Africa did not only bring about political changes but ushered along economic reforms that changed the race and gender ownership, control, and staffing of the country's major media houses (Skinner, 2006). The constitution of the country protects freedom of expression and media freedom (Plaut, 2018:3). It is not a surprise that the media was expected to present a dynamic scene abounding with varied opinions that were unheard of under the repressive apartheid government (Plaut, 2018:3). According to Berger (cited in Daniels, 2012:32), the media has been significantly transformed since apartheid. Berger (as cited in Daniels, 2012:32) notes that racism still exists in South Africa, but it no longer dominates politics or the media.

Wasserman and De Beer (2005) studied changes in South African media during the first decade of democracy. Among the developments, the scholars highlighted the shift from government control to self-regulation and ownership (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005:36). Wasserman and De Beer (2005:36) also identified a rift between the mainstream media and the new administration. The scholars discovered that the basis of the conflict was differing perspectives on the function of the media in a post-apartheid society. There was much debate on whether the media should serve the “public interest” or the “national interest” (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005:36).

Apart from ideological conflicts, there were substantial changes in newspaper ownership from the old white-owned mainstream media barons (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005:38). The country's leading newspapers were sold to black owners in two significant transactions involving black empowerment consortiums in the 1990s (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005:38).

The Irish Independent group purchased several English newspapers, introducing the country's media to global competition (Tomaselli, 2000). The exposure of local press ownership to

global competition resulted in the transfer of problems facing Western media to South African newspapers. According to Harber (as cited in Wasserman & De Beer, 2005), the more competitive media market has led to “tabloidization” in the print media, personnel reductions, less experienced newsrooms, profit-driven editorial decisions, and degradation of expert reporting.

Analysts also regarded the shift in the racial make-up of newspaper owners and editorial staff as superficial, claiming that the class foundation of South Africa’s print media remained the same (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005a:39). According to Jacobs (2003:146), the architectural logic of circulation, distribution channels, and advertising remained unchanged in South African mainstream newspapers. Jacobs (2003:146), avers that they targeted a wealthy and predominantly white and, to a lesser extent, rich black upper market. Wasserman and De Beer (2005:40) highlighted that, while ownership changes resulted in the desegregation of the South African media in the boardroom, market segmentation remained consistent with apartheid-era social polarization.

The South African Human Rights Commission launched an investigation into racism in the media in response to the on-going controversy about the media in post-apartheid South Africa (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005b:193). Wasserman and De Beer (2005b:193) claim that the investigation heightened tensions, prompting former President Thabo Mbeki and the South African Editors Forum to meet in Sun City in 2001.

Another topic of discussion in South Africa's post-apartheid media environment was media transformation (Steenveld, 2012). In reaction to the contemporary media environment and mounting media criticism of its efficacy and corruption, the ANC released a policy document during its national policy conference in 2010 titled *Media reform, ownership, and diversity* (Steenveld, 2012:130). According to Steenveld (2012:130), the ANC saw the media as promoting “market fundamentalism” to maintain apartheid economic and social ties. The ANC then attempted to meddle in the media by advocating the notion of a Media Appeals Tribunal, which came before the similarly contentious Protection of State Information Bill (Steenveld, 2012:130). However, both attempts at state interference in the media were met with public and even ANC opposition. Amid ANC criticism of the media, *The New Age* was established as a pro-party and pro-government newspaper (Plaut, 2018:7).

### 1.3.6 The founding of *The New Age*

A daily newspaper, called *The New Age*, was added to the South African media arena in 2010. It was established by the Gupta family (Zondo, 2022:457). *The New Age's* formation was backed by former president Jacob Zuma (Southall, 2011:619). On December 6, 2010, *The New Age* hit the streets, with copies sold throughout South Africa (Nkosi, 2016). According to Nkosi (2016), some media analysts predicted that the African National Congress (ANC) and its administration would exploit it as a propaganda tool. This was predicated on the owners of *The New Age's* claims that the publication would write positively about the government (Nkosi, 2016). The daily, which sold for R3.50 and produced in 24–32 full-colour pages in broadsheet format, pledged to give its competitors a run for their money (Nkosi, 2016).

*The New Age* was a subsidiary of Oakbay Investments (Pty) Ltd, a company controlled by the Gupta family and represented by Atul Gupta who was in charge of print media (Zondo, 2022:458).

Readership figures for *The New Age* are difficult to determine, however. According to Gordon Patterson, vice president of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), as quoted in De Waal (2012), the publication was not listed with the ABC. Patterson (ibid) was concerned because no one knew what it was doing in the absence of an ABC certificate due to a lack of openness.

The publication was added to South Africa's then "approximately 45 million newspapers a year" circulation (Plantinga, 2012:175). At the time, four major companies, Naspers, Independent News & Media, Caxton & CTP Publishers & Printers and Avusa, controlled the South African newspaper industry (Potgieter & Angelopulo, 2012:1).

At face value, *The New Age* was a welcome addition that would shake up South Africa's newspaper landscape. The dominant media giants owned hundreds of influential newspaper titles among themselves. Caxton & CTP Publishers and Printers Ltd owned 120 titles, Naspers

publishers, through its subsidiary Media24, owned about 72 titles, while Avusa Media Ltd owned more than 20 titles (Plantinga, 2012:175). The Independent News & Media Group was “the largest newspaper publisher” (Potgieter & Angelopulo, 2012:1).

However, *The New Age* courted controversy because of its founders’ proximity to Zuma. The notion that *The New Age*’s “proclaimed purpose was to provide more balanced coverage to government and the ANC than was provided by the established private media” thrived (Southall, 2011:619). Complaints that the publication unduly benefited from state advertising also abound, and it became a subject of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry in State Capture (Zondo, 2022).

A report compiled after the state capture probe revealed that Zuma admitted that *The New Age* was his brainchild and that he even came up with its name (Zondo, 2022:457). Zuma said he had seen a need for a publication that would be less critical of his government (Zondo, 2022:457).

It was revealed that the sources of *The New Age*'s revenue were government departments. In a liquidation application, the newspaper disclosed that its revenue was primarily derived from a combination of commercial and public sector advertising, bulk subscriptions from national and provincial government agencies, and, its one-of-a-kind property brand, *The New Age* business briefings (Zondo, 2022:458). The briefings were organised in collaboration with the South African Broadcasting Corporation and funded, among other sources, by major state-owned corporations such as Eskom and Transnet (Zondo, 2022:458).

About four years after its establishment, *The New Age* covered South Africa’s general elections in which Zuma sought a second presidential term. Available studies have not explored the impact of *The New Age* on the South African media discourse and whether it achieved what Zuma had sought to accomplish: which was patriotic coverage. According to Plaut (2018:5), Zuma's approach to critical media recalls that of the apartheid administration. It involved finding and investing in a media outlet that would do the ANC's bidding (Plaut, 2018:5). Rumney (2015:68) argues that *The New Age*'s impact is difficult to discern and that the publication contributed very little to the national discourse. In 2017, *The New Age* was sold to Mzwandile Manyi, who renamed the station *Afro Voice* before closing in 2018 (Finlay, 2018; Rumney, 2014). This study will explore *The News Age*’s framing of Zuma’s campaign

trail in the run-up to the 2010 general elections. Zuma's political career and his relationship with the Gupta family are discussed below.

#### **1.4 Jacob Zuma and his relationship with the Gupta family**

Jacob Zuma made headlines before becoming the ANC and South Africa's president, throughout his tenure, and after he left office. Myriad reasons, that will be apparent below, sparked media interest in his life and governance.

Zuma was elected president of the party in December 2007 after defeating incumbent Thabo Mbeki (Gumede, 2008:261). According to Gumede, Zuma courted controversy ahead of his election to the highest office (2008:262). Mbeki fired him as the country's vice president in 2005, after his close associate Schabir Shaik was convicted of fraud (Gumede, 2008:262). The following August, Zuma was scheduled to go on trial for fraud, corruption, money laundering, and racketeering, according to Gumede (ibid). Zuma was charged with raping an HIV/AIDS campaigner who was a close family friend and half his age in 2006 (Gumede, 2008:262). The court acquitted Zuma after admitting to having unprotected intercourse with the woman and taking a shower to avoid getting the virus, but his morals and commitment to women's equality were questioned (Gumede, 2008:262). According to Gumede (ibid), throughout his rape trial and again during his corruption trial, Zuma played the ethnic card, speaking in isiZulu in court, and inventing new Zulu cultural norms to excuse his sexist attitudes. His singing of the controversial song *Umshini wami, umshini wami, We Baba, Awuleth' umshini wami* (My machine gun, my machine gun, Oh father, Please bring me my machine gun) also raised eyebrows (Gunner, 2009). Gunner (2009:1-2) notes that Zuma sang the song during Shaik's trial in 2005 and at the ANC's election conference in Polokwane in 2007, where he became president.

According to Gunner (2009:22), Zuma's powerful, rowdy song tainted the political discourse, with its weighty pomp carrying the credence of a Zulu war song, the weight of massive machismo, resounded off the just fight for a free nation, and slivers of the anger of those who feel the new regime has brought them hardly anything. It also exposed the stormy waters beneath the surface of the new era. Hunter (2011:1102) supports this view, stating that Zuma sang, danced, and occasionally said and did things that made the chattering classes

uncomfortable. According to Hunter (ibid), Zuma remains the most popular politician in South Africa since Mandela (ibid).

As if Zuma's contentious connection with Shaik was not enough to tarnish his political career, his equally controversial relationship with the Gupta family made headlines (Southall, 2011). The relationship between Zuma and the Gupta family is an intriguing subject because it is often associated with corruption (Desai, 2018; February, 2019; Von Holdt, 2019; Madonsela, 2019; Rapanyane, 2021; NA- Oxford Analytica, 2022). Allegations that the Indian-born Gupta family unduly benefited from lucrative government contracts because of their “nepotistic network”, which included Zuma, abound (Fredericks, 2022:128). According to Fredericks (ibid), this resulted in the control of state institutions and the commission of high levels of corruption, resulting in pre-democratic fragmentation and the rise of tensions. In 2011, there were concerns within the ANC over the Gupta family's perceived influence on government appointments. The senior echelons of the party were worried about the family's role in appointing chief executives and chairpersons of state-owned firms (Basson & Du Toit, 2017).

There was also disquiet about how the Gupta brothers allegedly summoned ministers and their deputies to notify them of their appointments before Zuma told them and that they pressured bureaucrats to channel advertising to *The New Age* (Basson & Du Toit, 2017).

Also, pertinent to this study, Zuma admitted to the judicial commission of enquiry that investigated allegations of improper conduct between Zuma and the Gupta family that *The New Age* was his idea and that he had shared it with the Gupta family, who then established the publication (Zondo, 2022). The establishment of the judicial commission of enquiry was initiated by former Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, who investigated how about R250 million of taxpayers' money was splurged on security upgrades at Zuma private home. Part of the remedial action that Madonsela recommended was the appointment of a commission that would be chaired by a judge chosen by the chief justice (Zondo, 2022:i).

The commission found that “between 2014 and President Zuma’s resignation as President of the country in February 2018, serious efforts were made by the Guptas, assisted by President Zuma, to capture National Treasury” (Zondo, 2022:680).

According to Hlase (2021:3), under Zuma's presidency, there were fears that South Africa would degenerate into a “banana republic” as his cronies were rewarded with critical positions



in government. Hlase (ibid) cites the landing of the Guptas' private plane on a military airfield in 2013 and media investigations that showed pervasive corruption in government, directly implicating Zuma and the Guptas, as indicators of a “banana state”.

The link between the Zuma’s controversial relationship with the Guptas and how it impacted his 2014 campaign trail bears the hallmarks of an academic inquiry. It is, therefore, discussed below.

## **1.5 The 2014 general elections**

The 2014 general election, held on May 7, was an important milestone in the history of South Africa. It was South Africa’s fifth democratic election since the demise of the racist apartheid regime (Booyesen, 2015; Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019). For the national and provincial elections, fifty political parties registered (Fakir *et al.*, 2014:3). Only 13 of the 20 parties who participated in the national elections won seats in parliament (Fakir *et al.*, 2014:3). The bottom eight political parties received less than 10% of the national vote, according to Fakir *et al.* (2014:3).

All political parties that wanted to run in the national elections had to deposit at least R200 000, plus an additional R45 000 for each province they planned to run in (Fakir *et al.*, 2014:5). During the election season, the ANC and fought hard. The ANC spent roughly R200 million on its campaign in 2009, but it is unknown how much money it spent overall on the 2014 general elections (Fakir *et al.*, 2014:5). According to Fakir *et al.*, the ANC and DA are thought to have spent more than R100 million on their campaigns in the Gauteng province alone (2014:5).

However, amidst a plethora of scandals and shortcomings, the ANC, led by Zuma, approached the election weaker than before. Zuma's private residence in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal, was one of the biggest scandals that threatened the ANC's election performance (Prinsloo, 2014; Booyesen, 2015; Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015; Koenane, 2017; Bailie, 2017; Segwagwa, 2017; Motsaathebe, 2020; Palmer, 2022; Maritz, 2022).

In an unfavourable report, Thuli Madonsela, the then Public Protector, revealed that the Department of Public Works spent more than R250 million on security improvements at Zuma's residence (Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015:1; Booysen, 2015:10). Although security enhancements at presidents' residences were not uncommon, as they were at Zuma's three predecessors' homes, Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, and Kgalema Motlanthe, the money spent on Zuma's home was excessive (Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015:1; Booysen, 2015:10). The ANC was accused of corruption by the electorate (Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015). The issue made it harder for the ANC's election campaigners to sell the party's message. The ANC's campaign took a beating due to the scandal, which provided the opposition parties with political ammunition (Twala, 2014:566).

Besides the Nkandla controversy, the ANC's 2014 campaign was marred by several scandals. The country's economic strategies had failed to produce positive outcomes, and the unemployment rate stood out like a sore thumb (Booyesen, 2015:9). Corruption, racketeering, and money laundering charges stemming from a contentious arms deal hung over Zuma (Booyesen, 2015:9). Zuma's first presidential term (ibid) was far from easy; he narrowly avoided an impeachment debate in parliament.

The Marikana incident was another black mark on the ANC's record. On August 16, 2012, police shot and killed 34 striking miners on a hill near Marikana, Rustenburg, North West (Chinguno, 2013; Naicker, 2016). This raised questions about whether the ANC was an accountable and caring political party, according to Booysen (2015:9).

As if that were not enough, a private plane carrying guests to a Gupta wedding landed illegally at Pretoria's Waterkloof Airforce Base in 2013. (February, 2019; Budhram, 2019; Hlase, 2021:3). According to Hlase (2021), the illegal landing was one of the moments that challenged the efficiency of South Africa's constitutional democracy. The incident showed exceptional advantages for particular citizens, as well as inequality before the law, according to Booysen (2015:9).

The death of former President Nelson Mandela on December 5, 2013, also proved to be a challenge for the ANC. South Africans held Mandela in high regard, and therefore the most effective asset in the ANC's campaign armoury (Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015:2).

Disarray in the ANC Youth League, which spawned the a new political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) before the 2014 general elections, compounded the ANC's challenges (Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015:2). According to Booysen (2015:11), the EFF reached out to a rising number of young and disgruntled voters. According to Booysen (ibid), the party kept first-time voters away from the ANC and had more legitimacy within the ANC's target demographic than the preceding split-off parties, the United Democratic Movement (UDM) and the Congress of the People (Cope).

Malusi Gigaba, the ANC's election campaign manager in 2014, admitted that it was a difficult campaign to conduct (Booyesen, 2015:10). According to Booysen (2013), ANC's foot soldiers were met with opposition from the electorate, who were sceptical of the party's campaign pledges and absent representation. Booysen (2015:11) claims that as things got tough, ANC officials used "dirty tricks". For example (ibid), Nomvula Mokonyane told picketers in Bekkersdal that the ANC did not need their "dirty votes", Gigaba labelled the Democratic Alliance (DA) a "party of demons", and Fikile Mbalula claimed that "witches" ran the Western Cape and that "tokoloshes" were required to push the DA out of power. Former Deputy President and Speaker of the National Assembly Baleka Mbete claimed that the struggle spirits would deal with those who were disloyal to Zuma (Booyesen, 2015:11).

Frustrated ANC supporters, seeking answers for myriad issues including the Nkandla saga and other cases of corruption, booed Zuma at rallies (Booyesen, 2015:11). Zuma was booed in front of world leaders during at Mandela's memorial service in Gauteng in December 2013 (Lannegren & Ito, 2017).

Given the ANC's predicament, an analysis of *The New Age's* framing of Zuma's campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general elections is a necessary exercise. However, at this point, it is vital to look at how South African presidents are elected into office.

## **1.6 Election of a South African president into office**

It is difficult to find literature about how the South African presidents are elected into office. Because the president is not directly elected by the public, the presidential election process is rather complex. According to Kotze (2019:443), the election of the president is

decided by the “power balance between the major political parties”. As a result, presidential campaigns coexist with political party campaigns (Kotze, *ibid*). Parliament has 400 members, which are apportioned proportionally depending on the votes received by political parties during the polls (Kotze, 2019:443). After the establishment of the National Assembly, the country's president is elected. During general election campaigns, political parties frequently promote their national leaders as faces of the election campaign and presidential candidates (Kotze, 2019:443).

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the ANC has led the national government, with its leaders serving as presidents (Kotze, 2019:447). The ANC National Conference elects the party president for a five-year term, alongside the top leadership structure (ANC 2019, Constitution of the ANC). There have previously been recommendations that the president should be directly chosen by the public, however, this has yet to be considered (Kotze, 2019: 459).

The election of the South African president by parliament has become a “non-event” since it has become predictable. Thus, under the existing electoral system, the decisive point in the election of the South African president is during the party elections (Kotze, 2019: 459). Before delving into how *The New Age* framed Zuma's campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general election, it's worth looking at the ANC's 2014 election manifesto.

## **1.7 The ANC's 2014 election manifesto**

On 11 January 2014, Zuma, the president of the ANC and the face of the party's election campaign, launched his election manifesto. This signified the beginning of his campaign, which concluded on the eve of the elections on May 6, 2014. (Zuma, 2014). Zuma's campaign attracted extensive media coverage (Fransman, 2014; Van Schie & Cronje, 2014; Shoba, 2014; Seery, 2014; Poplak, 2014; Mkhwanazi, 2014; Velaphi, 2014). Reviews of Zuma's campaign trail, which included “slick” television commercials, indicate that it was a cut above the others. It cost around R450 million (Hunter, 2014; Seery, 2014).

Zuma dedicated the 52-page manifesto, titled “Together We Move South Africa Forward”, to the late statesman, Nelson Mandela (Zuma, 2014). A series of noteworthy incidents that attracted extensive media coverage foreshadowed Zuma's campaign trail. The ANC's centenary celebrations in 2012, Zuma's re-election as ANC president in Mangaung,

Bloemfontein, in December 2012, Mandela's death in December 2013, and the 20th anniversary of South Africa's democracy were among them (Booyesen, 2015:9).

The ANC introduced its “Good Story” campaign during the party's centennial celebrations (Booyesen (2015:8). Journalists required a specific meaning to synchronize their reportage on Zuma's campaign trail. This is consistent with Ardévol-Abreu's claim that every informative or compelling text requires narrative frameworks to organize its discourse (Ardévol-Abreu, 2015:424). The research problem of the study is discussed below.

## **1.8 Research problem for the study**

The South African Press Council emphasises that the media should “not allow commercial, political, personal or other non-professional considerations to influence reporting” (NA. Press Council, 2020). Independent media enable citizens to make informed judgments on the “issues of the day” (NA. Press Council, 2020). However, former president Jacob Zuma admitted to the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Capture that *The New Age* newspaper was his brainchild (Zondo, 2022:457). Zuma (ibid) told the commission that there was a need for a “different perspective in the news that would not be so ‘negative’ and critical of the government...” Therefore, it would be fundamental to analyse *The New Age*'s framing of Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

## **1.9 Aims and objectives**

### **1.9.1 Aim**

This study aims to examine *The New Age* newspaper's framing of former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

### **1.9.2 Research question**

The main question of this study is: How did *The New Age* newspaper frame former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections?

### 1.9.3 Sub-questions

- What frames can be identified in *The New Age's* news reports on former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in 2014?
- Which news sources are prominent in advancing certain frames in *The New Age's* news reports of former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections?

### 1.9.4 Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To describe the frames that can be identified in *The New Age's* news reports of former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.
- To ascertain which news sources are prominent in advancing certain frames in *The New Age's* news reports of former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

### 1.9.5 Significance of the study

The volume of literature examining the media's framing of presidential elections and candidates is growing. Contemporary empirical studies examining the media's framing of presidential election campaigns are more pervasive in western countries compared to Africa (Ogan *et al.*, 2018; Porto, 2007; García-Perdomo, 2017; Araújo & Prior, 2020; Montgomery, 2019; Nee & De Maio, 2019; Karabiyik, 2021; Wozniak & Drakulich, 2019; Lamerichs *et al.*, 2018; Busby, 2019; Stewart, *et al.*, 2019; Toros, & Birch, 2020; Walter & Ophir, 2019; Kanwal & García, 2019; Drakulich *et al.*, 2020; Steward *et al.*, 2020). The majority of the studies have focused on the US media's framing of that country's presidential campaigns, which are often characterised by robust campaigning. This is precisely so because America is an "important player on the international stage" (Balaban *et al.*, 2014). The 2016 US presidential elections, which saw former President Donald Trump ascend to The White House, have received significant scholarly attention (Lamerichs *et al.*, 2018; Wozniak & Drakulich, 2019; Bubsy *et al.*, 2019; Walter & Ophir, 2019). The literature is from a variety of disciplines and academic fields ranging from criminology to communication, politics and linguistics.

The news media's framing of presidential campaigns on the African continent is often peppered with negative pigeonholing such as violence and venality (Behnke, 2019; Elega & *et al.*, 2021). Frames such as corruption, violence and relapse often dominate the presidential election campaign coverage in Africa (*ibid.*). Available literature shows that the framing of Nigeria's presidential elections has received widespread scholarly attention compared to other African countries (Abubakre, 2017; Santas, 2017; Nwofe, 2016; Tella, 2018; Ojebuyi & Chukwunwike, 2018; Behnke, 2019; Amenaghawon & Salawu, 2020; Elega *et al.*, 2021; Jinmi-Ahisu & Osah, 2021). The studies have focused on the use of "internet memes" to characterise presidential candidates and influence voters (Tella, 2018) and also suggest a need for publications to utilise issues raised by presidential candidates in their manifestos to expand the debate on pertinent issues affecting the citizenry rather than concentrating on the "personality" of the contenders (Ukonu & Ajaero, 2017). The literature also reveals that fewer publications on the African continent are inclined to carry election content (Elega & *et al.*, 2021). Fundamentally, the literature suggests that future framing studies should investigate and compare the news coverage of elections in the two largest economies in Africa, South Africa and Nigeria (Elega *et al.*, 2021:105). Other studies examining the news media's framing of presidential elections in Nigeria focused on the capability of tone and content of stories on election campaigns to stimulate political detachments (Nwofe, 2016). Behnke, (2019) examined the news frames in election coverage in Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe by CNN International, BCC World News and Al Jazeera and found that the countries were framed as "hopeless republics". Behnke (2019) suggests that future studies should consider African countries that held comparatively nonviolent elections to explore whether "frames of violence, corruption, or regression are still present". The necessary counsel that Behnke's study provides is the inclusion of "reactions from African media or civilians on how they are being framed" (Behnke, 2019).

Studies examining the news media's framing of election campaigns in South Africa are very few (Reta, 2000; Vladislavljević & Voltmer, 2017). Literature on news media coverage of elections in South Africa tends to focus on political issues, such as the voting process, the voters and democracy, rather than the framing of campaigns in the news (Reynolds, 1999; Gouws & De Beer, 2008; South Hall & Daniel, 2009; Homles & Shoup, 2013). It is hoped that the outcomes of this study will improve knowledge about the influence of media ownership on news. There do not appear to be any studies that have examined how *The New Age* framed issues about Jacob Zuma. This study will contribute toward closing this knowledge gap. *The New Age's* framing of issues is worthy of scholarly enquiry because it changed the South African media arena – albeit briefly.

Reta (2000) explored the US media's coverage of South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. The study concluded that the US media framed the elections based on their country's democratic standards (Reta, 2000:521). Literature gleaned from the study shows that the frames used by the US media encouraged negotiation, reconciliation and fair elections (ibid). This calls for a local study to determine the frames used by the local news media to frame presidential elections.

Vladislavljević and Voltmer (2017) conducted a quantitative content analysis of conflicts over issues such as citizenship, elections, interim justice and sharing of power in Egypt, South Africa, Serbia and Kenya. With regards to depictions of accomplishments of democracy, the study found the most negative coverage in South Africa (Vladislavljević & Voltmer, 2017:1). However, the study did not zoom into the framing of any particular presidential election campaign in South Africa.

In the run-up to the 2014 general elections, the phrase "a good story to tell", about the ANC government's track record, was synonymous with former president Jacob Zuma's speeches. It became the ANC's campaign message together with the catchy title of Zuma's manifesto, "Together we move South Africa forward" (Melber, 2014: 648; Booysen, 2015:13). Another aspect worth mentioning here is *The New Age* founders' editorial stance of covering Zuma's government from a "half-full glass" angle (Myburg, 2017:10).

### **1.9.6 Focus and Scope**

The study focused on textual analysis rather than visual analysis. The images did not complement the text. It is hard to make an appropriate conclusion regarding the framing of the topic based on *The New Age's* graphic layout.

### **1.10 Chapter outline**

There are seven chapters in this study. An overview of the research topic is provided in Chapter One, as well as background information, a description of the research problem, the aim of the study, and research questions.



Chapter Two goes into the study's literature and what other researchers have discovered on the subject.

Literature relevant to media coverage of presidential campaigns, the history of the South African media, and *The New Age* is also discussed.

Chapter Three discusses framing as a mass media theory in extensive detail. It also highlights why this theory has been used in the study and outlines the dimensions of the theory that have informed how the analysis is undertaken.

Chapter Four describes the research methodology in detail. Sections discussed in this chapter include the sample selection and size, selection of the study period, data collection and analysis.

Chapter Five offers a summary of the findings of this study. The results of the analysis of the newspaper articles are tabulated and discussed.

Chapter Six discusses the findings of the study. In doing this, it firstly describes the frames that can be identified in *The New Age's* news reports of former South African president, Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Then it discusses the news sources that appear to be the most prominent in advancing certain frames in the news reports of Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

Finally it outlines the linkages that emerge between the sources and the frames identified in *The New Age's* news reports of former South African President, Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Having discussed these aspects, it then responds to the main question of how *The New Age* newspaper framed Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. In this regard, it found that Zuma and his associates sponsored the frames used by *The New Age* journalists to cover his campaign trail.

Chapter Seven, the last chapter, is the conclusion of the study and recommendations for future research. The primary issues presented here are that all of the frames showed Zuma favourably, and *The New Age's* framing of Zuma's campaign seemed like an endorsement.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the research and objectives of this study also drew a link between media and politics. It provided the background of the study and the general media perspective on the research topic. The chapter also provided a brief review of studies, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, that have looked at the media's framing of elections globally. It also demonstrated that there are no contemporary studies that have looked at the media's framing of elections campaigns in South Africa, and by the local media. The chapter gave a brief history of *The New Age* and looked at how other studies have framed Zuma and demonstrated a gap in knowledge.



## **Chapter Two: Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The primary goal of this chapter is to review existing research on the framing of presidential elections in the news media and situate this study within the existing empirical studies. It also identifies the knowledge gap and shows how the current study will try to fill it.

Literature on the framing of presidential election campaigns is well-established, especially in Western countries. While this topic has been studied extensively, existing research has not focused much on presidential elections in African countries, and in South Africa in particular. Extant research has not examined the news framing of a presidential candidate's campaign by a newspaper whose establishment was the brainchild of the aspirant president.

According to a review of selected literature, these studies did not consider the texts in light of the distribution of political and social power espoused by the media hegemony thesis. To plug the knowledge gap, this study examines *The New Age's* framing of Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. This is in light of his admission that the publication was his brainchild. Zuma's close relationship with the publication's founders also contributes to the examination.

### **2.2 Theoretical roadmap guiding this study**

Before beginning this project, it is helpful to identify a framework that will assist in the research and inform the analysis. The theoretical framework that this study will draw from, which is discussed in detail in chapter three, is the framing theory. The theory is apposite for this study because it concerns itself with the way the news media portray issues from "one perspective to the necessary exclusion of alternative perspectives" (Bydstun *et al.*, 2013:1).

Essentially, the framing theory analyses "power in communicating text" (Entman, 1993:51). It is assumed that the news media, through their practice of shining the spotlight on one facet of reality and ignoring other features, might lead to news audiences reacting in a particular way to a certain topic (Entman, 1993:51). According to Entman (*ibid*), this triggers competition between journalists and politicians, who seek the support of the electorate, over news frames.

Drawing from the framing theory, this study seeks to examine the frames that *The New Age* adopted to report on Zuma's campaign message, given Zuma's friendship with the founders of the publication.

Both the news media and politicians use frames in their communications, framing is also an essential component of political communication (Entman, 1993:55; Bydstun *et al.*, 2013:1).

A review of the literature, focusing on central themes around the research topic, clarifies several issues and highlights gaps in knowledge. It is essential to start with the clarification of news framing and trace its development in scholarship.

### **2.3 News framing**

Research indicates that the news media give meaning to abstract messages from news sources by framing them for their audiences (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993:25; Chong & Druckman, 2007:100-101; Cater, 2013:1). Among the first sociologists to apply framing analysis to clarify social phenomena was Erving Goffman (Goffman, 1974). As a result of Todd Gitlin's work, drawing from Goffman's work, (Gitlin, 1980; 1986), the framing scholarship was enhanced. Over the past few decades, framing studies have become increasingly prevalent among communication scholars (Gamson, 1989; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Domke, 1997; D'Angelo, 2002; Borah, 2011).

For some time now, scholars have been exploring how the mass media frame various topics, including sports and health (Cater, 2013:9-10). The presentation of news about athletes accused of crimes, attitudes toward disabled athletes, and more recently the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, obesity, health costs, and epidemics are some of the contemporary issues that spark scholarly inquiry in these areas of framing research (Shih & Wijaya, 2008; Seate *et al.*, 2010; Hawkin & Linvill, 2010; Coleman & Wilkins, 2011; von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014; Sadri *et al.*, 2022).

A review of the literature, however, reveals that political issues appear to receive more scholarly attention than the previously mentioned topics (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; De Vreese *et al.*, 2001; Callaghan & Schnell, 2005; Nacos, 2005; Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Lecheler, 2010; Matthes, 2012; Melki, 2014; Chen & Anderson, 2022; Boukes, 2022; Zhang *et al.*,

2022). This could be because framing is important in the exercise of political power, according to Entman (1993:55). Entman (ibid) defines framing as cataloguing the identity of actors or interests vying for control of the news texts.

Framing has been a permanent feature of communication studies since the 1980s (Weaver, 2007). Research has shown that it has grown phenomenally since then, and most of the framing studies concentrate “on ways that politicians, issue advocates and stakeholders use journalists and other news professionals to communicate their preferred meanings of events and issues” (D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2009:2).

The relationship between journalists and news sources, as well as the intentions of both parties, are fundamental to news framing.

Abdullah (2021:3) suggests that framing can be classified into two distinct definitions, based on theoretical viewpoints and application, namely, the media perspective and the audience perspective. The present study is based on the media perspective of framing. This viewpoint suggests that to ensure that the information they intend to communicate to news consumers is appealing and appetizing to journalists, news sources frame the topics in a particular way. In turn journalists, through their editorial processes, frame the topics for them to appeal to audiences (D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2009:2).

Mass media and politics go hand in glove because news connects “political parties, candidates and citizens” (Muñiz *et al.*, 2018:744). It is a small wonder that political studies have a keen interest in the news framing concept (Scheufele, 1999:105).

Among the studies that were reviewed that looked at the framing of general political issues, others looked at the framing of election campaigns. The latter is relevant to the current study, which aims to investigate *The New Age’s* framing of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Therefore, it makes sense to review the literature on the different news platforms at this point.

## **2.4 Newspapers’ framing of politics**

Several studies have considered newspaper framing of election campaigns (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; Fiss & Hirsch, 2005; Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2006; Matthes, 2009; Tracy, 2012; McMenamin, *et al.*, 2013; Pedersen, 2014; Rinke, *et al.*, 2013; Dekavalla, M., 2016; Muñiz & Marañón, 2018; Dunaway & Graber, 2022; Douai *et al.*, 2022; Sintés-Olivella *et al.*,

2022;). So are studies that have focused on the framing of election campaigns by radio and television (Iyengar, 1990; Coleman & Banning, 2006; Porto, 2007; Dunaway & Graber, 2022; Grabe, & Bas, 2022; Demuyakor & Abdul-Rahaman, 2022). Research on social media's framing of election campaigns is also growing (Meek, 2022; Dunaway & Graber, 2022; Dhanesh *et al.*, 2022). However, news framing studies appear to have mainly focused on newspapers. The reason for this could be the fact that print media are the oldest of all news platforms (Odorume, 2012).

The print media's development spans centuries (Odurume, 2012:1). The impact of the printing press on humans cannot be over-emphasised (Baran, 2012:21). Steinberg (1959:11) contends that: "Neither political, constitutional, ecclesiastical, and economic nor sociological, philosophical, and literary movements can be fully understood without taking into account the influence the printing press has exerted upon them." The print press plays a significant role in political discourse. One of the stages in the development of the press was the "party-political press" (McQuail, 2005:30). According to McQuail (*ibid*), the party-political press' purpose, where it still exists, is "opinion-forming".

Therefore, the relationship between newspapers and politics, and the role the press plays in political campaigns, is not unexpected.

## **2.5 Presidential election campaigns**

Election campaigns are integral to democracies because they provide a platform for the electorate to engage candidates and political parties and examine their manifestos. Campaigns also affirm the electorate's right to elect their preferred candidates and political parties.

Nadeau *et al.* (2008:229) submit that during "election campaigns political parties compete to inform voters about their leaders, the issues, and where they stand on these issues". Kittilson and Fridkin (2008:376) also emphasise that the more the campaign attention is concentrated on individual candidates, the "more the campaign showcases candidates' achievements, mistakes, and characteristics".

It is for this reason, according to Jacobson (2015:32), that election campaigns have attracted a wide range of scholarly interest from historians, memoirists and journalists, among myriad others.

Lazarsfeld *et al.* (1944) and Berelson *et al.* (1954) are among the scholars who set the ball rolling for studies on presidential campaigns. However, the scholars concentrated on the

effectiveness of the presidential campaigns and whether they swayed the voters (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944; Berelson *et al.*, 1954). Another batch of scholars that looked at how to precisely forecast the results of presidential elections followed (Tufte, 1978; Rosenstone 1983; Lewis-Beck & Rice, 1992; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2014). The group of scholars considered issues such as the “state of the economy, distribution of partisans in the electorate, and ideological locations of the candidates before the campaigns had even taken place” as fundamentals to measure the outcomes of presidential elections (Jacobson, 2015:32). However, there seems to be a gap in the scholars’ findings. Jacobson (2015:32) contends that such findings directly challenged the significance of the “strategies, events, debates, speeches, ads, and gaffes that transfix news reporters during presidential contests and are later parsed by scholars seeking explanations for the outcomes of specific elections”. Jacobson (*ibid*) adds: “If only the fundamentals matter, campaigns do not.”

Some of the facets of election campaigns that scholars have examined include the “level of the campaign; organisation and professionalism; differences between genders in campaign-style; campaign advertising; fund-raising; and fund-raising law compliance” and “campaign effects” (Rackaway, 2010:796).

Just as election campaigns and democracy are intertwined, so are mass media and election campaigns. Seminal studies have also shown that mass media are integral to election campaigns (Altheide & Snow, 1997; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Doorn, 2010; Bedingfield & Anshari, 2014). This is precisely so because, as Doorn (2010:708) contends, mass media go beyond just providing information to their audiences, they are platforms for debates and also influence the audiences’ attitudes toward particular issues. According to Muñiz *et al.* (2017), mass media promote a “particular framing to present issues and candidates involved in the campaigns citizens are granted access to the political debate”.

Media framing of presidential campaigns is at the core of this study, therefore the framing theory will underpin this research.



## 2.6 Clarification of key concepts: political contest coverage and presidentialisation

To understand how existing seminal studies examined mass media's framing of presidential campaigns, it is necessary to first define mass media's coverage of political contests and presidentialisation.

In Takens *et al.* (2013:28-281), contest coverage depicts politics primarily as a contest between political actors. In news framing studies, several terms are used to define political contests. These include horse race journalism (Broh, 1980), strategy schema (Jamieson, 1992), game schema (Patterson, 1993) and game frame (Aalbert *et al.*, 2012). Contest coverage essentially includes both horse race coverage, which focuses on who succeeds and who fails in elections, and news about conflict and cooperation (Kleinnijenhuis *et al.*, 2007; Vliegthart *et al.*, 2011). Conflict coverage concentrates on the negative while cooperation coverage focuses on the positive displays of relations between the political contestants (Takens *et al.*, 2013:280).

According to Takens *et al.* (2013:280), these terms all refer to the reportage of certain facets of the election contests rather than the general coverage of politics. It is recognised that news stories frequently discuss both contests and political issues (Takens *et al.*, 2013:280). At the end of this study, it will be determined whether Zuma's campaign dominated *The New Age's* coverage in contrast with news issues or if they were combined.

Another framing aspect of the mass media's coverage of election campaigns is personalised coverage. According to Rahat and Sheaffer (2007:67), this aspect entails "a heightened focus on individual politicians and a diminished focus on parties, organisations, and institutions" in the media. Karvonen (2010) refers to the focus on one individual as "presidentialisation".

Drawing from these definitions, this study will determine whether *The New Age's* coverage of the election campaign focused on Zuma rather than his political party, the ANC. This will be done in consideration of the fact that the South African president is not directly elected by the public but by parliament, as discussed in chapter one.

In its analysis of the selected literature, this study used the media hegemony thesis lens which is discussed in detail below.

## 2.7 Media hegemony thesis

To determine the relationship between the media frames that *The New Age* used in its coverage of Zuma's election campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general elections and the wider issues of political and social power, this study used the media hegemony thesis. The media hegemony thesis, which is one of the myriad ways of examining how power shapes the framing process (Carragee & Roefs, 2004:215), is apposite for this study given the power relations between Zuma, his political influence, and the publication under study. The media hegemony thesis was introduced by Italian Marxist theoretician and activist Antonio Gramsci in 1971 (Carragee, 1993:330).

According to Carragee (ibid), Gramsci contended that dominant groups and classes in capitalist societies used hegemony to retain power. An important aspect of Gramsci's work is his "emphasis on ideological struggle and contestation" (Carragee, 1993:330). This is important to framing studies because it highlights a key component of the framing process – that is frame sponsorship. Carragee and Roefs (2004:215) contend that "the origin, character, and influence of media frames must confront how the distribution of power shapes the construction and interpretation" of frames. In their study, *The Neglect of Power in Recent Framing Research*, Carragee and Roefs (2004) critiqued developments in the studies examining media frames and their influence. The scholars contended that several trends in framing studies had abandoned the association between media frames and general issues of political and social power (Carragee & Roefs, 2004:214). Carragee and Roefs (2004:227) averred that by failing to fully consider political and social power, framing studies reduced frames to "story topics, attributes, and issue positions, and neglect frame sponsorships and the asymmetries in power that influence the ability of sponsors to shape the news agenda". In so doing, the scholars argued that the studies isolated frames as content features to study their influence thus neglecting why certain frames rule news discourse and argued that the integration of hegemony into framing studies would enhance scholarship (Carragee & Roefs, 2004:227).

Extant studies appear to have neglected the hegemony thesis as the reviewed studies related to this study's research show. Therefore, this study seeks to close this knowledge lacuna.

## 2.8 Studies on mass media's framing of presidential campaigns

Several empirical studies have been published in research journals about how the mass media frame presidential campaigns. A couple of seminal studies were analysed for this study. Scholarly attention is more likely to focus on presidential elections in western countries, according to the analysis. Only a few studies have examined how news is framed during presidential campaigns on the African continent. In contrast, no contemporary study has examined the news framing of a presidential campaign in South Africa, an observation shared by Jones (2019).

According to Jones (2019:3), few studies have investigated media narratives about African democracy and elections from a political science perspective, or explored sources and framing of media narratives in detail. Based on a review of studies examining South African elections since 1994, it appears that they only looked at polling, voters, political parties, and the viability of egalitarianism (Reynolds, 1999; Southall & Daniel, 2009; Habib & Herzenberg, 2011). As a result, the researcher argues, the studies have neglected to analyse the sources of news and political and social power.

This study is therefore necessary given that partisanship and the relationship between journalists and governments are major debates about election reporting in Africa (Jones, 2019:3-4). One of Jones' findings that highlight the importance of this study is that journalists and political leaders seemed to disengage during the later years of South Africa's democracy (Jones, 2019:11). According to Jones (*ibid*), instead of talking directly to politicians, across all political parties, journalists chose to speak to political analysts, colleagues, and thought leaders to clarify and interpret the election campaign messages. Jones also notes that Zuma's "strict control of media narratives" contributed to a significant drop in the number of political sources quoted in the media in the run-up to the 2014 general elections (Jones, 2019:11). According to Jones (*ibid*), journalists began talking about leaders rather than to them in 2004, and the current use of political voices is poor, with a focus on "horse race" framing. Jones avers the relationship between journalists and politicians in South Africa is becoming increasingly strained (Jones, 2019:11).

The ANC's deteriorating relationship with journalists, according to Jones (*ibid*), is a continuing source of concern for South African media. Jones goes on to say that this

problematic and deteriorating relationship could be one of the reasons for the demise of ANC sources in later years (2019:11).

Given the foregoing, as well as Zuma's admission that *The New Age* was his brainchild and that he needed a publication that would be less critical of his government (Zondo, 2022:475), it makes academic sense to examine how the newspaper framed his campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

The literature review on the news framing of presidential election campaigns has been divided into three sections: the framing of presidential election campaigns in the West, the African continent, and South Africa.

## **2.9 Framing of presidential campaigns in the West**

Several contemporary studies have examined how the news media frame presidential elections. The relationship between presidential election campaigns and editorial information processing devices employed by journalists to interpret political messages is well established (Entman, 1993; Shah & Wackman, 2001; Porto, 2007; Kumah-Abiwu, 2017; Muñiz, 2018; Toros & Birch, 2020; Demuyakor & Abdul-Rahaman, 2022; Adebumiti & Sambe, 2022).

In a seminal study, Sintés-Olivella *et al.* (2022) examined how the 2020 US presidential elections and candidates were framed in European publications. The comprehensive study looked at how leading newspapers in France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom framed the contest between former US President Donald Trump and the now current US president, Joe Biden. The researchers (2022:13-14) found that the frames featured in the newspapers include two of Entman's four frame characteristics (2003). The study (*ibid*) indicated that the frames represent consequences or circumstances as problematic and offer a moral judgment of those interested in the framed issue.

However, the study appears to contribute to a growing body of research that has ignored the distribution of political and social power in frame analysis. Framing studies may trace the frame sponsors and their links to the specific frames used by the news media by including the media hegemony concept in their investigation (Carragee & Roelfs, 2004:214-215). In light of this, some scholars have recently been interested in power in their research of media frames (Carragee, 1993; Carragee & Roelfs, 2004; Choi, 2020; Canella, 2022).

Carragee and Roefs (2004) theorise that “distribution of economic, political, and cultural resources shapes frame sponsorship and framing contests, studying the construction of reality through framing necessarily involves of examination of power”.

As previously stated, studies on the framing of presidential election campaigns have primarily focused on elections in Western countries as opposed to elections in Africa (Jones, 2019). According to a review of the literature, American presidential election campaigns appear to receive more scholarly attention compared to other Western countries (Patterson, 1993; Devitt, 1997; Esser & D'Angelo, 2006; Vliegenthart *et al.*, 2010; Groshek & Al-Rawi, 2013; Abdullah, 2021; Alieva, 2021).

Klein and Maccoby's research was one of the first studies to look at presidential campaign news coverage (Klein & Maccoby, 1954). The scholars (*ibid*) looked at how eight major daily newspapers in America covered the 1952 presidential election campaign. According to their findings, 60% of the stories focused on policy or issues, 16% were concerned with the candidate's personal qualities and character, and 5% of the stories were concerned with scandals (Klein & Maccoby, 1954). The scholars (*ibid*) sought to determine bias in the coverage of presidential campaigns by the selected publications at a time when the framing theory had yet to be refined as an academic concept. The study did not take into account the media hegemony thesis, which was first proposed in 1971. Despite these caveats, the study is an important source of presidential election campaign literature.

Devitt (1997) examined the coverage of candidate arguments in American presidential campaign news coverage in 1980, 1988, 1992, and 1996. The study (*ibid*) was thorough and considered how politicians' speeches were framed in the media, which checked the social power and media hegemony boxes. However, the study excluded print stories from its analysis (Devitt, 1997:1143).

In 2006, Esser and D'Angelo compared the “metacoverage—news about the press and publicity processes—in broadcast coverage of the 2000 U.S. presidential election, the 2001 British general election, and the 2002 German general election”.

The study discovered that the number of stories with a prominent metacoverage topic was higher in the United States than in Germany and the United Kingdom, where systemic conditions in both countries constrain the behaviours of actors in the media politics environment in terms of metacoverage production (Esser and D'Angelo, 2006:60). According to the study (*ibid*), the introduction of several media and publicity-related campaign

innovations in Germany increased stories with metacoverage when compared to the United Kingdom, where those innovations did not occur.

The study added invaluable knowledge to studies of news framing, particularly coverage of presidential campaigns, by demonstrating how the prevalence of "overtly strategic conception, or frame, of the press and publicity" tainted the campaign's information setting (Esser and D'Angelo, 2006:62-63). The study, on the other hand, ignored the "relationship between media frames and broader issues of political and social power" (Carragee & Roefs, 2004:214).

The 2008 campaign trail of former American President Barack Obama drew scholarly attention as well. However, this is no surprise given that he would be the first African-American president of the United States of America (Vliegthart *et al.*, 2010:44). The research conducted by Vliegthart *et al.* (2010), examined the presidential election coverage in Western Europe, is one of the seminal studies in the field of news framing. During the 11 weeks ahead of Election Day, the researchers examined newspaper coverage of the election campaign in 17 newspapers from eight countries. The comprehensive study, however, only looked at four aspects of news reporting generally studied in election campaign media studies: attention, tone and strategy, and horse race framing (Vliegthart *et al.*, 2010:445).

Another notable event for scholars is the 2016 US presidential election, which pitted former President Donald Trump against former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Abdullah (2021) investigated Trump and Clinton's campaign speeches. In the study, Abdullah (*ibid*) considered social power and media hegemony. According to the study, Trump used economic consequence, conflict, attribution of responsibility, and negative campaign frames more than his opponent (Abdullah, 2021:1). Although Abdullah (2021:16) recommends that scholars should examine how political actors' campaign speeches affect audiences' actions without media moderation, the mass media's framing of the campaign messages remains a needful exercise because journalists' framing of issues has an enormous effect on them (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Although Abdullah (2021:16) suggests that scholars investigate how political actors' campaign speeches affect audiences' actions in the absence of media moderation, mass media framing of campaign messages remains a necessary exercise because journalists frame issues and have a serious influence on them (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Alieva's study (2021) investigated the role of data visualization in media coverage of the 2016 US presidential election, focusing on data-visualization projects from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. While the study added a new dimension to the framing research - mixed methods analysis of data visualization - it did not take into account social power and media hegemony, which could have improved its findings.

The literature demonstrates that, while framing studies have extensively investigated the news framing of presidential elections, there is a knowledge gap regarding the relationship between news sources and how journalists adopt particular frames. It is necessary to review studies that have looked at how presidential elections in Africa have been framed to gain a comprehensive view of the literature.

## **2.10 Framing of presidential elections on the African continent: Nigeria and South Africa**

### **2.10.1 Nigeria**

Although the number of studies looking at how the media has framed presidential elections in African countries does not compare to those that have explored how the media has framed presidential elections in the United States, the Nigerian presidential election has received significant scholarly attention. In particular, the 2015 Nigerian presidential campaigns received significant scholarly attention. Ojebuy and Chukwunike (2018) examined how the Nigerian news media framed the election campaigns of female politicians during Nigeria's 2015 presidential elections. The empirical study analysed content from 194 editions of the country's three newspapers. The study found that the media's framing of election campaigns, indeed, marginalised female politicians in their coverage of presidential election campaigns (Ojebuyi & Chukwuwike, 2018:195). However, the scholars examined the media's framing of the presidential election campaigns from a gender perspective only. Media framing and market-oriented journalism were used in the study, but social power and the media hegemony thesis were not examined. The study would have achieved comprehensive results if the scholars had considered these aspects of news framing (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). As stated in Carragee and Roefs (ibid), the study would be able to determine the frame sponsors behind the biased framing of female candidates by the Nigerian news media.

Adebumit and Sambe (2022) evaluated the coverage of the 2015 Nigerian presidential election campaigns in four popular Nigerian newspapers in another research. Pertinent to this study, the scholars examined the framing of the presidential election campaigns by newspapers owned by politicians and they determined that the publications "exhibited bias in the coverage of the election campaigns" (Adebumiti & Sambe, 2022:204). However, the scholars conducted a quantitative analysis of the content. Therefore, the study could only determine which newspaper carried more election campaign content than others, and which topic dominated the coverage. In its analysis, the research tried to investigate frame sponsorship and the distribution of political and social power. It also included the media hegemony concept in its

examination of media frames to some extent. However, the study's examination of frame sponsorship was cursory. The study failed to show how the ownership of the examined newspapers altered the frames in ways other than just counting them.

Tella (2018) investigated the humour-generating and multimodal framing of political actors in the 2015 Nigerian presidential election campaign memes in another research. Although the researcher employed rhetorical framing analysis and other methods to investigate the presidential candidates' election campaigns, the study concentrated on campaign framing on the internet. It also focused on specific aspects of framing, such as memes.

In another study, Lamidi and Olisa (2016:201) found that the Nigerian news media framed one of the 2015 presidential candidates' election campaigns "more positively to their readers". However, the study does not explain what contributed to the media adopting the frames and does not trace the frame sponsors.

Nwofe (2016) studied dimensions of negativity towards politics during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. However, the study only focused on online publications. The study also did not take frame sponsorship into account when analysing the frames adopted by the publications in covering presidential elections.

Another research, relevant to the present study, was conducted by Ukonu and Ajaero (2017). The study looked at how the media framed the incumbent president's and his opponent's election campaigns. According to the study, the media concentrated on the presidential candidates rather than the problems (Ukonu & Ajaero, 2017:1). The study (ibid) suggests that the issues presented by candidates in their manifestos be adopted by the media to broaden their dialogue on issues affecting people rather than the contestants' personalities. The study fell short of elucidating the relationship between frame sponsors and social and political power in its examination of the frames used by the media to report on the presidential campaign, despite hinting at them.



### 2.10.2 South Africa

There are no current empirical studies on the news framing of South African presidential election campaigns that the researcher is aware of. The most recent study is nine years old. The available studies looked at how the US media framed South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 (Reta, 2000) and the frames used by the ANC to charm voters (Holmes & Shoup, 2013).

Reta (2000) examined the coverage of significant themes and characters in the 1994 elections in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. The study (ibid) examined the articles published by the two newspapers during the immediate pre-election period and on the voting day. The scholar also focused on the main characters in the elections such as late former South African presidents Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk and Inkatha Freedom Party leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi (Reta, 2000:526). The analysis determined that the elections were framed by American journalistic principles of "ethnocentrism and social order" as well as American democratic values.

The study, however, confined its examination of frames to events around the elections and the actors involved rather than the campaign messages. It also focused on the frames used by newspapers to report on elections rather than the sponsors of the frames, thus neglecting the manifestation of political and social power (Carragee & Roefs, 2014). The use of quantitative methods to examine the news media's coverage of the election did not yield comprehensive results; hence the researcher suggested that future research should focus on the "values and positions expressed by the media in reporting on South African elections".

Holmes and Shoup (2013) looked at how the ANC used symbolic and policy frames to attract voters in the national, local, and provincial polls of 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009. The research looked at press releases produced by the ANC that were covered by the media and identified the frames inherent in the statements that the party was attempting to deliver. This is consistent with Carragee and Roefs' (2004) call for news framing scholars to take frame sponsorship into account when examining media frames. According to the study, local newspapers covered symbolic frames at a much lower rate than national newspapers. Study findings indicated that municipal policy frameworks were the majority of the focus. However, the study's analysis fell short of adequately demonstrating the expression of political and social power.

## 2.11 The newspaper under study: *The New Age*

*The New Age's* framing of political and general issues has been examined in several empirical studies. These studies range from the publication's framing of the introduction of Mandarin into South Africa's schooling system (Frank, 2016), to its framing of protests (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018), and “cadre deployment” (Mpapela, 2017). The other issues framed by *The New Age* that have attracted scholarly attention include the publication's framing of South African legislative laws (Ndyondya, 2013), how its coverage influenced confidence levels within state institutions (Landu, 2013) and its relationship with government (Tabane, 2020).

Msiza's (2017) study, which examined *The Star*, *Sowetan*, *The Citizen*, and *The New Age* newspapers' coverage of South Africa's top three political parties, ANC, Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Democratic Alliance (DA), during the 2016 municipal elections, is pertinent to the present study. According to Msiza (*ibid*), biased reporting within a newspaper is a result of the media owner's interests. While media may not be forced to adopt a specific ideology, Msiza (2017:4) argues that editorial decisions can be influenced by political relations with media owners.

Msiza (2017:65) found that *The New Age*, unlike all of the other selected publications, was highly positive about the ANC, neutral about the EFF, and decidedly negative about the DA. Msiza (2017:66) states that the ANC, quantitatively, received more publicity than other parties because it is the ruling party, and as such, it was bound to receive more media attention. Qualitatively, the ANC received positive coverage compared to the other parties, the study found (Msiza, 2017:67).

The study sought to assess the frames within the contexts of political and social power distribution, in its endeavour to examine the publication's coverage of the parties during the municipal election (Carragee & Roefs, 2004:214-215). However, it failed to demonstrate the frame sponsorship – central to the media hegemony thesis (Carragee & Roefs, 2004:214). Also, the researcher is not aware of any study that has examined *The New Age's* framing of election campaigns.

## 2.12 Media's framing of Jacob Zuma

Though Zuma is a prominent politician and served two terms as head of state, few empirical studies have examined how the media framed him compared to Mandela (Martin, 2004; Both & De Beer, 2005; Odoemelam *et al.*, 2014; Beresford, 2014; El-Bendary, 2015; Pitcher *et al.*,

2016; Rosas-Moreno & Joyce, 2017; Muswede & Masvopo, 2018; Evans, 2020; Jones, 2021). Reviewed literature shows that scholars have been interested in how the media framed Zuma's stance on HIV and Aids (Worthington, 2010), his rape trial (Reddy & Potgieter, 2006; Waetjen & Maré, 2009; Worthington, 2011), polygamous marriage (Davies-Laubscher, 2014; Geertsema-Sligh, 2015), his pending corruption trial (Khuluse, 2011; Matthew, 2021).

However, the researcher is unaware of any study that has looked at the framing of Zuma's electoral campaigns in the media, let alone by *The New Age*. Therefore, the present study seeks to close this gap by examining how *The New Age* framed Zuma's election campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

### **2.13 Conclusion**

This chapter analyses relevant literature identifies knowledge gaps and locates this research among empirical studies that explored the framing of presidential election campaigns in the mass media. It also traces the development of the framing scholarship. This chapter reviews the literature about the publication under study, *The New Age*, and the media's framing of Zuma.

## **Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter delves into framing, the theoretical framework adopted for this research, and frame analysis. It examines the beginnings of framing theory, its evolution, and its current standing as a concept. This chapter also looks at the work of academic framing theory experts and how the South African media framed Jacob Zuma's political career and personal life. The chapter also discusses why the framing theory is the best framework for this research.

### **3.2 Defining framing**

Several scholars have attempted to define the concept of framing (Goffman, 1974; Gitlin, 1980; Shulman & Sweitzer, 2018). Entman (1993:52) conceptualises framing as the “selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommended for the text described”. Entman (2007:164) further delineates framing as the “process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connection among them to promote a particular interpretation”. This definition infers that the mass media steer audiences’ focus toward certain news events and give meaning to those occurrences.

In other words, framing entails the organisation and presentation of information with various shared meanings. In the process, as Entman’s definition (2007:164) suggests, audiences are persuaded to accept certain meanings and reject others. This view is accentuated by De Vreese (2005:77) who defines framing as a communication process that entails production, content and media use perception.

De Vreese adds that “a frame is an emphasis in the salience of different aspects of a topic”. McCombs (1997) views framing as the selection of particular topics and thematically related characteristics in the media schema. According to Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), the way an issue is framed by the news media impacts how the audiences understand it. Scheufele and Iyengar (2012) complement this view. They aver that “framing effects refer to behavioural or attitudinal outcomes that are not due to differences in what is being communicated, but rather to variations in how a given piece of information is being presented (or framed) in public discourse” (Scheufele & Iyengar 2012:13).

Another scholar who offers a similar definition of the framing process is Gitlin (1980). He avers that framing entails “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse” (Gitlin, 1980:23). The delineation merges into with Pan and Kosicki’s (1993) definition of the framing concept. They describe news media framing as an approach to creating and processing news discourse or as a “characteristic of the discourse itself” (Pan & Kosicki, 1993:57).

The various definitions of framing are testimony that the concept has received wide-ranging scholarly attention (D’Angelo, 2002; Shah *et al.*, 1996). For this study, Entman’s (1993:52) definition is appropriate. To examine how *The New Age* framed Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general election, this study sought to analyse the aspects of perceived reality that were salient in the publication’s reportage of the election crusade. The study also sought to analyse how, in the process, the publication promoted a certain “problem definition” provided a “causal interpretation”, made a “moral evaluation” and recommended treatment.

### **3.3 Choice of theoretical framework**

The researcher chose the framing theory for this study because it is suitable for the analysis of the news coverage of election campaigns (Muñiz *et al.*, 2017:746). The scholars (*ibid*) suggest that journalists utilise frames to interpret information and provide certain “informational treatment of reality”. The framing theory evaluates such frames (Muñiz *et al.*, 2017:746). These averments make the framing theory appropriate to analyse *The New Age*’s framing of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Another remarkable aspect of the framing theory, which makes it apposite for this study, is the role of news sources or frame sponsors in the frame-building process.

A study conducted by Kee *et al.* (2012) found that framing studies overlooked the interface between the media and news sources. This study is interested in the role of news sources in *The New Age*’s framing of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Zuma told the judicial commission investigating state capture that *The New Age*, which was established by the Gupta family in July 2010, was his brainchild (Zondo, 2022:457-458). He wanted a less “negative” newspaper that would not be critical of his government (*ibid*). The interface between *The New Age* journalists and the news sources in the coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail is therefore worthy of scholarly attention.

Entman (1993:52) suggests that framing entails the collection of some facets of reality which are then given prominence over others. In so doing, the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are advocated and suitable solutions are suggested (ibid). Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) adds that the framing theory “allows the holistic study of media effects on individuals and audiences”. With the above assertions in mind, the framing theory would come handy in analysing the frames that emerged from the interaction between *The New Age* journalists and the news sources. The appropriateness of the framing theory will become apparent as the researcher unpacks it.

The origins of the framing theory straddle two distinct academic disciplines, sociology and psychology (Schuefele & Tewksbury, 2007:9). Sociologist Ervin Goffman (1974) is widely recognised for his contribution to the refinement of the theory in his seminal work *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; Geertsema-Sling, 2015; Chong & Druckman, 2017). In his study, Goffman contends that people use schemata of interpretation to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” events (Goffman, 1974:21). According to Goffman, the schemata of interpretation, which are termed “frames”, help people make sense of life events that would otherwise be meaningless to them (Goffman, 1974:63).

Todd Gitlin implemented the sociological concept of framing in his study by applying it to the news media (Gitlin, 1980). He characterises frames as “persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion” and utilises the framing concept to examine the relations between journalists and the Student New Left movement and avows that frames are fundamental devices for the newsrooms (ibid). He states that they “enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely (and to) package the information for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, 1980:7).

Research annals are awash with influential contemporary framing studies that have considered the application of the framing concept in news. Key among them is Robert Entman’s 1993 seminal study, *Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm*, which sought to refine the “scattered” concept and turn its “weakness into strength” (Entman, 1993). Linking the paradigm to news, Entman explored four features, namely audience autonomy, journalistic objectivity, content analysis and public opinion and the normative democratic theory (Entman, 1993:57).

### 3.4 Frame analysis

Frames check certain boxes in terms of imparting significance to particular life events. They identify issues and compare them to common cultural ideals. Frames also determine the sources of situations and make moral decisions (Entman, 1993:52).

Finally, they provide solutions. In doing so, they develop and validate solutions to issues and foresee their likely consequences (Entman, 1993:52).

Political activities have evolved alongside the advancement of mass media throughout the years. While academics debated the impact of mass media on the importance of presidential candidates, presidents, voting trends, and issue salience, Gitlin concluded that the "texture of political life has altered" since mass media became a key component of society (Gitlin, 1980:8).

The media has been shown to set the tone for political debate. Gitlin claims that, while they are "far from independent," they do not inertly mirror political party goals, and that "the centralisation and monetization of mass communication media make them tools of cultural control" (Gitlin, 1980:8).

Aside from setting political agendas, mass media play an important role in creating and defining popular speculation, attitudes, and dispositions of thinking, among many other things.

According to Gitlin (1980:9), the media creates and sometimes intensifies a field of true dialogue that shapes the public's perceptions of circumstances. They do this through the use of selection and omission, emphasis and tones (Gitlin, 1980:9).

In general, Gitlin's study paved the way for further research on news framing. He offered a great recommendation that any inquiry into mass media content should include:

- What is the frame here?
- Why this frame and not another?
- What patterns are shared by the frames clamped over this event and frames clamped over that one, by frames in different places and different moments?
- And how does the news-reporting institution regulate these regularities? And then: What difference do the frames make for the large world? (Gitlin, 1980:7).

The literature on news framing of election campaigns reveals that mass media are inclined to underscore the use of strategic game frame and the issue frame (Rhee, 1997; Aalberg *et al.*, 2011).

The two news frames are typically associated with politics (Muniz *et al.*, 2018:744). The framing of politics as a strategic game by the media has been contested.

The strategic game's distinguishing features include "winning and losing," as well as its proclivity to show politics and the electoral course as a strategy game and numerous political tactics developed by candidates, political parties, or monarchs to improve their chances of winning (Aalberg *et al.*, 2011; Dimitrova & Kostadinova, 2013).

Scholars debate the pervasiveness of such framing. The first argument is based on the fact that the way frames are theorized and operationalized differs greatly (Aalberg *et al.*, 2011:1).

Secondly, while terminology like "game frame" and "strategy frame" are used interchangeably, their relationship is challenged since a specific group of academics believes there is a conceptual distinction between the two (Aalberg *et al.*, 2011:1).

To bridge this gap, Aalberg *et al.* (2011) investigated the relationship and proposed a synthesis as well as methods for increasing conceptual clarity and comparability in studies on the usage of strategy and/or game frameworks in the media.

To measure the extent to which the media adopts a game or strategy framing, Aalberg *et al.* (2011:12) suggest four elements for the game frame, which correspond to the reference to opinion polls, election outcomes, winners and losers, and the language of sports and wars.

They propose four elements to define the extent to which the media applies a strategy frame: campaign strategies and tactics, reasons and instrumental acts, personality and style, and the function of the media in the political process.

The main criticism directed at the game framing is that the media focus on political contests rather than the essence of political matters. True journalism, whose core is to seek out facts useful to the public, suffers as a result (Fallows, 1997:7).

The game frame flourishes for a variety of reasons. One of them is that it meets newsworthiness requirements and journalists' penchant for drama (Lawrence, 2000:95).



The game frame is commonly contrasted with the issue frame. According to Nelson (2011), issue frames have two main advantages. They include accurate statements and give detailed clarification and characterisation of a problem. Most issue frames back a specific point in a contentious subject (Nelson, 2011).

Although issue frames are covered by the media and even provide the topic for the article, they are not the same as news frames. According to Nelson (2011), the difference is that news frames are general and applicable to all issues. The essence of an issue is captured by issue frames, which also point out culpability and prefer certain remedies (Nelson, 2011).

However, the media's coverage of elections is not limited to these two frames, on which several studies have been conducted. The news media also use the conflict frame in elections coverage (De Vreese, 2014; Schuck *et al.*, 2016).

Based on the reviewed literature, the approach is a versatile news frame that can be applied to any news article to demonstrate contradiction between various political candidates (Neuman *et al.*, 1992; Semetko *et al.*, 2000; Stromback & Luengo, 2008).

### **3.5 Application of frame analysis in this study**

The news texts contain a wealth of framing functions. According to Entman (1993:52), one phrase may do more than one of the four framing duties, but a number of sentences in a text may perform none of the tasks.

Entman (*ibid*) argues that a frame in any given piece of writing may or may not include all four functions. This is pertinent to this study because it undertakes a qualitative content analysis of articles published in *The New Age* throughout the study period to examine the framing of Zuma's campaign trail in the newspaper.

This strategy is useful for interpreting texts (Morgan, 1993:15). Titscher *et al.* (2000:55) state that content analysis is the most well-established approach of text analysis among the empirical social study methods.

Frames highlight certain parts of an issue while ignoring others. According to Entman (1993:53), frames make bits of information about a specific issue more visible, vivid, or memorable to audiences through salience. This is also pertinent to this study since it will aid in determining which issues *The New Age* prioritised above others in its coverage of Zuma's campaign trail.

The texts highlight some pieces of information more than others in a variety of ways. Texts may accomplish this by strategically placing information (Entman, 1993:53).

Another method is to repeat the information or to connect it to culturally recognised symbols (Entman, 1993:53). One appearance of a concept at an inconspicuous spot in the text, on the other hand, can be quite noticeable.

This occurs if it corresponds to the prevalent schemata of news consumers' convictions (Entman, 1993:53). This component of framing is crucial for this study since it aids the researcher in finding the familiar cultural symbols to which *The New Age* related Zuma's campaign in its coverage, if at all.

### **3.6 Issue-specific frames and generic frames**

Frames are a useful tool for journalists who need to filter through large amounts of information quickly and on a regular basis. According to Gitlin (1980:7), frames assist journalists in classifying information and packaging it for dissemination to their audiences.

Frames also benefit media organizations; after all, they cannot ignore them. Frames in journalism, according to Gitlin (1980:7), are constructed to manage production. He also argues that the media have an influence on wider political currents (Gitlin, 1980:7).

According to the literature, there are five news frames: conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, morality, and economic consequences.

The conflict frame is self-explanatory; it concentrates on interpersonal conflict, whereas the human interest frame elicits emotions and gives a story a human face (Semekto & Valkenburg, 2000).

The responsibility framework assigns accountability for a problem to the government, individuals, or a group. The morality frame is based on religious or moral precepts, and it evaluates events and circumstances in accordance with these guidelines (Semekto & Valkenburg, 2000).

The economic consequences frame defines an event or issue in terms of the effects it could have on a person, group, or country (Semekto & Valkenburg, 2000).

Conflict, human interest, attribution of blame, and economic implications are the issue-specific frameworks explored in this study. This is because research has demonstrated that they are essential in political communication and election campaigns (Brugman *et al.*, 2017; Brüggemann & D'Angelo, 2018; Heidenreich *et al.*, 2022).

### **3.7 Strengths and weaknesses of the framing theory**

Scholars have criticised the framing theory in various studies. Entman (1993) expresses concern about the lack of a comprehensive theory of framing capable of describing how frames are constructed, how they manifest in text, and how they influence the minds of audiences. According to McCombs (2006), the variance in definitions of the concept presents a difficulty to framing researchers.

Weaver (2007) also points out a gap in the development of framing theory. According to the scholar, the word frames still lack a coherent definition (Weaver, 2007).

Some scholars, however, see value in the diversity of framing approaches. D' Angelo (2002) acknowledges multiplicity in framing techniques and contends that the composite phenomena of media effects can only be understood through several disciplines and theoretical paradigms. Weaver is complemented by Reese (2007). According to Reese, the framing theory, as disjointed as it is, brings together qualitative and quantitative research, empirical and interpretive research, psychological and sociological research, and both academic and professional research (Reese, 2007:148)

D' Angelo's (2002) assertion that the framing theory's strength rests in its multiplicity guided this study. This is useful when attempting to answer a difficult question like the one asked by this study.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework applied in this study. This chapter also discussed frame analysis and research gaps in framing. The next chapter discusses the research methodology.

## **Chapter Four: Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter defines the research methodology in detail. Sections discussed in this chapter include the sample selection and size, the selection of the study period, sampling, data collection and analysis. The next chapter discusses the results.

### **4.2 Research Design**

#### **4.2.1 Ontological orientation**

This is an interpretivist study. According to Saunders *et al.* (2007:106), the epistemology aids researchers “understand differences between humans in our role as social actors”. Interpretivist research is also associated with phenomenology, a philosophy that Saunders *et al.* (2007) describe as the way in which people make sense of their world. Alharahsheh & Pius (2020:39) assert that the interpretivist paradigm allows scholars to “gain further depth through seeking experiences and perceptions of a particular social context”. Interpretivism ponders dissimilarities such as “cultures, circumstances, as well as times leading to development of different social realities” (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:41-42). This is applicable in the present study because the researcher seeks to analyse and interpret news frames adopted by *The New Age* in its coverage of Zuma’s election campaign.

Studies using interpretivist paradigm are often criticised for being unable to “assess the ultimate truth” (Wang, 2020:726) because interpretive research deserts the scientific procedures of confirmation and that the results cannot be generalized to other circumstances (Lindsay, 2010:8).

However, it has been chosen for the present study because allows the researcher to “get as close as possible and develop a deep understanding of the phenomenon and participants being

studied” (Wry & Haugh, 2018:10). Ospina *et al.* (2018) aver that interpretivist scholars engross themselves in the activities of the subject of inquiry. Also, the interpretivist paradigm is apposite for qualitative research and inductive approaches (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2014). Interpretivist researchers tend to choose methods that centre on language and representation (ibid).

#### **4.2.2 Study orientation: qualitative methods**

This is a qualitative study. Qualitative research investigates people’s experiences, attitudes and behaviour (Dawson, 2002:2). Qualitative research is appropriate to provide a vigorous understanding of *The New Age* newspaper’s framing of Jacob Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections because, according to Ambert *et al.* (1995:880), it pursues an understanding of “how and why people behave, think, and make meaning the way they do or believe on a large scale”.

The research design adopted to examine *The New Age*’s framing of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections is qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis research methodology is suitable for this study because the researcher sought to analyse frames embedded in textual data. The concept of framing, in media studies, as outlined in chapter three, “consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text” (Entman, 1993:51), while qualitative methods can be utilised to “provide a description, build theory, and to test theory” (Van Maanen as cited in Shah & Corley, 2006:1824).

Therefore, qualitative methods were deemed suitable for this study because they offer means for developing an understanding of intricate phenomena (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sofaer, 1999). The qualitative methods came handy when the researcher explored the frames manifest in *The New Age*’s coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail during the period under study.

The advantages of the qualitative methods are that they allow the researcher to discern new variables, and connections and to uncover and understand multifaceted processes (Shah & Corley, 2006:1824). Most importantly, the qualitative methods assist the researcher to demonstrate the influence of the “social context” (ibid). According to Reese (2007:10)

“qualitative approach to framing analysis helps resist the reductionistic urge to sort media texts and discourse into containers and count their size or frequency”.

The qualitative research methods are often criticised for ignoring contextual considerations and focusing on meaning and experiences (Silverman, 2010). Smaller sample sizes, which are synonymous with qualitative research, often create misgivings in terms of generalizability (Harry & Lipsky, 2014; Thompson, 2011). However, the strengths of the qualitative methods make the approaches desirable. Qualitative research methods yield comprehensive descriptions of research participants’ experiences and ably interpret the meaning of people’s actions (Denzin, 1989). Qualitative research methods are also flexible and give better empirical analysis (Queirós, *et al.*, 2017:370). Qualitative research focuses on features of the truth that cannot be enumerated, concentrating on the understanding and clarification of the dynamics of social relations (Queirós, *et al.*, 2017:371).

#### **4. 2.3 Case study**

The researcher chose a case study as the overarching research approach for this study. A case study is a comprehensive examination of a person, a group of people or a unit to generalise across numerous units (Tellis, 1997:7). The most significant characteristic of a case study is that it allows the researcher to thoroughly investigate an event or phenomenon in its natural setting (Crowe *et al.*, 2011). The method is popular in the social sciences (Sandelowski, 1996; Yin, 2003).

However, case studies have typically been seen as lacking rigour and impartiality in comparison to other social research methodologies (Rowley, 2002:16; George & Bennett, 2005:24). Additionally, the imprecision of case studies as a research method does not help (2013:35).

The researcher used a case study for this study because case studies are often more effective in areas where quantitative studies are lacking (George & Bennett, 2005:19). Also, case studies are popular because of their great conceptual validity (George & Bennett, 2005:19).

#### **4.2.4 Subject selection**

*The New Age* newspaper, which was the latest newspaper to be introduced to the South African media landscape, was selected for this study as mentioned in previous chapters. *The New Age* newspaper was selected because “it was generally supportive of the ANC government under President Jacob Zuma...” (Wasserman *et al.*, 2018; Vaheed & Desai 2014). *The New Age*’s founders, the Gupta family, were Zuma’s close allies (Plaut, 2018).

Although *The New Age* newspaper claimed that it “provided news that is critically constructive” of the government, it was accused of being “brazenly propagandistic” towards the selected study period (Chipkin, 2018:103). Also, the publication was covering elections for the first time since its inception. A newspaper was chosen for this study because data gleaned from newspapers, and other official material, can be used in assembling qualitative research (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:98).

### **4.3. Data collection and analysis**

#### **4.3.1 Data collection**

The period chosen for the study was from 11 January 2014 to 6 May 2014. A total of 78 copies of *The New Age* newspaper published during this period were read and 150 stories were selected for this study. The stories were selected because they used clear campaign rhetoric, lauded Zuma and the ANC, and featured Zuma on the campaign trail. The large volume of articles analysed allows for a more precise conclusion to be drawn about the dominant frames used in the coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail ahead of the 2014 general elections. The starting date of the study period was selected because that was the day Zuma launched the ANC election manifesto and officially kicked off his election campaign. The end date of the study time frame was selected because it was the eve of the polls

Copies of the now-defunct *The New Age* newspaper were obtained from the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Campus. Articles about the launch of the ANC election manifesto, Zuma’s candidacy, ANC campaign rallies, Zuma’s speeches and his various public political engagements during the selected study period were chosen for the study. Using



textual analysis, this study scrutinised newspaper articles across the various sections of the newspaper. However designated sections such as the front pages of *The New Age* newspaper, page four, which is the publication's politics section, editorials and the opinion pages stood out. These sections of the publication were found to be most significant for this study. *The New Age* carried most of the election campaign content on these pages.

Articles that were false positives were discarded. These articles listed the words "election campaign" in their headlines, mentioned Zuma's speeches in text, used Zuma's pictures in party regalia and referred to the "ANC manifesto" but did not discuss Zuma's election campaign or encompassed a very superficial reference to it. Discarding them is in line with purposive sampling, which "is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest" (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015).

Accessing physical copies of *The New Age* newspaper eliminated common data collection problems. This meant that the researcher could access the articles within their original form. The copies were still intact, the page numbers were clear, and so is the layout, images and captions. The raw data analysed for this study are available in the research repository Figshare (Nombembe, 2022).

#### **4.4 Sampling**

The study used the purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling method, also known as judgmental sampling, is based on the researcher's judgment in selecting the pieces of data to be studied (Ria & Thapa, 2015:5). Purposive sampling is a method of non-probability sampling (*ibid*). The judgment about who should be included in the sample is made by the researcher, based on various norms which comprise "specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research" (Ria & Thapa, 2015:5).

The researcher closely<sup>19</sup> read the articles about elections campaigns published by *The New Age* during the research period. The researcher then narrowed them down by selecting those that specifically referred to Zuma and the ANC within the context of elections campaigning. Those that mentioned the election campaigns fleetingly were also discarded until the researcher remained with 150 articles that are relevant to this study.

The purposive sampling methods have several disadvantages. These include the fact that purposive samples are disposed to the researcher's predisposition, they are created based on the researcher's judgment and it is difficult to justify their representativeness (Sharma, 2017:751-752). However, the advantages of the purposive sampling methods made the technique suitable for this study. The different purposive sampling techniques provide researchers with reasoning to make generalisations from the samples being researched "whether such generalisations are theoretical, analytic and logical in nature" (Sharma, 2017:751). Since qualitative research designs can entail various phases, with each phase developing from the previous one, purposive sampling comes in handy in such cases as the various sampling techniques may be useful at each phase (Ria & Thapa, 2015:9). Purposive sampling is valuable in these cases because it offers a wide range of non-probability sampling methods for the researcher to draw on (ibid). The technique was chosen for this study because it allowed for "proper care" in selecting the sample, not expensive and not time consuming (Rai & Thapa, 2015:10).

#### **4.5 Content and data analysis**

This study adopted content analysis to gain a deeper understanding of how *The New Age* framed Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Content analysis is suitable for this study because it is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004). To bolster this view, Gheyle and Jacobs (2017) aver that content analysis is a research methodology to interpret, often unstructured, content which includes images, symbols, audio data and texts. The methodology endeavours to "determine textual meaning" (ibid).

To draw inferences from texts, content analysts rely on particular guidelines which pivot on current theories, previous studies, experience and coding, and astringent procedure, to examine an amorphous text to answer research questions (White & Marsh, 2006). Gheyle and Jacobs (2017) emphasise that, during this process, due care should be given to the context where the messages are rooted. The scholars (ibid) aver that "two similar sentences can mean different things in different surroundings". Content analysis is split into two, qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis, which is a common variance in social sciences (Gheyle and Jacobs, 2017). The researcher chose qualitative content analysis to examine how *The New Age* framed Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Qualitative content analysis has been chosen for this study because goes beyond

“manifest content” (Mayring, 2004). It also analyses “themes and main ideas of the text” and “context information” (ibid).

According to Preiser *et al.* (2021:270), qualitative methods of content analysis view language as a source that has the potential to influence societal actions. The qualitative methods of content analysis endeavour to discover and study patterns of “sense-making and meaning creation” in the communicative features of language (ibid). They do this by concentrating on the content and core themes that materialise in a text (Preiser *et al.*, 2021:270). Preiser *et al.* (2021:270) aver that “points to a wide range of phenomena such as descriptions, accounts, opinions and feelings that are conveyed in a variety of representations, not only as letters on a white page or screen” and that qualitative “data can be represented in words, pictures and even sounds”.

Morgan (1993) avers that data, in qualitative content analysis, is pigeonholed using classifications inductively derived from the data. This is often applied to the data through close reading (ibid). Researchers using qualitative content analysis focus on words and categories to detect patterns in data, they then analyse the patterns to derive meaning (Sandelowski, 2000). In summary, content analysis is generally defined as a technique in which data is only analysed qualitatively (Patton, 2002; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In the 1950s Kracauer (1952) criticised qualitative content analysis. He (ibid) contended that it abandoned the actual quality of texts and that it was significant to restructure contexts. Kracauer argued that “it is not by counting and measuring that ‘patterns’ or ‘wholes’ in texts can be demonstrated but by showing the different possibilities of interpretation of ‘multiple connotations’” (Kohlbacher, 2006). Another critical challenge linked to qualitative content analysis, identified by Lindgren *et al.* (2020:33), is the trustworthiness of the studies using the technique. The scholars (ibid) contend that in such studies the “‘red thread’ running through the entire work, from the introduction and background, via the soundness of the method, to the integrity of the findings, discussion, and conclusions” is a challenge to distinguish. Lindgren *et al.* (2020:33) also point out that qualitative content analysis makes it difficult to distinguish whose voice is heard in the different parts of a study – the “participant’s voice or the researcher’s interpretation”.

Notwithstanding the above denunciations, qualitative content analysis was chosen to examine *The New Age’s* framing of Zuma’s campaign trail ahead of the 2014 general election because it “goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely” to classify “large

amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings” (Weber, 1990 as cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). The researcher also considered Kohlbacher’s (2006) assertion about the strength of the qualitative content analysis. Kohlbacher (ibid) avers that the method’s forte is that it is rigorously “controlled methodologically” and that the “material is analyzed step-by-step”. Kohlbacher (2006) adds that a “category system which is developed right on the material employing a theory-guided procedure” makes qualitative content analysis attractive. The method was also chosen for this study because it does not merely focus on counting words or mine “objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text”, it aids scholars to comprehend “social reality in a subjective but scientific manner” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

To analyse *The New Age*’s framing of former President Jacob Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections, this study applied a qualitative thematic analysis. Textual analysis of news comes in handy in determining news frames. This technique aids researchers in examining conceivable links between media frames and philosophy (De Vreese *et al.*, 2001). Braun and Clarke (2006) aver that thematic analysis entails data familiarisation, code generation, theme search, themes revision.

According to MacNamara (2018:10), qualitative content analysis has borrowed many of the methods of textual analysis and “in some forms is indistinguishable from this method of analysing texts”.

A close reading of articles enables coders to identify framing devices such as metaphors in the news stories including exemplars, catch-phrases, depictions as well as visual images that give rise to predominant themes (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Coding is a widely used method of allocating units of analysis to categories (MacNamara, 2018:4). The time tested human coding technique, of pre-computer days, is still relevant today (ibid). According to Neuendorf (2002: 40), “the notion of the completely ‘automatic’ content analysis via computer is a chimaera... The human contribution to content analysis is still paramount.” The researcher used inductive thematic analysis to analyse every selected article. Inductive analysis is a key feature of qualitative content analysis (MacNamara, 2018:11). The wide-ranging pragmatic approach to determining news frames in articles is to look at the headlines, subheads, photos, photo

captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts and concluding statements and paragraphs (Tankard, 2001:101).

The researcher analysed the raw data, known as a data corpus, for relevance and excluded the data that he deemed irrelevant. The researcher was then left with 150 news articles that were pertinent to the study. From the data set, the researcher then developed codes and began the process of analysing the data. The codes helped the researcher sort the data into different categories. The researcher then created themes that served as overarching terms for particular codes. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020:5), coding aids researchers to organise data at a rough and precise level. At this stage, researchers are able to identify intriguing probable data items and note questions and links between data items and other maiden ideas (ibid).

The codes that developed were allocated a related theme – if their meaning aligned with the theme. Kiger and Varpio (2020:5) aver that a code should be adequately well-defined to ensure that it does not overlap with others and fits cogently with a broader coding framework. The researcher then analysed the list of coded data and arranged it into potential themes. The researcher built the themes after analysing, linking, contrasting and mapping how they relate to other as advocated by Varpio *et al.* (2017). In this study, the researcher used inductive analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes are derived from the coded data in inductive analysis.

The temporary candidate themes were then reviewed to test their validity. During this process, misplaced codes were moved to relevant themes and all insignificant themes were culled. Each code became a frame.

The broad themes, namely experience, election victory and economy, emerged. Nine frames emerged from the codes. These are the good story to tell frame, vilification frame, nation-builder frame, support frame, Mandela frame, electability frame, transformation frame, apartheid frame and the jobs frame. The analysis of the results was guided by Entman's (1993:52) averments that frames perform certain functions. They define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies (ibid).

#### **4.6 Selection of frames**

The researcher exhaustively read all the stories published in the selected copies of *The New Age* newspaper from the chosen study period. This helped the researcher develop several themes. The researcher then refined the themes into a sequence of frame definitions to aid coding. The frames were not predetermined but were identified during the course of the research. The thematic analysis comes in handy when summarising the main features of a bulky data set (King, 2004). It guides the researcher to adopt an organised approach to handle the data and yield sound and structured results (ibid).

For coding purposes, the researcher analysed the text, headlines, subheads, leads, selection of sources, selection of quotes, pull quotes, photos and captions and concluding statements to identify frames. Tankard (2001:101) lists these as key features for identifying and measuring news frames. De Vreese (2005:54) avers that frames are “specific textual and visual elements” and that they are “essentially different from the remaining news story which may be considered core new facts”.

To further guide the coding and designate the frames, the researcher used the “interpretive package” method. The technic, developed by Gamson & Modigliani (1989), considers “metaphors, catchphrases, visual images, moral appeals, and other symbolic devices” as framing devices. The researcher then marked the variety of conceivable frames, registered the different possible frames in a latent category and used them as classifications in content analysis.

The articles analysed are replete with various frames. However, this study does not seek the review all the frames manifest in the data set. This study has focused on frames that have resonance with the ANC 2014 election manifesto, Zuma’s candidacy, ANC campaign rallies, Zuma’s speeches and his various public political engagements during the selected study period.

#### **4.7 Methodological limitations**

The chosen methodology for this study, a qualitative case study that employs content analysis, has limitations. In carefully selecting *The New Age* articles, for analysis, the researcher relied heavily on his judgement. This was brought about by the application of the purposive sampling method, an approach rooted in qualitative research methods. The method is largely based on the researcher's judgment in selecting the pieces of data to be studied (Ria & Thapa, 2015:5).

The qualitative research methods, as they are wont to do, did not allow for a bigger sample size which could have given the study better contextual considerations (Silverman, 2010).

To address this, the researcher used a crucial case sample to decide whether the study issue warranted additional inquiry before applying an expert sampling technique to analyse specific problems (Sharma, 2017:751). Qualitative research designs can have several stages, each building on the previous one (ibid).

## **4.8 Research rigor**

### **4.8.1 Trustworthiness of this study**

The amount of certainty in “data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study” determines its trustworthiness and rigour, according to Pilot and Beck (2014:24). Positivists are sceptical of the credibility of qualitative research because their concepts of validity and reliability are not addressed in the same way in naturalistic work (Shenton, 2004:63). However, several scholars have demonstrated how qualitative researchers can ensure the validity and reliability of their studies. Among them are Lincoln and Guba (1985; 1994). This study hinged on the scholars' criteria, which are widely accepted by qualitative researchers, which entail “credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability” (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 15). The scholars later added “authenticity” (ibid).

### **4.8.2 Credibility**

A study's credibility is the crucial criterion to ensure the truth of the research and its findings (Polit and Beck, 2014:21). In quantitative research, this concept is akin to internal validity (Connelly, 2016: 435). To ascertain a study's credibility, one need to ask was “the study conducted using standard procedures typically used in the indicated qualitative approach, or was an adequate justification provided for variations?” (Connelly, 2016:435). The researcher

approached this study with this question in mind. Reflective journaling and deep engagement with the data helped the researcher refine the findings before presenting them.

### **4.8.3 Transferability**

The difference between transferability and other aspects of research, as explained by Polity and Beck (2014:45), is that readers decide how applicable the findings are to their situations. This distinguishes it from other aspects of research. However, Shenton (2004:69-70) observes that because the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of specific environments and individuals, demonstrating that the findings and conclusions apply to other situations and populations is impossible. Hence Connelly (2016: 436) avers that researchers who use qualitative methods focus on the informants' stories without implying that this is the story of everyone. Qualitative researchers should paint a detailed image that will enlighten and resonate with readers to achieve transferability (Amankwaa, 2016). To achieve transferability in this study, the researcher adhered to Connelly's (2016:436) guidance and supported the "study's transferability with a rich, detailed description of the context, location, and people studied, and by being transparent about analysis and trustworthiness".

### **4.8.4 Dependability**

Data must be stable over time and withstand the conditions of the study. Polit and Beck (2014:45) refer to this stability as dependability. The procedure for dependability does not happen in a vacuum. Connelly (2014: 436) points out that it includes safeguarding a researcher's audit track of "procedure logs and peer-debriefings". For this study, the researcher chronicled all the developments and decisions regarding the various facets of the study, including the newspaper articles gleaned from *The New Age* that were selected for analysis and observations, and saved all the notes. This is consistent with Shenton's (2004:71) assertion that, to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study should be detailed, allowing a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily achieve the same results. According to Shenton (2004:71), such in-depth coverage also allows the reader to evaluate the degree to which proper research practices were pursued.

### **4.8.5 Conformability**



The notion of conformability is comparable to the qualitative researcher's concern for objectivity (Shenton, 2004:72). To achieve data neutrality, it is necessary to ensure that the study's findings are based on the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the researcher's traits and preferences (Shenton, 2004:72). The researcher, aware of his biases, has detailed the reasons for favouring one approach over others, as well as the weaknesses in the techniques. The raw data that the researcher analysed for this study was also reviewed by the supervisors. This is consistent with Connelly's (2004:435) assertion that in some studies "notes are reviewed by a colleague; in other studies, they may be discussed in peer-debriefing sessions with a respected qualitative researcher". These discussions, according to Connelly ((2004:435), prevent biases from only one person's perspective on the research.

#### **4.9 Ethical consideration**

The data for his study was gathered from copies of *The New Age*. The data was already available in the public domain. Before beginning the study, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the institution's ethics committee. The study did not involve human beings because it only focused on textual analysis.

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

This chapter dealt with the research methodology used in this study, the qualitative news frame analysis. It starts with an overview and advantages of the qualitative research methodologies. This chapter also deals with the choice of the selected publication used in this study and the motivation for the chosen study period.

## Chapter Five: Findings

### 5. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings of the techniques and processes utilised to create and gather data for the study outlined in the previous chapters. The first chapter defined the study's goals and objectives; the second chapter analysed the existing literature on the subject and identified gaps. The third chapter offered a comprehensive theoretical framework, and the fourth included a detailed description of the researcher's research methodology.

The empirical study began by selecting relevant articles published by *The New Age* throughout the designated research period and ended up with 150 units. The selection of the study period has been discussed in previous chapters.

The coding processes, illustrated in Table 1, bore nine broad frames that *The New Age* used in its reporting on Zuma's election campaign: the good story to tell, vilification and nation builder, support, Mandela, electability, transformation, apartheid and jobs frame. The codes were organised into three broad themes: experience, election victory and the economy, which helped the researcher catalogue the findings in an order that makes it easy to interpret the information.

The findings also answer the sub-question of this study: Which news sources are prominent in advancing certain frames in *The New Age*'s news reports of former South African President Jacob Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections?

#### 5.1 Coding sheet

The coding sheet below, in Table 5.1, is an illustration of the codes that emerged from the data and the themes they belong to. Based on the coding process outlined in the previous chapter, nine frames were identified, and upon further categorisation, these frames were grouped into three overarching themes, as depicted below.

Theme	Frames	Diagnosis of the problem	Evaluation of the causes of the problem	Prescription of remedies	Textual expression
Experience	Good story to tell Vilification Nation builder	Efforts to legitimise Jacob Zuma	Jacob Zuma's critics pose danger to South Africa's hard won democracy	South Africans should ensure that Jacob Zuma gets a second term as president in upcoming elections by voting the ANC	"they had recommended at the Mangaung conference Zuma served a second term in office"
Election Victory	Support Mandela Electability	Efforts to portray Zuma as electable	Jacob Zuma did well during his first term as president	A Jacob Zuma presidency must be supported	"Jacob Zuma continues to be the most popular leader with an approval rating of 46%. He is the most popular leader among black people with an approval rating of 53%"
Economy	Transformation Apartheid Jobs	Efforts to legitimise Jacob Zuma's abilities to steer the economy	The economy is still in the hands of a few	Jacob Zuma's efforts to transform the economy must be supported	"President Jacob Zuma said the party would continue to focus on job creation, rural development, land reform, food security, education, health and fight crime and corruption"

**Table 5.1: Coding sheet**



The coding sheet in Table 5.1 is grounded on Entman's (1993:52) contention that frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies. The themes, illustrated in the table above, that emerged are closely linked to the data, as the inductive approach is wont to do.

The experience theme includes all the news reports that were framed around the good story to tell, vilification and nation builder frames. The frames, under the experience theme, highlight Zuma's perceived abilities and portray him as a good leader and bureaucrat. The frames also portray Zuma as being maligned by his detractors.

The frames, under this theme, sought to define a problem, which were efforts to legitimise Zuma.

The frames also evaluated the causes of the problem and highlighted that Zuma's critics posed danger to South Africa's hard-won democracy. The frames prescribed a remedy for the problem by suggesting that South Africans should vote for the ANC in the upcoming general elections to ensure that Zuma gets a second term as president. This problem was viewed as having arisen from the growing negative portrayal of Zuma in the media ahead of the study period. Some of the obstacles to Zuma's campaign included; inadequate economic policies, high unemployment, threats of impeachment, the Marikana massacre, his relationship with the Gupta family, the high cost of security features fitted to his Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal, home, and an upsurge in violent protests (Booyesen, 2015:9-10). As mentioned in chapter one, on August 16, 2012, police shot and killed 34 striking mineworkers at Marikana, North West (Chinguno, 2013:160). The tragedy occurred during Zuma's first term as president. Adelman (2015) argues that Zuma's government was marked by impunity and disrespect for the rule of law, showing a loss of democratic legitimacy that weakened the rule of law.

According to Chinguno (2013:160), the Marikana massacre highlighted significant issues about South Africa's socioeconomic and political order, as well as the integrity of the industrial relations system. Paret (2016:42) suggests that the massacre posed a challenge for the ANC and Zuma because it tarnished the party's support among labour unions.

The controversy over the exorbitant cost of security upgrades at Zuma's private residence in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal, impacted the former president's election campaign. The modifications, which cost the government R250 million, sparked a significant political backlash and considerable public unhappiness (Lodge, 2014:2). According to Booyesen

(2015:15), the Nkandla incident converted the ANC's presidential candidate, Zuma, into one of the party's weakest contestants on its election list. As a result, according to Booysen (ibid), much of the ANC's campaign strategy focused on reducing the impact of Nkandla, but the "Zuma-Nkandla" problem weakened the party's support.

The election victory theme comprises all the news reports that were framed around the support, Mandela and electability frames. The frames, under this theme, were used to prop up Zuma's image following a turbulent first presidential term marked by his detractors' attempts to depict him as a liability. The frames render him an electable candidate to the voters. The frames define the problem as efforts to present Zuma as electable, the cause of the problem, as the frames established, was the assertion that Zuma did well during his first term as president, and the remedy, according to the frames is he should be supported for to clinch a second presidential term.

Again, the genesis of the problem could be viewed as Zuma's battered public image towards the end of his first term (Booyesen, 2015). Late former president Nelson Mandela's legacy was part of Zuma's campaign message. Booysen (2015:12) describes Mandela's legacy, as a "symbol of democratisation and reconciliation process of 1994", and as "manna from heaven" for Zuma's campaign. Zuma also dedicated his election manifesto to Mandela, who died in December 2013 (Zuma, 2014). *The New Age* harnessed the message and utilised it as one of the frames to interpret Zuma's campaign message.

The economy theme comprises all the news reports that were framed around the transformation, apartheid and jobs frames. The problem, as diagnosed by the frames, centre on efforts to legitimise Zuma's abilities to improve the country's economy. The frames further pinned the causes of the problem on the assumption that the economy is still in the hands of the white minority. The frames prescribed that Zuma's efforts to transform the economy should be supported, as a remedy to the problem.

This problem was viewed as having arisen from long-held doubts about Zuma's economic policies (Southall 2009; Booysen, 2015). According to Southall (2009:322-323), fears abound that Zuma would be inclined to pursue communist economic policies. Zuma's economic policies came under scrutiny when his administration failed to achieve significant economic growth and reduce high unemployment rates (Booyesen, 2015:9).

The following section dissects the themes and shows how the frames that fall under them emerged.

### **5.3 Experience theme**

#### **5.3.1 The good story to tell news frame**

#### **5.3.2 Overview of the good story to tell news frame**

*The New Age* newspaper used the good story to tell frame comprehensively in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. The frame can be described as a “quality of life frame” (Boydston *et al*, 2014:7). The frame, as Boydston *et al* (ibid) define it, encompasses the “effects of a policy on individuals’ wealth, mobility, access to resources, happiness, social structures, ease of day-to-day routines, quality of community life” among myriad other issues. The good story to tell frame falls under generic news frames which are prevalent in the coverage of politics and, particularly, election campaigns (De Vreese, 2005). The good story to tell frame explicitly portrays the ANC and Zuma by association as the people’s saviour. The party is being hailed as having transformed the majority of South Africans’ lives for the better during the two decades it had been at the helm of government after taking over from the minority white rule. The frame served Zuma well and he could also take credit for the progress, having served in different capacities in the ANC government since the dawn of democracy (Geertsema-Sligh, 2015:176; Koosentse *et al.*, 2018).

*The New Age* newspaper’s journalists, political analysts and government spin doctors also latched onto the frame. News articles, political analysis and opinions on Zuma’s election campaign, during the period of study, reflected the good story to tell frame (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:1; Dlodlo, 2014:19; TNA Reporter, 2014:8; Torerai, 2014:9; Hunter, 2014:22a; Hunter, 2014:4b; Khiba, 2014:9; Williams, 2014:18). This could have been the case because the frame was tactfully crafted and based on undeniable facts. Indeed, the quality of South Africans’ lives – during Zuma’s campaign – was not the same as under apartheid (Booyesen, 2015:10).

According to Miller (2017:2), the ANC government, since the dawn of democracy in 1994, was able to reduce poverty among the South African population and provide water and electricity. This observation is complemented by Southall (2015:4) who avers that the ANC managed the economy better than the “last disastrous decades” of the National Party government. Southall (ibid) adds that the ANC “provided for an impressive extension of social grants” to the elderly and disabled, among others. This ensured a significant lessening of poverty (Southall, 2015:4).

### 5.3.3 Identifying the good story to tell news frame

Inclusion or lack of certain keywords, stock phrases, and pigeonholed images reveal frames in news text (Entman, 1993:52). Frames are also identified through the sources of information used, and sentences that offer thematically supporting sets of facts or decisions (ibid). The good story to tell frame was identified through the catchphrase “we have a good story to tell” which was the centre of Zuma’s election campaign (Hunter, 2014:4b; Booysen, 2015). Booysen (2015:13) avers that the “good story” encompassed the two decades that the ANC had been in power. The 20 years included Zuma’s first term of office (ibid). The phrase received significant attention from political science scholars who examined campaign speeches during the election period (Plaut, 2014; Mtshiselwa, 2015; Reddy, 2015; Evertt, 2016; Mpofu, 2019). However, the scholars did not analyse the phrase within a news framing context. Catchphrases are among framing devices that summarise information and provide a “media package” of a subject (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). They entail language that is “peculiar to a particular profession, and organizational culture, or a well-developed vision or program” (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996:108).

Catchphrases help frame an organisation’s vision in a way that persuades people to buy into the idea (Shapiro & Ward, 1998). Zuma used the catchphrase “good story to tell” to unpack his campaign and in so doing, he explained his vision in terms familiar to the South African voter. This was strategic because *The New Age* covered the campaign extensively and widely quoted the catchphrase over the study period (Khiba, 2014:9; TNA, 2014:8a; TNA, 2014:8b; Hunter, 2014:22a; Torerai, 2014:9; Dlodlo, 2014:19; Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:1; Williams, 2014:18; Hunter, 2014:4b).

*The New Age* used the good story to tell frame to illustrate the ANC and Zuma’s abilities to govern and enhance South Africans’ quality of life. Sampled stories published by *The New Age* during the run-up to the 2014 general elections show that the publication used persuasion techniques (Carter, 2013:8). The techniques enabled the publication to emphasise issues in an attempt to swing the readers’ opinions from one posture to another by giving them detailed context (ibid). The good story to tell frame focused on Zuma’s ability to continue with the ANC’s governance legacy of improving people’s lives and turning South Africa into a better country.



*The New Age* also focused on apartheid and contrasted the appalling circumstances of the black majority then, and compared them with the living conditions under a democratic ANC government – five years of which were under Zuma’s reign as president. It is assumed that publication’s readers probably still remembered apartheid, and its atrocities, when the stories were published. It can be assumed that *The New Age*, through the frame, sought to trigger the readers’ memories of apartheid. This is in line with Entman’s (1993:53) averment that frames can make pieces of information more salient if they accord with the “existing schemata in a receiver’s belief system”.

In summary, this frame sought to portray Zuma and the ANC in glowing terms. The frame depicts Zuma and the party as beacons of hope for South Africans. However, the crisp message communicated by the frame is that Zuma, and the ANC, deserve re-election because they delivered the privileges, and a progressive constitution, that the voters are benefiting from. The reminder, comprehensively communicated, of what South Africa used to be, sticks out like a poster that says: Lest you forget where we come from. In a report in the publication, Dlodlo (2014:19) writes: “Today, where people talk of these rights, they seem to forget that this is where we come from.”

How this frame manifested is self is aptly captured in Esser and D’Angelo’s comparative study of meta coverage of general election campaigns (2006). The scholars aver that “party politics reaches into media organizations because they are often either controlled by party representatives (in the case of the public broadcasting channels) or pursue politically motivated editorial lines (in the case of national newspapers)” (Esser & D’Angelo, 2006:50). In that situation there is somewhat a “small distance” between the “news media and politicians” (ibid).

This frame defines a problem, diagnoses its causes, makes a moral judgment and suggests as delineated by Entman (1993:52). These are discussed in the next chapter. According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996:117) news “engage our attention because they are often about the problems that people experience and the resolution they work out”.

**Table 5.2: Textual expression in the good story-to-tell news frame**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Ramaphosa said: ‘Our president Jacob Zuma said throughout these 20 years of freedom that we have a good story to tell and it is true’” (Khiba, 2014:9b).</li> <li>• “That South Africa indeed has a good story to tell was reiterated by the ANC leadership at Human Rights Day celebration in D’Almeida, Mossel Bay at the weekend” (TNA, 2014:8c).</li> <li>• “The minister rides on Zuma’s narrative of a good story over the last 20 years of democracy.</li> </ul> |
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He says when the first electricity light was switch on in South Africa in 1890 very few houses were connected to the grid over the next 100 years since then” (Hunter, 2014:22j).

- “Legoete says South Africa has ‘good story to tell’ when the apartheid past was eradicated by democracy” (Torerai, 2014:9b).
- “Looking back to 1994, indeed, South Africa has a good story to tell. The ANC through its pro-poor policies ensured that our people are truly liberated” (Torerai, 2014:9b).
- “We have a good story to tell. Our country is a much better to live in now that it was before 1994. For that we are thankful to millions of South Africans for working with the ANC and its government, to bring about the change and transformation we see today” (TNA, 2014:8c).
- “This is what we speak about when we say there is a good story to tell. It is not just propaganda but the world that is looking on, that compares itself with us, has acknowledged this numerously through various recognitions” (Dlodlo, 2014:19). “Instead we were the skunk of the world whose system of apartheid was declared by the whole world as a crime against humanity. Today, where people talk of these rights, they seem to forget that this is where we come from. The very existence of a Constitution that considered human rights sacrosanct is a good story to tell” (Dlodlo, 2014:19).
- “His message to Zuma was “ you need a negative to activate a positive, sometimes we become agitated because we see and hear the opposition, do not be moved by whatever they are saying, they can have their say but you will have a good story to tell, after today, (it) will never be the same” (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:1a).
- “Highlighting the achievements of the past 20 years, President Zuma stressed that South Africa has a positive story to tell. Working together we have changed South Africa into a better country. We have delivered basic services to the majority of our people who were neglected under apartheid. Therefore we do have a good story to tell” (Williams, 2014:18a).
- “The ANC used the catchphrase “we have a good story to tell” as the basis of its election campaign. It tells the story of developments made by the ANC-led government over the past 20 years without any focus on individual leaders” (Hunter, 2014:4f).

#### 5.3.4 Vilification frame

#### 5.3.5 Overview of the vilification news frame

*The New Age* newspaper harnessed the vilification frame and ran with it during Zuma’s campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. The vilification frame is a human interest frame. According to Abdullah (2021:7), the human interest frame hinges on emotion conjures empathy on issues and prefers a humane attitude to deal with challenges. The frame manifests itself when news media personalise, sensationalise and emotionalise a story (ibid). Neuman *et al.* (1992) defined it as the “human impact” frame. Scholars aver that new media, due to the competitive nature of the industry, employ the frame to captivate audiences (Bennett, 1995; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Abdulla, 2021). The human interest frame is one of the commonly utilised generic news frames (Boukes *et al.*, 2015).

The vilification frame was extensively used in *The New Age*'s coverage of Zuma's campaign trail (Mabona, 2014:4; Muzondo, 2014:19; Mafisa, 2014:1; Mavuso, 2014:7; Mbatha, 2014:19). It portrays Zuma in a duet of vastly diverse circumstances. The frame shows Zuma as an innocent target of malicious opponents. The second level, which is more pronounced, depicts him as one of the country's most experienced politicians – one who has the interest of the poor and downtrodden at heart.

The 2014 elections were the toughest for the ANC since the first democratic polls in 1994. Key among the problems that plagued the party was the fact that Zuma was embroiled in scandal.

Public Protector Thuli Madonsela had just released a scathing report about security upgrades at Zuma's private home in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal, that cost the taxpayer about R250 million (Ndletyana & Maserumule, 2015). Meanwhile, the corruption, racketeering and money laundering charges, related to the controversial arms deal, against Zuma persisted (Booyesen, 2015). Zuma's first presidential term was bumpy towards the end – a parliamentary impeachment debate was on the cards (ibid). The unauthorised landing of a private jet transporting guests en route to a Gupta wedding at the Waterkloof Airforce Base was another public relations nightmare for Zuma (Booyesen, 2015). The killing of striking mineworkers by police at Marikana, North West, was another impediment to Zuma's campaign (ibid).

The vilification came in handy for Zuma and his campaign. *The New Age* newspaper bought into it, and it was evident in its coverage of Zuma's campaign in the run-up to the general elections. News stories and opinion pieces, alike, adopted the frame.

### **5.3.6 Identifying the vilification news frame**

The vilification frame is explicit, extensive and catchy. Article headlines, subheadings, introductions and conclusions of the stories published by *The New Age* during the period of study embodied the frame. Etymological hints, word groupings, word selections and syntactic constructions are some of the framing techniques that *The New Age* used. These techniques aid researchers in processing frames (Boydston, 2013:2).

Chong and Druckman (2007:100) aver that the words, pictures, phrases and how a politician or a news media outlet presents information to consumers reveal the media frame or frame in

communication. The vilification frame was identified through several phrases in headlines such as: “Church slams Zuma ‘haters’” (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:29), “ANC says Zuma is not dead” (Nyaka, 2014:29) and “Zuma opens up candidly on Nkandla story” (Hunter, 2014:1).

Zuma’s victimhood, which precedes his 2014 campaign, requires a bit of context. His vilification, real or perceived, can be traced back to 2006 when he was accused of rape and later acquitted. His supporters viewed the charges as a conspiracy to prevent him from ascending to the presidency (Waetjen, 2010:60). According to Basson (2012), Zuma became president because the majority of ANC members were convinced that he was the victim of a conspiracy invented by former president Thabo Mbeki and the now defunct elite crime-fighting unit, the Scorpions. Ndletyana and Maaba (2010) aver that Zuma presented himself as a victim of ethnic persecution during his campaign to become the president of the ANC.

Mangope (2014: 18) writes: “Criticism towards the president is not a recent matter. One may even argue that the non-conformist nature of President Jacob Zuma is what has made him cannon fodder for media houses.”

The vilification frame found its way into *The New Age*’s editorial content, opinion pieces and letters to the editor.

**Table 5.3: Textual expression in the vilification frame**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The SACP Gauteng leadership yesterday expressed concerns at the public attacks directed at the ANC and President Jacob Zuma over the country’s various challenges” (Mabona, 2014:4d).</li> <li>• “Features of low intensity counter-revolution take the form of severe lies to wage attacks against the ANC leadership, particularly President Zuma” (Mabona, 2014:4d).</li> <li>• “To blame President Jacob Zuma and completely ignore contradictions of the state transformation constitutes crude subjectivism,” (Mabona, 2014:4d).</li> <li>• “Efforts to disparage the president can be traced to way back before Bulelani Ngcuka held off-the-record meetings with selected editors and informed them that Zuma was corrupt but he did not have evidence to obtain a conviction. The vitriol spewed by the media about Zuma prior to Polokwane is hard to forget (Muzondo, 2014:19).</li> <li>• “The booing of President Jacob Zuma at the memorial service of the late former president Nelson Mandela showed to some extent the way the media has persistently painted Zuma black” (Muzondo, 2014:19).</li> <li>• “For the longest time, the media has consistently and persistently vilified Zuma. Hardly a day goes by with one or other media house presenting a story casting the president in bad light” (Muzondo, 2014:19).</li> <li>• “The basic rule of journalism of telling both sides of the story is always thrown into the garbage bin when it comes to any reporting about Zuma” (Muzondo, 2014:19).</li> <li>• “His vilification started a long time ago with constant digs at his perceived lack of education. He has been labelled corrupt and a rapist and convicted on both counts by the court of public opinion fuelled by the media, even though he was cleared of criminal conduct competed</li> </ul>
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courts” (Muzondo, 2014:19).

- “For instance many South Africans believe that President Jacob Zuma is corrupt, even though there has been no formal court proceedings that charged and declared the president to be corrupt. Unfounded allegations motivated by lies and hatred are posited instead of proper analysis” (Mbatha, 2014:19c).
- “The ANC yesterday came out in defence of Zuma in response to the report on security upgrades to his house, and said it had no intention to recall him” (Mafisa, 2014:1b).
- “Numsa, the DA and Thuli Madonsela accused of making a ‘sustained assault’ on Zuma” (Mavuso, 2014:9a).
- “Church slams Zuma ‘haters’” (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:1a).
- The president of the Western Cape Christian Ministries Association (WCCMA) yesterday slammed Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Thuli Madonsela and others at a prayer meeting held for President Jacob Zuma and the upcoming election (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:1a).
- “His message to Zuma was ‘you need a negative to activate a positive, sometimes we become agitated because we see and hear the opposition, do not be moved by whatever they are saying, they can have their say but you will have a good story to tell, after today, (it) will never be the same’” (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:1a).
- “President Jacob Zuma had the last word on the controversy surrounding his private residence in Nkandla which has been the focal point of electioneering among opposition parties” (Hunter, 2014:1u).
- “We should all go and vote for the ANC and put our president back in power” (Seekoi, 2014:9c).
- “Thabethe said he had worked with Zuma while they were in exile in neighbouring Swaziland in the late ’70s. Mjibha Njobe, another veteran, said they had recommended at the Mangaung conference Zuma served a second term in office” (Mavuso, 2014:8b).
- The balanced and positive state of the nation address by President Jacob Zuma was very well crafted, executed and received (Daniels, 2014:18).
- “Xasa, a speaker of the Eastern Cape provincial legislature, said Zuma had been part of ANC collective. ‘He served on many senior positions of our movement way back before 1994 and in the process had become part of the collective of the ANC,’ Xasa said in Cofimvaba his week” (Velaphi, 2014: 27d).
- “While the people of Limpopo chose to acknowledge his contributions, the media missed the opportunity to inform the nation of contributions Zuma made towards achieving a non-racist society in South Africa, choosing instead to focus on how he purportedly disrespected women” (Muzondo, 2014:19).

### 5.3.7 Nation builder frame

### 5.3.8 Overview of the nation-builder news frame

The nation-builder frame was unsubtle and one of the strong and extensively used frames in *The New Age’s* coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail ahead of the 2014 general elections. It can be described as a political frame. Boydston *et al.* (2014:5) define political frames as any political deliberations surrounding a political issue. Political frames are characterised by “explicit statements that a policy issue is good or bad for a particular political party” (ibid).

The notion of political frames is synonymous with public policy (Casademont Falguera & Serra, 2021). They influence how people delineate events and how they construct ensuing behaviour concerning that definition (Lopatin, 2020).

The crisp message that Zuma's campaign trail sought to communicate was that the former president and the ANC were focused on national-building (Zuma, 2014). According to Chaka (2014:353), nation-building is the "process through which nations are created and national identities are constructed". Effective communication is a crucial adhesive that binds nations (Deutsch, 1963). Deutsch avers that the bedrock that nations are created is comprised of various plans, different materials, diverse arrangements of steps and changes in global politics (ibid). The scholar also states that the process of nation-building is guided by the choice, determination and supremacy of its builders (Deutsch, 1963).

However, it is Huntington's (1969) view about nation-building that best describes South Africa's position during Zuma's 2014 campaign trail. Huntington (ibid) links nation-building to the setup of political establishments in a freshly minted nation. These political bodies, which include political parties among myriad others, then aid the infant nation to realise the socio-political needs of its population (Huntington, 1969). Zuma's message in the ANC 2014 election manifesto aptly articulates Huntington's assertion (Zuma, 2014). Zuma wrote: "Twenty years ago we began a new journey to eradicate the oppressive legacy of colonialism and apartheid. It has been 20 years of freedom and democracy in which we have made significant steps towards achieving the vision of the Freedom Charter" (ibid). In the message, Zuma said his party had worked hard to meet South Africans' expectations of a better life (Zuma, 2014) the socio-political needs that Huntington (1969) alluded to. Zuma then added: "More than ever before, we must work together to promote national building, unity and social solidarity as we free the economy from the shackles of the past" (Zuma, 2014). Zuma's message confirms aligns with Deutsch's (1963) that communication is crucial to gluing a young nation together.

The ANC government, through the National Planning Commission, developed a "grand" economic policy for the country and name it the National Development Plan (NDP) (NDP, 2011). According to Naidoo and Maré (2015), the "formulation of grand economic policy strategies to promote growth, job creation, and industrial development has been a regular feature in South Africa's democratic transformation" and the NDP was the latest in a list of strategies since the Reconstruction and Development Programme in 1994.

The NDP reads in part:

“The country must write a different story in the years ahead. In this new story, every citizen is concerned about the well-being of all other citizens, and the development of South Africa means the development of each and every one of us who lives here. We must build on our social solidarity, which, through history and heritage has demonstrated our aspiration to create a caring South African society” (NDP, 2011:4).

Zuma flaunted the NDP, alongside other policies, to evoke the electorate’s interest in the party during his campaign trail (Zuma, 2014; Booysen, 2014b). Rallying people around policy issues is a hallmark of both political frames and nation-building (Boydston *et al.*, 2014:5; Casademont Falguera & Serra, 2021). Thus, the nation-building frame found in expression in *The New Age*’s coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

### **5.3.9 Identifying the nation-builder news frame**

According to Boydston *et al.* (2014:2), language is central to identifying frames in text. This assertion bolsters Entman’s (1993) posit that frames in the text are noticeable through the manifestation or lack of certain keywords and sources of information among other things. The National Development Plan was one of the highlights of Zuma’s administration (Isike & Ogunnubi, 2017). The document was a glimpse into the former president’s thinking on the economy, foreign policy, housing and other key needs of South Africans. It is a small wonder that Zuma’s administration “celebrated” the document (Southall, 2015:5). *The New Age* incorporated the national builder frame in its coverage of the Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. The frame was very unsubtle and obvious. This was precisely so because the National Development Plan document was launched with much fanfare (Southall, 2015; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2015). The term National Development Plan, and its acronym ‘NDP’, became a catchphrase and a buzzword as the debate over the “grant economic plans” raged (Naidoo & Maré, 2015).

Had it not been for Wolfsfed’s (1997) view that the more overt and easily spotted frames are less grounded in philosophy, making them shallow, the National Development Plan would have been a frame on its own. The umbrella term for the National Development Plan became the experience theme (See table 5.1). Several sentences that provided thematically

underpinning groups of details and judgments, as suggested by Entman (1993:2), were manifest in the analysed data.

**Table 5.4: Textual expression in the nation-builder news frame**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade union federation backtracks on NDP, which is the centrepiece of ANC election document (Hunter, 2014:4b).</li> <li>• Cosatu has made an apparent U-turn on its stance on the National Development Plan (NDP) (Hunter, 2014:4b).</li> <li>• The NDP aims to eradicate poverty, increase employment and reduce inequality by 2030. In February 212, ahead of the ANC's Mangaung conference, Cosatu's central executive committee cast doubt on the plan. (Hunter, 2014:4b).</li> <li>• Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini said regarding the ANC's adoption of the NDP as the basis of its manifesto: "You win some and you lose some. We fully support the ANC and the manifesto. (Hunter, 2014:4b).</li> <li>• The ANC manifesto reads: "Within the NDP vision, critical policy instruments will continue to drive the government's policy agenda." These programmes included the New Growth Path, the National Infrastructure Plan and the Industrial Policy Action Plan. (Hunter, 2014:4b).</li> <li>• On Friday night President Jacob Zuma alluded to the same reasoning, saying there could be no consensus in a democracy. Despite having lost its contention of the NDP, Cosatu remains committed to campaign for the ANC ahead of the general elections. (Hunter, 2014:4b).</li> <li>• Its manifesto launched at the weekend maps out its programme of action for the next five years with the National Development Plan retained as the central feature of the vision for South Africa's future. (NA. Editorial, 2014:18a).</li> <li>• Zuma once again drew reference to the National Development Plan as one of the key achievements of the past five years. "Everybody will need to work hard and play their part to move South Africa forward and ensure that we achieve the prosperous society we all desire," he said. (Hunter, 2014:22a).</li> <li>• Zuma said only collaboration with all sectors of society would breed success for the country. "The time for sitting on the fence and pointing fingers will need to stop. "We have a country to build together." (Hunter, 2014:22a)</li> <li>• The company is also pleased that the Industrial Policy Action Plan has identified biofuels as a contributor to industrial growth. The National Development Plan has also identified biofuels as a future option for liquid fuels and economic infrastructure development. (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4b).</li> <li>• The ANC expressed hope that the new blueprint, the National Development Plan would help eradicate challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality by 2030. (Torera, 2014:9b).</li> <li>• The president opens up about the elections, the NDP, private sector investment and the tripartite alliance (Omarjee &amp; Hunter, 2014:17).</li> <li>• We appeal to the private sector to play a role in supporting the national development plan through their ideas. This will help as we plan the delivery of services to our people," Mkhize said. (Nyaka, 2014:23e).</li> <li>• "This president will be well received in the Eastern Cape simply because of his dedication to develop the province" (Velaphi, 2014:28a).</li> <li>• "DJ Sbu added that President Jacob Zuma' state of the nation address inspired confidence in terms of fighting corruption" (Mabona, 2014:4e).</li> </ul>
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## **5.4 Elections Victory theme**

### **5.4.1 Support frame**

#### **5.4.2 Overview of the support frame**

The support frame featured prominently in *The New Age* newspaper's coverage of Zuma's campaign trail ahead of the 2014 general elections. It is a public opinion frame. According to Boydston *et al.* (2014:5), public opinion frames relate to general social stances, voting and demographic information. They also entail endeavours to achieve more votes at the polls (ibid).

The support frame portrays Zuma and the ANC as popular among the electorate and likely to succeed in the then-upcoming elections. Zuma covered his election campaign with a victory façade (Booyesen (2015:18). According to Booyesen (2015:19): "Print and electronic media were deluged with celebratory advertisements and billboards and advertorials and building wraps amplified the message." Zuma's speech when he welcomed the outcomes of the elections strengthens the support frame. Zuma, as cited in Booyesen (2015:20), said: "[T]his election victory has re-confirmed just how deeply rooted the ANC is in the hearts and minds of the overwhelming majority of South Africans."

The frame sponsors of the support frame were Zuma, members of his party and close allies. Non-media actors, such as Zuma and his associates, promote certain frame packages that influence the outlines in frame packages used by journalists in their reporting (Wichgers *et al.*, 2021:674). Influential actors with a "strong stake in the issue", such as Zuma and the prize he stood to gain from the elections "are more successful in getting their preferred frame packages across" (ibid). Entman (1993:57) asserts that framing is a fundamental power democratic process; hence political elites seek to control the framing of issues.

#### **5.4.3 Identifying the support frame**

There are several ways used to identify frames in a media text. These include the journalist's choice of words, images and syntactic constructions (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015:429). Entman (1993:52) avers that "sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" also constitute a frame. Shah *et al.* (2002:367) complement Entman's assertion. They assert that "the choices about language, quotations, and

relevant information” (ibid). The researcher applied a technique used by Kellstedt (2003) in his study of public attitudes to the US government’s bid to encourage racial equality. To detect cues of a particular frame, Kellstedt (2003:35) looked for several ideas, each containing unique words and combination of words associated with the idea. In this study, the researcher identified *support*, *confidence* and *strength* as the general words that marked the presence of the support frame in the analysed data.

**Table 5.5: Textual expression in the support frame**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “While people are claiming the ANC is losing ground, it is the opposite because the ANC is gaining ground all the time. We are a big organisation and everywhere you look there is just the ANC. We are confident that we will win in all provinces,’ Zuma said” (Nyaka, 2014:22e).</li> <li>• “As the ANC, we have done our campaigning very well with confidence in the entire province and we are not scared by Malema’s visit. The residents in the municipality are our pillar of strength and will continue supporting us as they know the ANC has fought for their democracy. We don’t believe people could simply be misled by a child without any track record in his life” (Nyaka, 2014:29f).</li> <li>• “Another beneficiary, Mary Mandonsela, 73, said: ‘The only political party in my mind is that of Nelson Mandela’s ANC because I have been voting for it since 1994. So I would be wrong not to reveal in front of you that I will continue voting for it’” (Nyaka, 2014:29f).</li> <li>• ““We believe that the ANC, notwithstanding its challenges, remains the most effective vehicle to bring about fundamental change and transformation in favour of the poor and workers, in our country, on the continent and internationally,’ they said” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:24r) 30 April 2014</li> <li>• “Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini said regarding the ANC’s adoption of the NDP as the basis of its manifesto: ‘You win some and you lose some. We fully support the ANC and the manifesto’” (Hunter, 2014:4a).</li> <li>• “The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) wants the ANC to make a clean sweep at the polls. The show of support by Nehawu yesterday came after metalworkers union Numsa dumped the ruling party for the elections” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4a).</li> <li>• “President to deliver key address at rally in Dutywa to drum up support ahead of polls” (Velaphi, 2014:28a).</li> <li>• “The ANC is the only party that has not only the support of the people; it is also supported by an advanced section of society who have the organic intellectual capacity to advise the ANC correctly. This advanced section is none other than the communists, organised by the SACP. That is the main reason why DA hates the ANC so much (Hlalele, 2014:18).</li> <li>• “The ANC continued talking to communities because it was working closely with them, Sangoni-Khawe said. She said the service delivery protests were not an indication of the loss of support for the ANC on the ground” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4c).</li> <li>• “Prior to that, Zuma tabled his party’s manifesto which received applause from the majority of the country’s citizens” (Nyaka, 2014:4a).</li> <li>• “SACP, Cosatu back ANC” (Nyaka, 2014:4a).</li> <li>• “Zuma and ANC gain support from foreign nationals grateful for their acceptance in SA” (Nyaka, 2014:23c).</li> </ul>
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#### **5.4.4 Mandela framing**

#### **5.4.5 Overview of the Mandela frame**

The Mandela frame was a central feature of the media's framing of Zuma's election campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Zuma and ANC senior leaders were the sponsors of the frame package, and it permeated *The New Age* journalists' coverage of the election campaign. According to Wichgers *et al.* (2021), frame sponsors are non-media actors who promote a particular frame package that sways the patterns in the frame package. The Mandela frame is a symbolic frame. Bolman and Deal (1991) aver that a symbolic frame entails dialogue about "institutional identity, culture, or symbols". The scholars (*ibid*) assert that the frame also involves a "discussion of the symbolic importance of existing practices, rituals, or artefacts". In this case, the symbol was late former South African president Nelson Mandela – a renowned public figure. Mandela fought for the liberation of South Africans, of all races, from the apartheid regime (Oppenheim, 2012:370). He spent 27 years in prison, and he was revered for his contribution (*ibid*).

Bolman and Deal (1991) hold that the frame makes or invigorates rites and sacraments in a bid to reaffirm the institution's vision "working on influencing organizational culture, using self as a symbol". This was evident in the Mandela frame's sponsors' messages. Mandela, a staunch ANC stalwart, was used to reignite his vision and the message that emerged from the media coverage was that the electorate would be fulfilling the former president's dream by voting for the ANC and Zuma. It falls under the generic news frames category. Generic news frames surpass thematic limits and can be traverse diverse topics (De Vreese, 2002).

#### **5.4.6 Identifying the Mandela news frame**

The Mandela news frame was identified by the reference to late former president Nelson Mandela's name in the analysed text. According to Entman (1993:52), key words and stock phrase help researchers identify frames in the news stories. Zuma and news sources aligned to the ANC invoked Mandela's name during the election campaign. Zuma dedicated his 2014 election manifesto to the late icon. Zuma's foreword in the manifesto reads:

One of the greatest leaders ever produced by our people and our movement is gone, yet Madiba's revolutionary spirit continues to inspire our efforts to ensure the poor

and the working class truly benefit from the material fruits of the freedom for which he fought.

Let us together re-double our efforts to realise his vision, shared by his people and humanity, for a better life for all, for a better Africa and a better world (Zuma, 2014).

The Mandela news frame was widespread in the analysed stories published by *The New Age* during the period of the study.

**Table: 5.6: Textual expression in the Mandela frame**

- “Mandela belongs to the ANC and the ruling party has every right to campaign in his name” (Mafisa, 2014:1a).
- ““They can’t take (Nelson) Mandela from us. He was an ANC leader and a loyal ANC member,’ ANC spokesperson Keith Khoza said” (Mafisa, 2014:1a).
- “Political analyst Ralph Mathikge agreed. He said opposition parties had created an ‘imaginary Mandela who was depoliticised when in reality Mandela was a member of the ANC who had radical political ideas’ (Mafisa, 2014:1a).
- “And while Madiba may not be around any longer to woo voters for the ruling party, his fellow Rivonia trialist said: ‘I will die an ANC member. I will campaign for the ANC if I’m deployed to do so’ (Mafisa, 2014:1a).
- “ANC national executive committee member Fikile Xasa said it did not make sense for the opposition to tarnish the ANC-led government’s name, and yet find it expedient to single out former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki as having been better leaders of the organisation” (Velaphi, 2014:27d).
- “In other words we cannot single out Madiba and Zizi (Mbeki) for the good work that the ANC has done for the country. The two comrades (Mandela and Mbeki) were deployed by the ANC in their positions. What they did was based on our collective decisions as ANC. Even under Mbeki, we (ANC) were there. We are still here under Zuma and we will also be there for any of our leaders” ((Velaphi, 2014:27d).
- “He said when former Nelson Mandela walked out of Pollsmoor prison 24 years ago, he called on white to join the ranks of the ANC in their numbers, assuring them that the ANC was their political home” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:8s).
- “Reflect on the unstinting contribution of Nelson Mandela and others before committing the futile act of spoiling the ballot paper” (NA. The Editor, 2014:1). “Occupying presidency soon after Mandela means that he had big shoes to fill” (Muzondo, 2014:19).
- “President Zuma paid tribute to Madiba by reminding us that his long walk to freedom might have come to an end, but that our journey of creating a better life for all continues” (Williams, 2014:18a).
- “We have a collective responsibility to live up to Mandela’s legacy and continue to build a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa” ((Williams, 2014:18a).

- “Recently they have attempted to divide the ANC by praising Madiba and Thabo Mbeki, while condemning and demonising Zuma. They claimed that during the past five years the government under President Zuma has rolled back the progress made by former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki” (Monyela, 2014:18).
- “My vote will honour Madiba” (Benjamin, 2014:17).
- “I will stand proudly in the queue to cast my vote to honour Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani, Ruth First and many of our fallen revolutionaries” (Benjamin, 2014:17).
- “A rainbow in a grey sky and a statue of Nelson Mandela smiling with open arms. This is what adorns the cover of the 20 Year Review of South Africa. And if President Jacob Zuma’s words are anything to go by, the picture reflects the positive strides they country has made” (Hunter, 2014:1i).

#### **5.4.7 Electability frame**

#### **5.4.8 Overview electability frame**

Among the frames that *The New Age* used to report on Zuma’s election campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general elections is electability frame. It can be called a viability frame. The viability frame entails content about a candidate’s efficacy as a campaigner, political validations, campaign organisation and the public’s opinions of the candidate (Yoon & Lee, 2013:422). *The New Age* journalists presented Zuma as a candidate capable of being elected to the country’s highest office.

The analysed articles carried by the publication during the period of study tick all the above boxes. The frame also includes content about “campaign finances and fundraising” (ibid). Booysen (2015:16) avers that “[b]y the time of Election 2014 the ANC had formidable resources...” The electability frame falls under the generic news frame. The generic news frames are prevalent in the coverage of politics, especially election campaigns (De Vreese, 2005:55).

#### **5.8.9 Identifying the electability news frame**

The catchphrases such as "unwavering identification with the majority", "popular leader", "ANC deserves their support", "ANC is the only viable choice", "Nkandla report will not have serious implications for President Jacob Zuma’s political" and "[s]eventy percent of South Africans think the ANC will win at the polls on May 7" were among the words that helped the researcher identify the electability frame in the examined articles. This is in line with

Entman's (1993:52) assertion that frames, in text, manifest through the inclusion or nonappearance of particular keywords.

In the absence of "stereotyped images", the sources quoted in the analysed articles and "sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" were some of the devices that reinforced the electability news frame (Entman, 1993:52). Zuma was among the sources, which included ANC members and aligned unions, who were quoted in the examined articles. Even *The New Age* urged the electorate to vote for the ANC in its editorial. The articles that have been analysed present thematically strengthening bands of facts and conclusions about Zuma and the ANC's electability.

Zuma's election manifesto foregrounded the electability frame. In his message dedicated to the late president Nelson Mandela, Zuma lauds the 20 years that the ANC has been in power and also highlights the party's achievements during those two decades (Zuma, 2014). Zuma served as both deputy president and president of the country during this period. Zuma continues to portray the ANC as a party that delivers on its promises and concludes the message to Mandela with the sentences: "Together we move South Africa forward! Vote ANC for a better life for all!" (Zuma, 2014). *The New Age* journalists took the frame and used it to unpack Zuma's message in their coverage of his campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Booyesen (2015:7) notes that the campaign trail sought to remind the electorate about the ANC's role "in the liberation struggle, the time to affirm that it is better trusted than opposition parties". Booyesen (2015:8) adds that the "phenomenal election campaign" was "well-resourced and nurtured by the celebration of both 20 years of democracy and the life and passing of Nelson Mandela". In its efforts to convince existing supporters to continue voting for it, the party, according to Booyesen (2015:10), predicted that it would increase its support across the country.

**Table 5.7: Textual expression in the electability frame**

- "The ANC's unwavering identification with the majority of Africans and its championing of pro-poor policies in education, health, housing, and social security is its greatest source of popularity within the electorate" (Peters, 2014:19).
- "Jacob Zuma continues to be the most popular leader with an approval rating of 46%. He is the most popular leader among black people with an approval rating of 53%" (NA. TNA Reporter, 2014:1d).
- "Zuma slams those who heckle him as attention seekers, saying the ANC is not losing popularity" (Hunter, 2014:4s).
- "Trade union federation backtracks on NDP, which is the centrepiece of ANC election document" (Hunter, 2014:4a).

- “One of Cosatu’s biggest unions has come out in support of the ANC during the elections” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4a).
- “Majuba said the ANC deserves their support as their alliance” (Nyaka, 2014:4a). “The ANC is the only viable choice” (Hlalele, 2014:18).
- “The Nkandla report will not have serious implications for President Jacob Zuma’s political future with the head of state’s future secured” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4g).
- “Analysts say damning report will not affect president now” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4g.)
- “Seventy percent of South Africans think the ANC will win at the polls on May 7” (NA. TNA Reporter, 2014:1a).
- “Cosatu backs manifesto” (Hunter, 2014:1a).
- “Television personality and house music DJ Sbu said he was contributing to the ANC’s victory in the forthcoming general elections” (Mabona, 2014:4e).
- “‘I am contributing to the ANC’s election campaign and I believe the ANC is the winning team,’ said DJ Sbu” (Mabona, 2014:4e).
- “I think we will win with an overwhelming majority and I am very excited about this. I am also excited to see young people getting involved in voter education and having a say in the future of this country” (Mabona, 2014:4e).
- “Vote ANC but demand good governance” (NA. The Editor, 2014:1).

## 5.5 Economy theme

### 5.5.1 Transformation frame

#### 5.5.2 Overview of the transformation news frame

The media widely used the transformation frame in its coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. The news frame has its roots in South Africa’s post-apartheid transformation goals of establishing an equal society. The vision includes ridding South Africa of class, gender, race and economic inequalities, which are a legacy of the apartheid regime of socially excluding the black population (Badat, 2010:2-3). The ANC, which has been the ruling party since 1994, has been at the forefront of this mission (Mosala *et al.*, 2017). The transformation frame can be described as a fairness and equality frame. Boydstun *et al.* (2014:13) aver that the fairness and equality frames comprise the application of laws, distribution of resources among people and the balance between the rights of individuals and groups. The transformation frame falls under the issue-specific news frames. Issue-specific frames relate to particular topics and news events (De Vreese *et al.*, 2001:108).

*The New Age* journalists used the transformation news frame in their coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Zuma and the ANC were the sponsors of the news frame. According to Brüggemann (2014:63), public “actors strategically

send out messages with a frame”. Entman (1993:55) holds that a frame “registers the identity of actor or interests that competed to dominate the text”.

### 5.5.3 Identifying the transformation news frame

The transformation news frames emerged from the analysed data. The word “transformation” was key in tracing the frame. According to Entman (1993:52), frames can be identified by “the presence or absence of certain key words”. The researcher used an inductive approach. The approach steers clear from analysing news articles with a pre-defined news frame in mind (De Vreese, 2005:53). The ANC’s transformation agenda can be traced back to the ANC’s early policy documents as far back as 1943, in which the party spelt out its vision for the future of South Africa (Walshe 1987). It became one the ANC’s campaign tools since the dawn of democracy in 1994 (De Jager, 2009). Transformation also formed an integral part of Zuma’s 2014 election manifesto (Zuma, 2014). Zuma’s message in the manifesto reads:

Our struggle has now reached the second phase, in which we will implement radical socio-economic transformation to meaningfully address poverty, unemployment and inequality (ibid).

The word “transformation” was endemic in the analysed stories published by *The New Age* during the research period. The sources of information used in the stories *The New Age* stories on transformation were mainly aligned to the ANC. Source of information are crucial when identifying and examining frames (Entman, 1993:52).

**Table: 5.8: Textual expressions in the transformation news frame**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “The ANC has been at the forefront in the fight against oppression. The ruling party has driven the democratisation of South Africa. It was also driving the transformation agenda in the country, he said. The two previous conferences of the ANC called for a strong developmental state” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4a).</li><li>• “The review shows how South Africa developed in terms of governance and administration and in social transformation. A strong emphasis was placed on economic transformation which an acknowledgment that the economy needed stronger intervention” (Hunter, 2014:1i).</li><li>• “Working together we have changed South Africa into a better country. We have delivered basic services to the majority of our people who were neglected under apartheid” (Williams, 2014:18a).</li><li>• “They said there was no alternative to the ANC, stating that the ruling party remained the strongest leader of social and economic transformation in the country” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:24r).</li></ul> |
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- “We call on those who support us and all South African voters to vote ANC to give new impetus to the transformation agenda and to build a united, prosperous nation,” the defectors (said) in a statement” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:24r).
- “We believe that the ANC, notwithstanding its challenges, remains the most effective vehicle to bring about fundamental change and transformation in favour of the poor and workers, in our country, on the continent and internationally,” they said. (Mkhwanazi, 2014:24r).
- “To blame President Jacob Zuma and completely ignore contradictions of the state transformation constitutes crude subjectivism,” Mambaolo said. (Mabona, 2014:4d).
- “Our immediate task is to renew the mandate of the ANC to carry forward the revolutionary project of transformation of our society” (Piitso, 2014:15c).
- “We know the ANC is the only non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and revolutionary movement with the necessary capacity to accelerate transformation in our country” (Piitso, 2014:15c).
- “We have a good story to tell. Our country is a much better to live in now that it was before 1994. For that we are thankful to millions of South Africans for working with the ANC and its government, to bring about the change and transformation we see today” (NA. TNA Reporter, 2014:8c).
- “He said the ANC was the only organisation capable of correcting the imbalances of the past” (NA. TNA Reporter, 2014:8c).
- “We must remember that a vote for the DA is a vote to keep the Western Cape white and to stop transformation in South Africa” (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:3a).
- “It is to the immense credit of the governing party that the Reserve Bank now has a surplus close to R\$50bn, having added \$75bn to the Reserve since 1994. We can and should be proud of our achievements and the fact that we have built a substantial economy in the past 20 years, opposition mudslinging notwithstanding” (Jullienne, 2014:18).

#### 5.5.4 Apartheid

#### 5.5.5 Overview of the apartheid news frame

Apartheid was a frame in itself. It featured prominently in the media’s coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general election. The news frame can be termed a victim or underdog frame. According to Block (2003:167), the news frames portray one side as the victim and depicts the other side as the aggressor. The apartheid news frame falls under the issue-specific frames. Issue-specific frames deal with a particular topic and offer information about the issue at hand (Kozman, 2017:779).

*The New Age* newspaper’s coverage of Zuma’s campaign during the research period is peppered with the apartheid news frame. Zuma and the ANC were the sponsors of the news frame. Zuma and the ANC, as Entman (1993:55) alludes to, sought to dominate *The New Age*’s coverage of the election campaign with their interests. The frame depicts the erstwhile apartheid regime, and some of its remnants, as an aggressor against the black majority of the South African population. The news frame aided Zuma and the ANC in the election coverage; they presented themselves and saviours of black population. It was widely used by both Zuma and *The New Age* journalists. The news frame’s strength lies in a sub-frame that the researcher

has named the neo-apartheid news frame. People and groupings, who challenged Zuma’s administration, including members of the ANC, were labelled neo-fascist and neo-colonial oppressors.

### 5.5.6 Identifying the apartheid news frame

The apartheid frame emerged from the analysed text. Entman’s (1993:52) asserts that text encompasses frames, which are expressed by the manifestation or nonappearance of certain key words, stock phrases and sources of information. The word “apartheid” was conspicuous in the data. The frame was also identified through words and phrases such as “legacy of apartheid”, “colonial rule”, “racist regime”, “before 1994” and “oppression”. The identification of the frame was aided by the use of the inductive approach. The researcher did not approach the data with a pre-conceived framed in mind (De Vreese, 2005:53).

The frame featured prominently in the analysed opinion pieces, editorials, letters to the editor and articles written by *The New Age* journalists during the research period. The journalists mainly quoted ANC members and Zuma in the stories bearing the apartheid frame. The apartheid frame also features prominently in Zuma’s manifesto document (Zuma, 2014).

**Table 5.9: Textual expression in the apartheid frame**

- “According to the mayor, many people tended to too easily forget that when the ANC came to power, the country was faced with many problems resulting from the legacy of apartheid and form colonial rule” (Moloi, 2014:9b).
- “This was on Friday night in Durban at the Amadelakufa awards ceremony which was held to honour living and late MK soldiers who risked their lives to take on the apartheid regime and its army to liberate South Africa” (Mavuso, 2014:9a).
- “In an exclusive in-depth interview with *The New Age* and ANN7 President Jacob Zuma shared his pride about how far the country had come since 1994. ‘It is 20 years of democracy after centuries of apartheid machinery,’” he said (Hunter, 2014:1b).
- “The Department of Basic Education has made significant strides since it inherited an apartheid system what was radically unequal” (Motshekga, 2014:20a).
- “Over the centuries of apartheid and colonial rule and domination our people have endured immense deprivations and suffering that violated their dignity in the land of their birth. The racist regime was most corrupt” (Pitso, 2014:19b).
- “It was aware that one of the most destructive legacies of apartheid was Bantu Education which hindered the intellectual development of blacks in schools and tertiary institutions. Without the expansion of education opportunities, one of the main aims of the liberation struggle would not be achieved” (Nzimande, 2014:19).
- “To counteract this problem, the newly unbanned ANC put pressure on the apartheid regime and big business to look seriously into the plight of black students at tertiary level” (Nzimande, 2014:19).
- “The only bullet the working class has is to vote for the ANC in the coming national

general elections. Many of our people across the length and breadth of our country and Southern African region and the Southern African region are still bearing the wounds and fresh scars of apartheid neo-colonial oppression and exploitation. Twenty years is just too short to forget the brutality of the vicious apartheid regime. Our immediate task is to renew the mandate of the ANC to carry forward the revolutionary project of transformation of our society” (Piitso, 2014:15c).

- “Our people, particularly the black in general and African in particular, those to whom the colour of their skins still to this day determines their fate and future, know that not to vote for the ANC, is equivalent to bringing back racist apartheid in our country” (Piitso, 2014:15c).
- “Legoete says South Africa has ‘good story to tell’ when the apartheid past was eradicated by democracy” (Torerai, 2014:9b)
- “Legoete further argued that the ANC sustained its fight against oppressive rule as far back as 1919 when the anti-pass campaign started, leading to several defiance campaigns and the watershed 1961 national anti-pass campaigns that exposed the brutality of the apartheid regime” (Torerai, 2014:9b).
- “Our government has over the past 20 years proven itself to be committed to eradication of the pandemic acts of corruption inherited from the apartheid historical past. We are committed to rooting out all forms of social ills threatening the moral fabric of our society” (Piitso, 2014:20d).
- “The ANC government’s focus in the post-apartheid years have been on holistically improving all the people who were historically excluded or disadvantaged (Motshekga, 2014:19b).
- “Instead we were the skunk of the world whose system of apartheid was declared by the whole world as a crime against humanity. Today, where people talk of these rights, they seem to forget that this is where we come from. The very existence of a Constitution that considered human rights sacrosanct is a good story to tell” (Dlodlo, 2014:19).
- “He lambasted talk that the country was better off under apartheid that it is today.
- ‘They are old people. Not young people. They say Bantustans were better’” (Hunter, 2014:4s)
- Zuma tied this sentiment in with an elaboration on the 20 years of democracy. South Africa will celebrate 20 years of freedom on Sunday. “We are completing 20 years of freedom, reminding people where we come from,” he said (Hunter, 2014:4s).
- “As a liberation movement the ANC led the struggle against apartheid for many decades. As a political party it remains anti-racist and pro-democracy. Its efforts have resulted in a political transition that guarantees everyone a range of rights, including the right to vote. The people of this country have struggled for the right to vote. They should use it on May 7” (Pampallis, 2014:19).
- “President Jacob Zuma yesterday revealed an astonishing plan by the apartheid regime’s military to kidnap former president Nelson Mandela – and former National Party leader FW de Klerk – to Angola to force them to renounce negotiations on the eve of the democratic breakthrough” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:1q).

### 5.5.7 Jobs

### 5.5.8 Overview of the jobs news frame

Several news frames abounded in the news media’s coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. Among the news, frames was what the researcher calls the jobs news frame. The news frame found expression in *The New Age* journalists' stories on

the election campaign. It can be described as an economic frame. Boydston *et al.* (2014:4) expound that economic news frames entail financial benefits to “an individual, family, community or to the economy as a whole”. It is an issues-specific news frame. As issue-specific frames are wont to do, the jobs news frame also focused on a particular issue, which is job creation (De Vreese, 2005:55). Zuma and the ANC were the sponsors of the frame, which is small wonder because, as Wichgers *et al.* (2021:674) content, powerful none-media actors with more power and a strong interest in an issue tend to succeed in “getting their preferred frame packages across”. The frame worked in Zuma’s advantage. South Africa battled high unemployment rates (Booyesen, 2015:9), and Zuma presented the second presidential term, he was vying for, as an opportunity to create employment (Zuma, 2014). To underscore this, the ANC 2014 election manifesto reads:

In the next five years, despite the global economic outlook, we are determined to act decisively and boldly to increase investment in the real economy and infrastructure, stimulate faster levels of inclusive growth, speed up social development, substantially reduce poverty and unemployment, and place the economy on a qualitatively different growth path.

### 5.5.9 Identifying the jobs news frame

The researcher used the words “jobs” and “employment” to identify the jobs news frame in the analysed text. They became the key words to identify and examine the news frame, as suggested by Entman (1993:52). The creation of jobs and employment was a key feature of Zuma’s campaign (Zuma, 2014). High unemployment rates had been some of the criticisms of Zuma’s first presidential term (Booyesen, 2015). In a bid to be voted in as president for the second time, Zuma upped the ante (*ibid*). Entman (1993:52) asserts that sources of information in analysed text are also a tool to identify the presence of a frame. The sources information quoted by *The New Age* journalists in stories that were framed around jobs were mainly people associated with the ANC and its members, and Zuma.

**Table 10: Textual expression in the jobs news frame**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “‘We hope the manifesto does not end as words on paper. We want delivery of the six million jobs promised,’ the union said” (NA. Sapa, 2014:9).</li> <li>• “‘Mabele Fuels said yesterday it welcomed the ANC’s commitment to job creation and rural development in its manifesto for the 2014 elections. The company said it also supported the ANCs’ commitment to encourage investment in biofuels to create jobs in the agricultural sector and achieve energy self-sufficiency” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4b).</li> </ul>
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- “No country was left untouched by the global recession of 2008. The recession led to many countries shedding jobs and struggling to grow their economies. The president said the ACDP leader Kenneth Meshoe has made good prediction on the ANC retaining power in the country by asking about ANC government’s priorities for the next five years” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:1d).
- “(We will) empower, educate and create jobs for youth through job placement and internship schemes, allocating 60% of employment in infrastructure and other projects for youth, and promoting youth employment and training incentive schemes (Hunter, 2014:4h).
- “The ANC is perceived to be on the forefront of this issue. ‘(We will) promote decent work and strengthen measures to speed up employment equity,’ the ANC said in its manifesto” (Hunter, 2014:4h).
- ““Most of our people have been lifted out of extreme poverty, we have created more jobs than before, expanded social grants, housing and basic services to our people and further improved access to better education and healthcare,’ he said” (Torera, 2014:9b).
- ““Our people must remember that creating jobs not like waking up in the morning and opening factories, there are plans that should be put in place before hand,’ Manyoni said” (Moloi, 2014:9a).
- ““We know that a lot of people are not working today, but I tell you now the focus is to create permanent serious jobs for all,’ he said” (Moloi, 2014:9b).
- “The ANC-led government has proved that it delivers to the people and continues to create jobs and independence for the people. The lies must stop” (Thwala, 2014:19).
- “The MEC launched a R20m project comprising 256 houses and said it would help create jobs for the residents of the area” (Nyaka, 2014:29f).
- ““The second phase of our democratic transition calls for bold and decisive steps to place the economy on a qualitatively different path that eliminates poverty and unemployment and reduce inequality,’ the newly launched manifesto reads” (Hunter, 2014:4a).
- “The NDP aims to eradicate poverty, increase employment and reduce inequality by 2030. In February 212, ahead of the ANC’s Mangaung conference, Cosatu’s central executive committee cast doubt on the plan” (Hunter, 2014:4a).
- ““The number of people in employment grew by about 5.6 million between 1994 and 2013, or by 60%,’ Zuma said” (Hunter, 2014:1i).
- “A declining employment rate, low investment levels, a poorly educated workforce and large monopolies – these were features that characterised the South African economy in the period leading to 1994” (Chauke, 2014:19).
- “He said they were pleased to report that the ANC-led government has rolled out a massive job creation programme known as the Expanded Public Works Programme (Luphahla, 2014:10).
- ““This programme aims to halve unemployment and alleviate poverty. As long as there is unemployment, public employment programmes are needed to provide a lifeline for the country’s most impoverished. We are well aware that the EWP is one government initiative that was established in June 2003 during the Growth and Development Summit, with the express intention of not only creating job opportunities for local communities but transferring skills which people can use at a later stage to create job for themselves”” (Luphahla, 2014:10).
- “Legacy role to emancipate millions from historical indignity, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and inequality” (Peters, 2014:19) **11 April 2014**
- “Many leaders and supporters of this movement accept the legacy and role that has been bestowed on it – to emancipate millions of South Africans from the yoke of historical indignity, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and inequality” (Peters, 2014:19).
- “Mayor Vusi Tshabalala convinced Mantshatlala Project to fight unemployment among the youth” (Moloi, 2014:9b).

The following section examines how *The New Age's* editorials shaped its journalists' framing of Zuma's campaign trail. Following that, the researcher examines how *The New Age* used catchphrases and placement of articles to make some information more salient.

## 5.6 *The New Age* editorials

The tone of newspaper editorials in the coverage of presidential elections gives an insight into how the media frame the candidates' campaigns (Arajo & Prior, 2021). As Le (2010: XI) points out, editorials display the media's view and reaction to the outside world. In every editorial, the news media explore how their socio-cultural milieu is constructed and where they fit within in (Le, 2010: XI). Le (2010: XI) concludes that editorials are glimpses of media socio-cultural narratives.

The researcher argues that editorials reveal the stance that a publication takes when covering particular issues and are ideal in mapping out the frames that its journalists adopt in their reporting. Le's (2010: XI) assertion that editorials are fertile ground for media politics studies due to their persuasive methods supports this argument.

In light of *The New Age's* founders' pledge to provide a favourable impression of the ANC (Southall, 2011:619), and Zuma's admission that he backed its establishment to create a less "negative" publication (Zondo, 2022:457), it therefore makes academic sense to analyse the tone of its editorials towards Zuma's campaign trail. In support of this analysis, Afzal (2016:90) suggests that newspaper editorials that promote one group's voice lead readers to pay more attention to the subject matter. This is because newspaper editorials provide timely analysis of events for general public consciousness (Aziz & Saeed, 2022:2).

*The New Age* adopted a positive tone in its editorials about Zuma's presidential campaign. The news frames utilised by the publication in its editorials pervade the articles written by its journalists in their coverage of Zuma's campaign, as detailed below. There are phrases in the editorials that incorporate thematically related facts and conclusions as discussed by Entman (1993:52) in *Framing: Toward a Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm*. For instance, in one editorial shortly after Zuma launched his campaign manifest, reads:

“Continuity is ensured in that the ruling party has stuck to the key five priorities it adopted in its 2009 manifesto. All likelihood points to the oldest movement on the continent – one that has also acquired 20 years of experience in governing – receiving an extension of its mandate to rule and take the country forward for the next five years” (NA. Editorial, 2014a: 13).

The editorial further states:

“The party has to look into the past and reflect on its successes and failures, consider the present and look into the future. It is a fitting time to celebrate and chart the way forward to a more prosperous South Africa” (NA. Editorial, 2014a: 13).

Another editorial, in the run-up to the elections, distances Zuma from the Nkandla scandal and blames government officials:

“*The New Age* previously alluded in this column that Zuma was possibly also a victim of circumstance. The report of the public protector, Thuli Madonsela, into the issue in part confirmed that assertion” (NA. Editorial, 2014b: 21).

The same editorial further states:

“There is no doubt Zuma was failed by the officials and public representatives of his government. To paraphrase the public protector’s report title, there was looting of the public purse on a grand scale involving officials, private contractors and consultants involved in the upgrade” (NA. Editorial, 2014b: 21).

A different editorial, sought to absolve Zuma from the Nkandla saga, in the run-up to the elections, stating:

“Learning from one’s mistakes is the kind of dictum that is easier said than done. First, one needs to acknowledge the mistakes and then analyse them for ways to ensure they are not repeated. This analysis has to be followed with decisive action. In regard to all things Nkandla, the ruling party and key government departments need to rapidly apply the above-mentioned process” (NA. Editorial, 2014c:20).

The same editorial further states:

“Even though Nkandla is just one project among many by public works, it demonstrates that there is a tendency for unscrupulous service providers to dupe the department and collude with corrupt officials. The perpetrators, not just at Nkandla but in all cases, must be brought to book for their sordid greed” (NA. Editorial, 2014c:20).

The editorial adds:

“One must also call this into question the role of key staff in the Presidency. Surely they are there to ensure that the integrity of the president is not compromised by underperforming ministries who seem to have no idea of what is happening in their own departments?

There is a monitoring and performance capacity in the Presidency. If this is dysfunctional then that is another mistake that must be addressed. Nkandla has presented us with a lens through which we can see a broader picture of what needs to be fixed urgently” (NA. Editorial, 2014c:20).

A different editorial is headlined “Fairplay needed over Nkandla” reads:

“Nkandla has already passed into the lexicon of words used to describe issues that accompany furores involving presidents. Political scandals come and go. If we look at our recent history we can see the example of the so-called come arms deal. This is a matter that comes and goes and comes back again. Mention of the strides we have made in tackling HIV and Aids are often accompanied by a dip into the past citing then President Thabo Mbeki’s strange approach around the issues. Some are even prepared to accuse him of genocide” (NA. Editorial, 2014d: 4).

The editorial further reads:

“With the May 7 elections just around the corner opposition parties are outdoing themselves to wield the Nkandla stick. The DA has gone as far as telling a million people that Jacob Zuma stole money.

The fact that the public report contains no such conclusion and that the matter has landed up in court just shows how the DA’s election strategy is shallowly centred



around trashing Zuma rather than constructively engaging with the ANC's track record and policies" (NA. Editorial, 2014d: 4).

The editorial adds:

"Public comment has also degenerated into near naked racism and vilification of the president. Any attempts to conduct the process of the investigations with dignity and in keeping with the law are called into question. Detractors are ready to line up with sticks to make the president run the gauntlet" (NA. Editorial, 2014d: 4).

The editorial concludes:

"The president has clearly said that he is not happy about what happened at his residence. His government has released a report and so has the public protector. The outcome of the Special Investigative Unit investigation that was requested by the president himself is keenly awaited so that the nation can lay this matter to rest" (NA. Editorial, 2014d: 4).

Another editorial, published on the front page, openly endorses the ANC. It reads:

"Who to vote for? This will be the question uppermost in the minds of voters over the next 48 hours. Some, of course, will vote according to traditional racial or cultural patterns which have become an unfortunate hallmark of our democracy. Our advice to the thinking and more circumspect section of the electorate, which includes, of course, the readers of *The New Age*, is to pause for a moment of reflection and consideration in the privacy of the voting booth" (NA. The Editor, 2014:1-24).

The editorial further reads:

"Reflect on how we have come to this point in our history, able as free men and women to vote for a political party of our choice. Before you heed the call of Ronnie Kasrils and his 'no vote' campaigners, spare a thought for the sacrifices of Solomon Mahlangu, Chris Hani, Ashley Kriel and many others who have paid the ultimate price" (NA. The Editor, 2014:1-24).

It also states that:

“Reflect on the unstinting contribution of Nelson Mandela and others before committing the futile act of spoiling the ballot paper. Out of the rotten ruins of the apartheid state, millions of been accommodated in proper housing, receive potable water and have been electrified (NA. The Editor, 2014:1-24).

The editorial concludes:

“At *The New Age* we have thoroughly examined the names of the ballot paper and made our own tick. It’s not for the DA which is still to mired in a history of which privilege and unable to strike a chord among the country’s black majority. It is not the EFF who masquerade as champions of the poor but are in essence Gucci revolutionaries who advance delusional poppycock populist policies with no basis or logic. Cope, which garnered a sizable anti-ANC vote in 2009, bickered ever since and has now fallen apart. The other “minus 1%” parties will hardly cause a ripple. That leaves only the ruling party, the ANC, to consider” (NA. The Editor, 2014:1-24).

Based on the above quotes, it is evident that *The New Age* editorials devoted substantial time and space defending Zuma from the Nkandla issue and attempting to depict him and his party as the greatest choice on the ballot. Following, is an analysis of *The New Age's* use of catchy headlines and article positioning.

## **5.7 *The New Age's* use of catchy headlines and article positioning**

An essential part of framing is the placement of a story in a newspaper (Bell & Coche, 2020:4). Among the processes for measuring news frames, according to Tankard (2001:101), are headlines. According to Linström and Willemien (2012:32), framing devices that work in tandem with news writing include technical components such as layout and imagery. Meanwhile, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) characterise catchphrases as framing devices that provide a media package of an issue that is being reported on. It is consistent with Entman's (1993:53) assertion that texts can emphasize information through positioning, repetition, or by linking it to culturally known symbols.

*The New Age* employed several framing devices in its coverage of Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections to draw the readers' attention to the issue. These comprise headlines and article placement. To demonstrate how *The New Age* used framing strategies, the researcher divided the articles into four groups, as shown below.

### 5.7.1 Salience by catch-phrases

Several catchphrases appeared in the headlines of *The New Age* articles covering Zuma's campaign trail during the research period. These include:

- SA has made huge strides since (Chauke, 2014:19);
- ANCYL focuses on upcoming elections (Chonga, 2014a:10);
- The shenanigans of the DA will do little to attract mass vote (Daniels, 2014:18);
- Once a sunk, SA now shows its true value (Dlodlo, 2014:19);
- May Day rallies throughout the W Cape (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014b:3);
- The ANC is the only viable choice (Hlalele, 2014:18);
- Cosatu backs manifesto (Hunter, 2014a:4);
- 'Secure in Comfort' blasted (Tweedie, 2014:18);
- Zuma step up for ANC (Velaphi, 2014a:28);
- Zuma says 'come home' (Velaphi, 2014b:24);
- Union launches scathing report on Madonsela Nkandla report (Velaphi, S. 2014c:24);
- Opposition parties under fierce ANC fire (Velaphi, 2014d:27);
- Advances made under Jacob Zuma (Williams, 2014a:18);
- Zuma charms Mahikeng (Torerai, 2014a:4);
- Lies told of no delivery by ANC (Thwala, 2014:19);
- Free State ANC win assured, says Maseko (Seekoei, 2014b:9);
- 'SA under Malema will be broke' (Seekoei, 2014c:9);
- ANC to intensify campaign (Seekoi, 2014a:10);
- Voting ANC is a vote against anarchy (Piitso, 2014c:15);
- ANC guns for two-third majority (Piitso, 2014a:20);
- Much to take the ANC for (Peters, 2014:19);
- Voting for ANC makes sense (Pampallis, 2014:19);
- An inspiring ANC success story (Nzimande, 2014:19);
- SA achieved much – Zuma (Omarjee & Hunter, 2014:17);
- ANC says Zuma is not dead (Nyaka, 2014f:29) and
- Zuma get 'X' support (Nyaka, 2014c:13).

## 5.7.2 Salience by repetition

*The New Age* repeated several topics related to Zuma and his campaign, elevating them to salience using headlines. For instance, in reporting on Zuma's detractors *The New Age* used the headlines:

- Church slams Zuma 'haters' (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014a:1) and
- Tutu slated for anti-ANC stance (Diale, 2014:1).

Another topic directly related to Zuma's campaign that *The New Age* covered is the release of his manifesto, the public's reaction to it, and its interpretation. *The New Age* used the headlines:

- Biofuels company back ANC manifesto (Mkhwanazi, 2014b:4);
- We hope manifesto delivers, says Sadtu (NA. Sapa, 2014:9);
- Cosatu backs manifesto (Hunter, 2014a:4) and
- "Zuma simplifies manifesto" (Hunter, 2014b:22).

In its coverage of Zuma's campaign trail, *The New Age* also repeated the Nkandla controversy, which threatened to ruin Zuma's image in the eyes of the people. The newspaper gave Zuma, and those who backed him, a platform to control the narrative. *The New Age* used headlines such as:

- Timing of Nkandla report worried ANC, allies (Hunter, 2014k:4);
- First Nkandla case (Hunter, 2014p:1);
- Zuma opens up candidly on Nkandla story (Hunter, 2014u:1);
- Nkandla report presents a test of integrity ahead of elections (Mangope, 2014:4);
- Nkandla report a political ruse (Mbhatha, 2014b:15);
- ANC campaigns unfazed by Nkandla (Mkhwanazi, 2014h:4);
- President waiting for SIU report on Nkandla (Mkhwanazi, 2014k:1);
- ANC winning in Nkandla saga (Mkhwanazi, 2014p:4);
- Fairplay needed over Nkandla (NA. Editorial, 2014d:18);
- 'Nkandla findings are flawed' (Naidoo, 2014a:20);
- Nkandla: still looking for hat in the dark (Naidoo, 2014b:19);
- Madonsela's Nkandla report timing is suspect (Piitso, 2014b:19 and
- Union launches scathing report on Madonsela Nkandla report (Velaphi, 2014c:24).

### 5.7.3 Salience by association with familiar symbols

*The New Age* linked some of the topics related to Zuma's campaign trail to culturally recognisable symbols to elevate them. Former President Nelson Mandela was one of the culturally known icons chosen by *The New Age*. The publications used headlines such as:

- My vote will honour Madiba (Benjamin, 2014:17);
- 'They can't take Mandela away from us' (Mafisa, 2014a:1);
- There hangs a Mandela tale (Mkhwanazi, 2014q:1);

Another cultural familiar symbol that *The New Age* used is South Africa's apartheid legacy and the country's post-apartheid legacy. *The New Age* used headlines such as:

- Keep the legacy and vote ANC-Mchunu (Dlamini, 2014:8);
- Once a sunk, SA now shows its true value (Dlodlo, 2014:19);
- ANC has achieved much in 20 years (Zondi, 2014:18);
- Restoring land, fostering dignity (Williams, 2014:18);
- 'Lest we forget our past' - ANC (Torera, 2014:9) and
- Constitution is not written in stone (Nkondo, 2014:18).

### 5.7.4 Salience by position

To achieve a certain level of salience on some of the topics linked to Zuma's campaign, *The New Age* published articles on the front page. On the front page articles, *The New Age* used the headlines such as:

- Tutu slated for anti-ANC stance (Diale, 2014:1);
- Church slams Zuma 'haters' (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014a:1);
- 'We've done much' (Hunter, 2014c:1);
- 20 years in the right direction (Hunter, 2014i:1);
- Criminal charges loom on eve of poll (Hunter, 2014m: 1);
- First Nkandla case (Hunter, 2014p:1);
- Call for peaceful election (Hunter, 2014t:1);
- Zuma opens up candidly on Nkandla story (Hunter, 2014u:1);

- ‘They can’t take Mandela away from us’ (Mafisa, 2014a:1);
- ANC officials to inspect Zuma’s homestead (Mafisa, 2014b:1);
- Zuma pulls no punches on ANC success (Mkhwanazi, 2014d:1);
- President waiting for SIU report on Nkandla (Mkhwanazi, 2014k:1);
- There hangs a Mandela tale (Mkhwanazi, 2014q:1);
- Zuma pulls no punches on ANC success (Mkhwanazi, 2014d:1);
- ANC flexes its muscles in final pre-poll rally (Mkhwanazi, 2014s:1) and
- It’s on Tracker – the ANC wins (NA. TNA, 2014d: 1).

The next section examines the prominent news sources cited by *The New Age* journalists and the frames they sponsored. In the following section, Zuma's connection to news sources is also discussed.

## **5.8 The prominent news sources and the frames they advanced in *The New Age*’s coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail**

The data demonstrate that during the research period, *The New Age* mostly quoted news sources associated with Zuma and the ANC in its coverage of his campaign trail. Campaign-related opinion pieces published by the newspaper were also written by those loyal to the former president and the party. The letters to the editor also complimented Zuma and the ANC. As a consequence, as the data show, the news sources advanced particular news frames that are favourable to Zuma’s campaign. Zuma was a prominent sponsor of all nine frames derived from the data and was widely quoted.

### **5.8.1 Sources who sponsored the good story to tell frame**

In the good story to tell, Zuma was the source of the stories. He was quoted saying:

“We have a good story to tell. Our country is a much better to live in now that it was before 1994. For that we are thankful to millions of South Africans for working with the ANC and its government, to bring about the change and transformation we see today” (TNA, 2014:8a).

In an opinion piece, Phumla Williams, who was the acting CEO of Government Communications and Information System wrote:

“Highlighting the achievements of the past 20 years, President Zuma stressed that South Africa has a positive story to tell. Working together we have changed South Africa into a better country. We have delivered basic services to the majority of our people who were neglected under apartheid. Therefore we do have a good story to tell” (Williams, 2014:18).

In a different story President Cyril Ramaphosa, who the ANC and the country’s deputy president, told *The New Age*:

“Our president Jacob Zuma said throughout these 20 years of freedom that we have a good story to tell and it is true” (Khiba, 2014:9).

Former ANC Western Cape chairman and former Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Marius Fransman also sponsored the good story to tell frame. *The New Age* reported:

“That South Africa indeed has a good story to tell was reiterated by the ANC leadership at Human Rights Day celebration in D’Almeida, Mossel Bay at the weekend” (TNA, 2014:8b).

In another story, Hunter quoted Ebrahim Patel, a member of the ANC, who was the Economic Development Minister:

“The minister rides on Zuma’s narrative of a good story over the last 20 years of democracy. He says when the first electricity light was switch on in South Africa in 1890 very few houses were connected to the grid over the next 100 years since then” (Hunter, 2014:22a).

Ayanda Dlodlo, then then Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration, an envoy for South Africa at the Open Government Partnership, wrote in an opinion piece and an ANC national executive council member:

“This is what we speak about when we say there is a good story to tell. It is not just propaganda but the world that is looking on, that compares itself with us, has acknowledged this numerous through various recognitions” (Dlodlo, 2014:19).

In a different story Torerai interviewed then North West ANC provincial secretary Dakota Legoete:

“Legoete says South Africa has ‘good story to tell’ when the apartheid past was eradicated by democracy” (Torerai, 2014:9).

Ford-Kritzinger quotes ANC aligned Western Cape Christian Ministries Association president Dr Khaye Maseko in another story:

“His message to Zuma was “ you need a negative to activate a positive, sometimes we become agitated because we see and hear the opposition, do not be moved by whatever they are saying, they can have their say but you will have a good story to tell, after today, (it) will never be the same” (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:1).

### **5.8.2 Sources who sponsored the vilification frame**

Zuma took centre stage in the vilification frame, just as he did in the good story-to-tell frame. Zuma may not have sponsored the vilification framing, but others close to him and the ANC, as well as supportive columnists, did. As shown below, the frames portray Zuma as a victim.

Mabona, for example, quoted South African Community Party Gauteng secretary Jacob Mamabolo, an ANC tripartite alliance partner, lamenting attacks on Zuma and the ANC. Mabona reported:

“The SACP Gauteng leadership yesterday expressed concerns at the public attacks directed at the ANC and President Jacob Zuma over the country’s various challenges” (Mabona, 2014:4).



In the same story, Mabona quoted Mamabolo saying:

“Features of low intensity counter-revolution take the form of severe lies to wage attacks against the ANC leadership, particularly President Zuma” (Mabona, 2014:4)

Mamabolo continued:

“To blame President Jacob Zuma and completely ignore contradictions of the state transformation constitutes crude subjectivism” (Mabona, 2014:4).

In a column entitled: The media vilification of President Jacob Zuma, Tamuka Muzondo, an NGO consultant, wrote:

“Efforts to disparage the president can be traced to way back before Bulelani Ngcuka held off-the-record meetings with selected editors and informed them that Zuma was corrupt but he did not have evidence to obtain a conviction. The vitriol spewed by the media about Zuma prior to Polokwane is hard to forget (Muzondo, 2014:19).

Muzondo continued:

“The booing of President Jacob Zuma at the memorial service of the late former president Nelson Mandela showed to some extent the way the media has persistently painted Zuma black” (Muzondo, 2014:19).

Muzondo further wrote:

“For the longest time, the media has consistently and persistently vilified Zuma. Hardly a day goes by with one or other media house presenting a story casting the president in bad light” (Muzondo, 2014:19).

Muzondo further blamed the media:

“The basic rule of journalism of telling both sides of the story is always thrown into the garbage bin when it comes to any reporting about Zuma” (Muzondo, 2014:19).

In a letter to the editor, Bhekithemba Mbatha wrote:

“For instance many South Africans believe that President Jacob Zuma is corrupt, even though there has been no formal court proceedings that charged and declared the president to be corrupt. Unfounded allegations motivated by lies and hatred are posited instead of proper analysis” (Mbatha, 2014:19).

Mafisa also reported on how the ANC “came out in defence of Zuma in response to the report on security upgrades to his house, and said it had no intention to recall him” (Mafisa, 2014:1). Mafisa (ibid) quoted then ANC secretary- general Gwede Mantashe saying:

“One of the dangers we make is to equate the public protector to a court of law. It’s a chapter 9 institution, not a court of law, a public protector’s report is reviewable.”

Mafisa (2014:1) added

“He (Mantashe) rejected calls for the president’s impeachment. Mantashe said the ANC will not apologise.”

In another story, Mavuso (2014:7) quoted Willies Mchunu, the then-ANC deputy chairperson in KwaZulu-Natal, as accusing the DA, the then Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) of "launching a 'sustained assault' on President Jacob Zuma and the ruling party”.

Mavuso wrote:

“He (Mantashe) said the recent announcement by Madonsela to release the Nkandla report next month was a way of keeping the matter in the limelight to further damage Zuma’s reputation and subsequently that of the ANC” (Mavuso, 2014:7).

Mavuso quoted Mchunu saying:

“Madonsela is determined to keep this matter in the media and the public for as long as possible, thus damaging the name of the president. This is one of many ways the propoganda against the ANC is sustained” (Mavuso, 2014:7).

Mavuso further reported:

“Mchunu also turned on the DA, accusing the main opposition of capitalising on the Nkandla debacle. He said the party knew very well that Zuma did nothing wrong in this matter but still they were happy to ‘pin him down’ despite the obvious fact that he was not involved” (Mavuso, 2014:7).

### **5.8.3 Sources who sponsored the nation builder frame**

Data from the nation builder frame suggest that Zuma was one of the frame's key sponsors. Journalists were able to interview him and directly quote him.

A newswire story published in *The New Age* reads:

“President Jacob Zuma said the party would continue to focus on job creation, rural development, land reform, food security, education, health and fight crime and corruption. It is no secret that the majority of South Africa’s poor were black, particularly women and those living in rural areas” (Sapa, 2014:9).

In another story, Hunter reported:

“In an exclusive in-depth interview with *The New Age* and ANN7 President Jacob Zuma shared his pride about how far the country had come since 1994” (Hunter, 2014:19).

In a different story, Hunter reported:

“Zuma said only collaboration with all sectors of society would breed success for the country” (Hunter, 2014:22).

Omarjee reported:

“In that vein, elections were pending and Zuma said a lot had been done and more change was needed” (Omarjee, 2014:14).

In a different story Mkhwanazi reported:

“President Jacob Zuma hit back at the opposition pulling no punches on the success of his administration over the last five years and 20 years of a democratic order” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:1).

Phumla Williams, the then acting CEO of Government Communications and Information System, wrote in a column:

“President Zuma paid tribute to Madiba by reminding us that his long walk to freedom might have come to an end, but that our journey of creating a better life for all continues. We have a collective responsibility to live up to Mandela’s legacy and continue to build a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa” (Williams, 2014:18).

Williams (ibid) added:

“The picture that emerges is clear; he has done a lot in this first term as president of the country.”

#### **5.8.4 Sources who sponsored the support frame**

According to the data, Zuma was one of the sources who sponsored the support frame. Nyanga reported that Zuma told Mpumalanga “citizens” to “ignore doomsayers and come out in numbers to support the ruling party next month’s election” (Nyanga, 2014:22).

Nyanga further reported that:

“President Jacob Zuma made the calling at an election rally in Secunda where he expressed shock at negative comments about the ANC and opposition claims that the party’s support had waned. Zuma predicted that the ANC would sweep the board and get 90% of the votes in the province” (Nyanga, 2014:22a).

In a different story, Nyanga quoted Siphosezwe Masango, the spokesperson for the ANC in Mpumalanga, saying:

“As the ANC, we have done our campaigning very well with confidence in the entire province and we are not scared by Malema’s visit. The residents in the municipality are our pillar of strength and will continue supporting us as they know the ANC has fought for their democracy. We don’t believe people could simply be misled by a child without any track record in his life” (Nyanga, 2014:29b).

In another story, Mkhwanazi quoted Congress of the People (Cope) members of parliament who defected to the ANC saying:

“We believe that the ANC, notwithstanding its challenges, remains the most effective vehicle to bring about fundamental change and transformation in favour of the poor

and workers, in our country, on the continent and internationally” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:24).

Hunter reported, in another story, that ANC alliance partner Congress of South African Trade Unions’ (Cosatu) then President Sdumo Dlamini said about the Zuma’s manifesto:

“You win some and you lose some. We fully support the ANC and the manifesto” (Hunter, 2014:1).

Mkhwanazi reported that ANC aligned labour union National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) had thrown its weight behind Zuma’s campaign:

“ANC to make a clean sweep at the polls. The show of support by Nehawu yesterday came after metalworkers union Numsa dumped the ruling party for the elections” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4).

In another story, Mkhwanazi quoted then ANC spokesperson Khusela Sangoni-Khawe saying:

“The ANC continued talking to communities because it was working closely with them, Sangoni-Khawe said. She said the service delivery protests were not an indication of the loss of support for the ANC on the ground” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4).

Nyanga quoted Bonakele Majuba, the ANC alliance partner SACP’s Mpumalanga provincial secretary saying:

“We are happy with the high turnout during voter registration weekend and we call upon those not yet registered to do so at various municipalities. We call on all our members to actively participate in ANC election structures and branches in strengthening the capacity of the movement (Nyanga, 2014).

In the same story, Nyanga quoted Cosatu’s Fidel Mlombo saying SACP and Cosatu would never abandon the ANC:

“The two organisations will work together in ensuring that a united and campaigning alliance exists in the province. Both organisations commit to protect and defend the ANC against the imperialist and counter-revolutionary forces who are bent on pursuing an agenda to derail the national democratic revolution” (Nyanga, 2014).

In another story, Nyanga quoted 73-year-old Mary Madonsela a beneficial of a state home, saying:

‘The only political party in my mind is that of Nelson Mandela’s ANC because I have been voting for it since 1994. So I would be wrong not to reveal in front of you that I will continue voting for it” (Nyanga, 2014:29c).

Nyanga, in a different story, quoted Ethiopian born Tyde Gambre to demonstrate foreigners' support for Zuma and the ANC:

"I am now a proud citizen of this country since the ANC has permitted foreigners to have rights, particularly to marry South Africans and apply for citizenship. I don't see why I should not vote for the ANC as the only political party which practices true freedom and non-racialism. I hope it receives more votes in the coming polls" (Nyanga, 2014:23b).

In a letter to the editor, Molebatsi Hlalele wrote:

"The ANC is the only party that has not only the support of the people; it is also supported by an advanced section of society who have the organic intellectual capacity to advise the ANC correctly. This advanced section is none other than the communists, organised by the SACP. That is the main reason why DA hates the ANC so much (Hlalele, 2014:18).

### **5.8.5 Sources who sponsored the Mandela frame**

According to the data, Zuma was one of the news sources that sponsored the Mandela frame. Data also indicates that other news sources, which sponsored the frame, had ties to Zuma and the ANC.

In a story, Hunter writes about how Zuma referenced Mandela:

"A rainbow in a grey sky and a statue of Nelson Mandela smiling with open arms. This is what adorns the cover of the 20 Year Review of South Africa. And if President Jacob Zuma's words are anything to go by, the picture reflects the positive strides they country has made" (Hunter, 2014:1)

*The New Age* editor wrote in an editorial:

"Reflect on the unstinting contribution of Nelson Mandela and others before committing the futile act of spoiling the ballot paper" (The Editor, 2014:1).

*The New Age* editor further stated:

"Reflect on the unstinting contribution of Nelson Mandela and others before committing the futile act of spoiling the ballot paper" (The Editor, 2014:1).

Mafisa quoted then ANC spokesperson Keith Khoza saying:

"Mandela belongs to the ANC and the ruling party has every right to campaign in his name" (Mafisa, 2014:1).

Khoza, a cited in Mafisa, further said:

“They can’t take (Nelson) Mandela from us. He was an ANC leader and a loyal ANC member,’ ANC spokesperson Keith Khoza said” (Mafisa, 2014:1).

In the same story, Mafisa quoted ANC veteran Ahmed Kathrada. Mafisa wrote:

“And while Madiba may not be around any longer to woo voters for the ruling party, his fellow Rivonia trialist said: ‘I will die an ANC member. I will campaign for the ANC if I’m deployed to do so’ (Mafisa, 2014:1).

Velaphi quoted ANC national executive committee member Fikile Xasa saying:

“ANC national executive committee member Fikile Xasa said it did not make sense for the opposition to tarnish the ANC-led government’s name, and yet find it expedient to single out former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki as having been better leaders of the organisation” (Velaphi, 2014:27).

Xasa, as cited in Velaphi, further said:

“In other words we cannot single out Madiba and Zizi for the good work that the ANC has done for the country. The two comrades were deployed by the ANC in their positions. What they did was based on our collective decisions as ANC. Even under Mbeki, we were there. We are still here under Zuma and we will also be there for any of our leaders” (Velaphi, 2014:27).

Mkhwanazi wrote about how ANC Provincial leader Songezo Mjongile whipped out the Mandela card during the campaign trail:

“He said when former Nelson Mandela walked out of Pollsmoor prison 24 years ago, he called on white to join the ranks of the ANC in their numbers, assuring them that the ANC was their political home” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:8).

In a column, Phumla Williams, the then CEO of Government Communications and Information System wrote:

“President Zuma paid tribute to Madiba by reminding us that his long walk to freedom might have come to an end, but that our journey of creating a better life for all continues” (Williams, 2014:18).

In the same column, Williams added:

“We have a collective responsibility to live up to Mandela’s legacy and continue to build a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa” (Williams, 2014:18).

In a column, Vusi Monyela, Nehawu’s then Gauteng secretary wrote:

“Recently they have attempted to divide the ANC by praising Madiba and Thabo Mbeki, while condemning and demonising Zuma. They claimed that during the past five years the government under President Zuma has rolled back the progress made by former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki” (Monyela, 2014:18).

In a letter to the editor, *The New Age* reader Alice Benjamin wrote:

“My vote will honour Madiba” (Benjamin, 2014:17).

In the same letter, Benjamin added:

“I will stand proudly in the queue to cast my vote to honour Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani, Ruth First and many of our fallen revolutionaries” (Benjamin, 2014:17).

#### **5.8.6 Sources who sponsored the electability frame**

According to data, Zuma was one of the news sources that sponsored the electability frame. News sources who sponsored the electability frame, like in the other frames, were people associated with Zuma and the ANC.

Hunter reported:

“Zuma slams those who heckle him as attention seekers, saying the ANC is not losing popularity” (Hunter, 2014:4).

*The New Age* editor wrote in an editorial:

“Vote ANC but demand good governance” (The Editor, 2014:1).

Wonderboy Peters, an employee of the Department of Correctional Services, wrote an opinion piece:

“The ANC’s unwavering identification with the majority of Africans and its championing of pro-poor policies in education, health, housing, and social security is its greatest source of popularity within the electorate” (Peters, 2014:19).



*The New Age* published a story headlined “It’s on Tracker – the ANC wins” (TNA Reporter, 2014:23). In the story, the publication sourced the story from a survey conducted by the Voter National Election Tracker. It quoted the organisation’s Manu Sharma saying:

“When asked about their perception of who would win, irrespective of their own party support, 70% of the respondents named the ANC as the expected winner” (TNA Reporter, 2014:23).

In the same story, *The New Age* reported:

“Jacob Zuma continues to be the most popular leader with an approval rating of 46%. He is the most popular leader among black people with an approval rating of 53%” (TNA Reporter, 2014:23).

Mkhwanazi, referring to Nehawu, reported:

“One of Cosatu’s biggest unions has come out in support of the ANC during the elections” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4).

Nyaka, reporting on an interview with SACP’s provincial secretary in Mpumalanga Bonakele Majuba, wrote:

“Majuba said the ANC deserves their support as their alliance” (Nyaka, 2014:4).

Mabona report that television “personality and house music DJ Sbu said he was contributing to the ANC’s victory in the forthcoming general elections” (Mabona, 2014:4).

Mabona quoted DJ Sbu saying:

“I am contributing to the ANC’s election campaign and I believe the ANC is the winning team” (Mabona, 2014:4).

DJ Sbu, as quoted in Mabona, added:

“I think we will win with an overwhelming majority and I am very excited about this. I am also excited to see young people getting involved in voter education and having a say in the future of this country” (Mabona, 2014:4).

### **5.8.7 Sources who sponsored the transformation frame**

Data shows that Zuma sponsored the transformation frame among news sources. The frame was also sponsored by other news sources affiliated with Zuma and the ANC.

Reporting on the 20 Year Review of South Africa, Hunter quoted Zuma saying:

“Given the manner in which we are able to pull our country back from the brink of disaster, South Africa is an inspiration to people elsewhere in the world who are seeing the resolution of serious conflicts” (Hunter, 2014:1).

Zuma, as quoted in Hunter, added:

“The review provides evidence of progress also in socio-economic transformation” (Hunter, 2014:1).

In the same story, Hunter quoted Zuma saying:

“The number of people in employment grew by about 5.6 million between 1994 and 2013, or by 60%” (Hunter, 2014:1).

In an opinion piece, Phumla Williams, the then acting CEO of Government Communications and Information System wrote:

“Working together we have changed South Africa into a better country. We have delivered basic services to the majority of our people who were neglected under apartheid” (Williams, 2014:18).

Mkhwanazi wrote about an interview with Cope members of parliament who defected to the ANC:

“They said there was no alternative to the ANC, stating that the ruling party remained the strongest leader of social and economic transformation in the country” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:24).

Mabona quoted SACP’s Gauteng secretary Jacob Mamabolo saying:

“To blame President Jacob Zuma and completely ignore contradictions of the state transformation constitutes crude subjectivism” (Mabona, 2014:4).

In an opinion piece, South Africa’s former ambassador to Cuba Phatse Justice Piitso wrote:

“Our immediate task is to renew the mandate of the ANC to carry forward the revolutionary project of transformation of our society” (Piitso, 2014:4).

Ford-Kritzinger quoted Cosatu’s then Western Cape secretary Tony Ehreinreich saying:

“We must remember that a vote for the DA, is a vote to keep the Western Cape white and to stop transformation in South Africa” (Ford-Kritzinger, 2014:3).

Mkhwanazi quoted Nehawu spokesperson Sizwe Pamla saying:

“The ANC has been at the forefront in the fight against oppression. The ruling party has driven the democratisation of South Africa. It was also driving the transformation agenda in the country” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:4).

### **5.8.8 Sources that sponsored the apartheid frame**

According to the data, Zuma was one of the news sources that sponsored the apartheid narrative frame. Zuma and the ANC were also connected to the other sponsors of the frame.

Moloi reported about an interview with the mayor of Maluti-a-Phofung municipality Vusi Tshabalala:

“According to the mayor, many people tended to too easily forget that when the ANC came to power, the country was faced with many problems resulting from the legacy of apartheid and from colonial rule” (Moloi, 2014:9).

Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education and Training in Zuma’s Cabinet, wrote in an opinion piece:

“It was aware that one of the most destructive legacies of apartheid was Bantu Education which hindered the intellectual development of blacks in schools and tertiary institutions. Without the expansion of education opportunities, one of the main aims of the liberation struggle would not be achieved” (Nzimande, 2014:19).

ANC national executive member and the then Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration and an envoy for South Africa at the Open Government Partnership Ayanda Dlodlo, wrote in opinion piece:

“Instead we were the skunk of the world whose system of apartheid was declared by the whole world as a crime against humanity. Today, where people talk of these rights, they seem to forget that this is where we come from. The very existence of a Constitution that considered human rights sacrosanct is a good story to tell” (Dlodlo, 2014:19).

Hunter reported that Zuma “lambasted talk that the country was better off under apartheid than it is today” (Hunter, 2014:4). In the story, Hunter quoted Zuma saying:

“We are completing 20 years of freedom, reminding people where we come from” (Hunter, 2014:4).

In another story, Mkhwanazi reported:

“President Jacob Zuma yesterday revealed an astonishing plan by the apartheid regime’s military to kidnap former president Nelson Mandela – and former National Party leader FW de Klerk – to Angola to force them to renounce negotiations on the eve of the democratic breakthrough” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:1).

John Pampallis, who had been an ANC member for 36 years and a special advisor to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, wrote in an opinion piece:

“As a liberation movement the ANC led the struggle against apartheid for many decades. As a political party it remains anti-racist and pro-democracy. Its efforts have resulted in a political transition that guarantees everyone a range of rights, including the right to vote. The people of this country have struggled for the right to vote. They should use it on May 7” (Pampallis, 2014:19).

Mavuso reported on ANC’s the deputy chairman in KwaZulu-Natal Willies Mchunu’s address:

“This was on Friday night in Durban at the Amadelakufa awards ceremony which was held to honour living and late MK soldiers who risked their lives to take on the apartheid regime and its army to liberate South Africa” (Mavuso, 2014:9).

### **5.8.9 Sources who sponsored the jobs frame**

The data reveals that Zuma, like the other frames, was one of the news sources that sponsored the jobs frame. The data also shows that the other people who sponsored the frame had ties to Zuma and the ANC.

For instance, Mkhwanazi reported:

“There were many measures the government was taking to deal with the issue of jobs, growing the economy and improving the lives of the people. Zuma said his administration came to power at the time of the global economic crisis but it weathered the storm” (Mkhwanazi, 2014:1).

In a story headlined “DA echoes ANC on jobs”, Hunter reported:

“In January this year, ANC President Jacob Zuma announced that his party would create 6 million work opportunities as part its manifesto (Hunter, 2014:4).

In the same story, Hunter quoted Zuma saying:

“We will consolidate the public works programme, creating 6 million work opportunities by 2019, many of which will be of long duration” (Hunter, 2014:4).

*The New Age* editor wrote in an editorial:

“Who can fix all of this with a sense of sympathy and for the poor, the underpaid worker and those seeking jobs?” At *The New Age* we have thoroughly examined the names of the ballot paper and made our own tick. It’s not for the DA which is still to mired in a history of which privilege and unable to strike a chord among the country’s black majority. It is not the EFF who masquerade as champions of the poor but are in essence Gucci revolutionaries who advance delusional poppycock populist policies with no basis or logic. Cope, which garnered a sizable anti-ANC vote in 2009, bickered ever since and has now fallen apart. The other “minus 1%” parties will hardly cause a ripple. That leaves only the ruling party, the ANC, to consider (The Editor, 2014:1).

Moloi quoted then Maluti-a-Phofung municipality mayor, and a member of the ANC, Vusi Tshabalala saying:

“We know that a lot of people are not working today, but I tell you now the focus is to create permanent serious jobs for all,” he said (Moloi, 2014:9).

In a letter to the editor, Thabo Thwala wrote:

“The ANC-led government has proved that it delivers to the people and continues to create jobs and independence for the people. The lies must stop” (Thwala, 2014:19).

## **5.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher identified the news frames used by *The New Age* to report on Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. The researcher also identified the news frame sponsors in the examined articles. The researcher will analyse the frames and interpret the result in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This final chapter outlines the study's findings. Arguments are constructed based on the research questions. The frames used by *The New Age* to interpret Zuma's election campaign in the run-up to the 2014 general elections are identified. The sponsors of the frames are examined. Lastly, future research prospects are discussed.

### **6.2 Frames used to cover Zuma's election campaign**

To identify and compare the frames, the researcher used qualitative content analysis.

Nine frames emerged from an analysis of 150 articles published by *The New Age* during the research period. Data show that in the run-up to the 2014 general elections, *The New Age* used a good story to tell, vilification, nation-builder, support, Mandela, electability, transformation, apartheid, and jobs frames to cover Zuma's campaign trail.

All the frames are positive. Therefore, *The New Age* lived up to Zuma's wish "for a different perspective in the news that would not be so 'negative' and critical of the government and one that would not only cover big national news" (Zondo, 2022:457) in its coverage of his campaign trail.

#### **6.2.1 Good-story-to-tell frame**

For instance, the good story to tell frame, which can be described as a quality of life frame (Boydston *et al.*, 2014:7), shone a positive light on Zuma's campaign. According to Boydston *et al.*, (ibid) this frame, which is one of the generic news frames that are common during election campaigns, covers a wide range of subjects, including income, mobility, and access to resources, happiness, social structures, ease of daily routines, and the quality of communal life.

In light of numerous criticisms of Zuma and his administration, alluded to in previous chapters, *The New Age's* extensive use of the frame during his campaign trail is intriguing. The articles that featured the frame were crafted like press releases. They lacked nuance, did not place Zuma's campaign in the perspective of his prior electoral promises and did not provide dissenting viewpoints to balance the narrative. The journalists went with the versions that Zuma, people linked to him and the party provided to them. In the articles that featured the frame, readers were deprived of an accurate picture of South Africa's multiparty campaigns and debates.

## 6.2.2 Vilification frame

Instead of adhering to the journalistic standards of fair and balanced reporting of facts, *The New Age* also adopted another self-serving frame to interpret Zuma's campaign message. The publication's journalists used the vilification frame. The frame, which is a human interest frame, hinges on emotion, conjures empathy on issues and prefers a humane attitude to deal with challenges (Abdullah, 2021:7). The human interest frame is one of the most common generic news frames (Boukes *et al.*, 2015). The articles that feature the frame attempted to insulate Zuma from criticism by portraying him as a victim of anti-transformation organisations, biased media, and envious political opponents.

The articles also tie Zuma's criticism to classism for his lack of formal education and machinations to have him jailed on allegedly concocted rape and corruption charges, among myriad other issues. Further, the articles highlight Zuma's capabilities and good character traits that they claim are clouded by the vilification that he is subjected to. However, one feature of the articles employing the vilification frame stands out: they do not present opposing viewpoints. The two-sided-story principle is not followed. The textual expression in Table 5.3 illustrates this.

Objectivity is a cardinal pillar of news reporting. The notion of objectivity harks back to the 1830s during the decline of "party journalism" in North America (Cohen-Almagor, 2008:138). It was during this era that the press offered a "more dependable and authentic journalism" and "news untainted by the political, social, and economic values that for so long had defined the content of the daily papers" (Cohen-Almagor, 2008:138).

In their study, "Objectivity" and "hard news" reporting across cultures: comparing the news report in English, French, Japanese and Indonesian journalism, Thomson *et al.* (2008:2) observe that "key notions recur with considerable regularity in the media studies and journalistic training literature". The scholars cite text such as "neutral in reporting 'just facts'" (Thomson *et al.*, 2008:2). Cushion and Lewis (2017) underscore the importance of objectivity in news reporting, which is lacking in *The New Age*'s coverage of Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections as demonstrated by the vilification frame. The scholars suggest the adoption of a "more evidence-driven approach to impartiality, where journalists independently seek the most truthful version of events – as well as taking their mission to inform more seriously – may have gone some way in better informing people before casting their vote" (Cushion & Lewis, 2017:222). Cohen-Almagor (2008) complements this view. According to Cohen-Almagor, newsrooms should evaluate various concepts fairly and resolve competing interests, claims, and demands (Cohen-Almagor, 2008:152). Cohen-Almagor (2008:152) points out that this is a "delicate task" as making decisions requires integrity, and considering all relevant factors.

### 6.2.3 Nation-builder frame

*The New Age* also used the nation-builder frame to unpack Zuma's campaign for its readers. The frame, which may be regarded as a political frame, is concerned with discussions on political matters (Boydston *et al.*, 2014:5).

Political frames, according to Lopatin (2020), determine how people define events and how they create subsequent behaviour based on that description. The National Development Plan, the ANC's plan to alleviate poverty by 2030, is the focus of *The New Age* articles that feature the nation-builder frame (Hunter, 2014:4). The document was one of Zuma's most utilised campaign tools. Zuma included the NDP in his manifesto. The articles that feature the frame centre on the NDP's endorsement by the ANC's tripartite alliance partners, as referred to in previous chapters, and by people close to Zuma and the party.

According to the articles, Zuma is a nation-builder who deserves to be elected to implement the NDP and build the nation by eradicating the country's shared enemy: poverty. However, an examination of the articles bearing the nation-builder frame reveals that *The New Age* journalists did not solicit the opinions of the general public, particularly those with opposing views on the NDP.

Essentially, the journalists regurgitated facts handed to them by Zuma and other NDP proponents. The journalists also neglected to compare the NDP to what other political parties had to offer. This denied readers of *The New Age* a key explanation of the NDP and how Zuma intended to roll it out.

### 6.2.4 Support frame

*The New Age* also adopted the support frame to interpret Zuma's campaign message. The frame, which may be described as a public opinion frame, is associated with broad social attitudes, voting, and demographic information, and it comprises efforts to increase voter turnout (Boydston *et al.*, 2014:5). The articles that feature the frame present Zuma as a victor and refute his opponents' claims. The articles are based on information provided by Zuma, the ANC, and its alliance partners to *The New Age* journalists. The articles failed to compare Zuma's perceived public support to that of other political leaders. Overall, the articles



featuring the frame are shallow. They give no context or background information on the electorate's support for Zuma.

### **6.2.5 Mandela frame**

Another frame that *The New Age* used in its coverage of Zuma's is the Mandela frame. The frame, which features South Africa's first democratically elected president, the late former President Nelson Mandela, can be considered a symbolic frame (Bolman and Deal, 1991). The frame includes a discussion of the symbolic significance of current practises, rituals, or artefacts, as well as discourse regarding institutional identity, culture, or symbols (Bolman and Deal, 1991).

The articles featuring the frame leverage Mandela's name to boost Zuma's campaign. The articles emphasise that Mandela and Zuma are products of the same political party and share similar values. They also criticise opposition parties for incorporating Mandela's legacy into campaign slogans, implying that only the ANC, and hence Zuma, can lay claim to the late leader. In summary, the articles featuring the Mandela frame encourage voters to vote for the ANC, and thus Zuma, in Mandela's honour. However, the articles fall short of traditional journalistic norms, such as situating the news events within a specific context and including multiple viewpoints.

The journalists failed to delve into widespread popular views regarding Zuma's campaign and determine whether Zuma was held in the same regard as Mandela. The people interviewed and whose perspectives are highlighted in the articles were approached while attending ANC rallies or party-related gatherings.

### **6.2.6 Electability frame**

*The New Age* also utilised the electability frame to report on Zuma's election campaign. The frame, which may be described as a viability frame, provides data on a politician's campaign performance, political endorsements, campaign organisation, and public impression of the candidate (Yoon & Lee, 2013:422).

The articles that feature the frame portray Zuma as a viable candidate for the country's top position. The articles reference surveys and people connected to Zuma, the ANC, and its tripartite coalition who argue that Zuma should be re-elected. They also quote celebrities who support Zuma and the ANC's re-election bid. The articles give Zuma and his supporters a voice and a platform to denounce his adversaries. Reading the articles using the frame, however, does not provide a clear picture of how Zuma compares to his opponents in other political parties. This is precisely so because the articles lack nuance and are one-sided. They do not present the competing views within the South African political landscape. Reading the articles utilising the frame leaves a reader with no grasp of South African politics and the dynamics of the 2014 general election campaigns.

### **6.2.7 Transformation frame**

The transformation frame is another device that *The New Age* adopted in its coverage of Zuma's campaign trail. The frame, which may be described as a fairness and equality frame, falls under the issue-specific news frames which relate to specific topics and news events (De Vreese *et al.*, 2001:108; Boydston *et al.*, 2014:13). The frame includes the implementation of laws, the allocation of resources among people, and the interplay between individual and group rights (Boydston *et al.*, 2014:13).

The stories featuring the frame depict Zuma, and the ANC, as champions of transformation in South Africa. They assert emphatically that a vote for Zuma and the ANC is a vote for transformation. To emphasise this, the articles contrast apartheid's treatment of the black majority with the privileges of democracy. They attribute the benefits to Zuma and the ANC.

The articles provide Zuma and his supporters with a platform to condemn his detractors and opposition political parties who blame him for what they see as a slow pace of transformation. The articles, however, do not provide a broader context of South Africa's transformation agenda. The journalists skirt around the topic and report on it, concerning Zuma's campaign, through the lens that Zuma and his supporters have provided to *The New Age*. The way the articles are framed suggests that readers were not given a true picture of South Africa's transformation efforts.

The opinions and assertions of opposition parties concerning transformation are only mentioned in the articles when news sources and Zuma defend his track record or make new pledges to transform the country and people's lives. The articles fail to adopt the traditional balanced approach associated with journalism; they do not include dissenting views and leave it up to the readers to judge which politician makes genuine promises about transformation.

#### **6.2.8 Apartheid frame**

The apartheid frame was one of the noticeable frames *The New Age* used to cover Zuma campaign trial. The frame, which may be described as a victim or underdog frame, presents one side as the victim and the other as the aggressor (Block, 2003:1687). As an issue-specific news frame, it focuses on apartheid and provides details about it (Kozman, 2017:779).

Articles that use this frame portray Zuma and the ANC as saviours of the black majority and other political parties as apartheid apologists. The articles also convey Zuma's campaign message and give voice to his supporters, the ANC, and its tripartite alliance. They seem to hold up apartheid atrocities as a mirror to the readers, urging them to vote for Zuma and the ANC if they do not want a recurrence of what happened in the past. The articles lack a journalistic analysis of the issue. The articles also deprive the readers of divergent facts regarding apartheid, in a democratic setting, by omitting to contrast Zuma's campaign message and pledges with those of his opposition party peers.

#### **6.2.9 Jobs frame**

The last frame that *The New Age* adopted to interpret Zuma's campaign message was the jobs frame. The frame, which may be described as economic frame (Boydston *et al.*, 2014:4), falls under the issue-specific news frames (De Vreese, 2005:55). A frame involves monetary gains for individuals, families, societies, or the economy (Boydston *et al.*, 2014:4). The jobs news frame, like other issue-specific frames, concentrates on a single subject, which is job creation (De Vreese, 2005:55).

The articles that feature the frame centre on Zuma's electoral manifesto, which promised to create thousands of jobs for South Africans. The majority of the voices in the articles either defend or endorse the manifesto. The articles' news sources include Zuma, the ANC, its

alliance partners, and supporters. The journalists' independent analysis of Zuma's job promises is lacking in the articles. The absence of opposition parties and people's viewpoints critical of Zuma's pledges to generate employment in the articles is notable. The articles also do not contrast Zuma's manifesto on job creation to those of other major parties. The highlighted shortcomings suggest that *The New Age* readers were denied a holistic understanding of what South African political parties pledged to do to create jobs. It seems that they approached the polls if *The New Age* was the only publication they relied on, none-wiser because they were only exposed to Zuma's message.

To examine how the articles originated, the next section looks at the frame sponsors.

### **6.3 Frame sponsors: the media hegemony lens**

News sources play a crucial role in framing. According to Kee *et al.* (2012), news sources (or frame sponsors) are influential in the frame-building process. It is not surprising that *The New Age* journalists had access to Zuma, given his proximity to the Gupta family, the founders of the publication, as seen in chapter five.

Zuma, the ANC, its tripartite alliance partners, government officials, and supporters sponsored the nine news frames, outlined above, that *The New Age* used to report on Zuma's campaign trail.

Zuma, for example, sponsored the majority of the frames. The articles directly quote Zuma, reference his manifesto and events involving him. Zuma also dominated the opinion articles penned by ANC aligned government officials, ministers, and columnists. The writers extensively quoted Zuma and justified his stance on myriad issues. ANC mayors launching big government projects, which were turned into campaigning tools, were extensively quoted and the projects are profiled in the articles. *The New Age* journalists also extensively quoted recipients of state homes, and other services who sang praises of Zuma and his government.

*The New Age* journalists also interviewed and quoted ANC supporters at party rallies.

The data examined shows how political and social power shaped *The New Age's* framing of Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. According to the data, the publication did not pick ordinary sponsors for the frames. They wielded both social and political power. For instance, Zuma, who eyed the presidential seat, was the leader of the

ANC and the incumbent state president. The data shows that he was among the chief frame sponsors in *The New Age*'s framing of his campaign trail.

Among the other noteworthy frame sponsors are national government spokespersons, Cyril Ramaphosa, the then ANC deputy president, and Zuma's cabinet ministers and deputy ministers. Also quoted extensively were ANC-aligned church ministers, leaders of the ANC's alliance partners, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of the South African Trade Unions, and members of the ANC's top six structure. Pro-ANC columnists also dominated the publication.

#### 6.4 Summary

The data examined in chapter five shows that *The New Age* emphasised Zuma's purported capacity to govern and improve people's lives during his campaign coverage.

The frames also justified the need for him to continue with the ANC's post-democracy service delivery track record. Most importantly, this is juxtaposed with apartheid where the black majority had little or no access to services (Hunter, 2014:22a). Furthermore, the publication highlighted the ANC's 20-year track record of delivering essential services to the segment of the population that was previously marginalised. It is noteworthy that Zuma's track record, during his first term as president of South Africa, is also part of the ANC's vaunted 20-year governance (Williams, 2014:18). In an opinion piece, headlined *Advances made under Jacob Zuma*, Williams sings Zuma's praises (Williams, 2014:18).

However, the absence of stories probing and detailing the controversies that plagued Zuma's first term is conspicuous. For instance, the government struggled to reduce the unemployment rate during Zuma's first term (Booyesen, 2015:9). However, Zuma was quoted saying his "administration came to power at the time of the global economic crisis" (Mkhwanazi, 2014:1).

The dark cloud emanating from the so-called arms deal still hung over Zuma. The corruption charges against Zuma, linked to the purchase of arms, persisted throughout his first term of office (Booyesen, 2015:9).

The shooting of striking mine workers by police in Marikana also bloodied Zuma's presidency. The illegal landing of a private plane belonging to the Gupta family, Zuma's close

associates and founders of *The New Age*, also caused a lot of consternation among political parties and the general public (Booyesen, 2015:9). The controversial security upgrades at Zuma's Nkandla home, KwaZulu-Natal, which cost the taxpayer more than R200-million, made headlines during Zuma's first term office (Booyesen, 2014:10). However, *The New Age* did not focus on these issues when reporting on Zuma's election campaign. Entman (1993) aptly explains the selective reporting displayed by *The New Age* in its coverage of Zuma's campaign. It is a common occurrence for frames to elevate certain features of reality and obscure other components (Entman, 1993:55). This may result in the audiences reacting differently to a particular issue (ibid).

The data also show that *The New Age* personalised the coverage of Zuma's victimhood claims, added emotion and conveyed the information in a manner that requires a humane solution. These are hallmarks of the human interest frame, as defined by Abdullah (2021:7). By giving the issue a human face, *The New Age* confirmed several scholars' averments that news media outlets adopt this frame to captivate their audiences (Bennett, 1995; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Abdulla, 2021).

The vilification frame, in *The New Age's* coverage of Zuma's campaign trail, performed four framing functions – as outlined by Entman (1993). It defined the problem in Zuma's vilification claims as the former president's political opponents and hostile news media. The frame went further to diagnose the cause of the problem. It identified it as classism wrought by Zuma's non-conformist nature, his polygamous marriage, and his perceived lack of education. Zuma's non-conformity, as diagnosed by the vilification frame, is consistent with Geertsema-Sligh's (2015) findings. Geertsema-Sligh (ibid) found that the media wanted Zuma to be a "modern head of state instead of a traditional man".

The frame also made a moral judgement by evaluating the underlying agents and their effect on Zuma's campaign. It found no justification for the perceived antagonism towards Zuma and that his private life was out of bounds of the media. It reinforced Zuma's victimhood which Ndletyana and Maaba (2010) alluded to. The moral judgment resonates with the conclusion Maseng *et al.* (2018:11618) arrived at regarding "Media's role in de-popularizing and Influencing Political Attitudes towards Jacob Zuma". The scholars (ibid) found that "the media had defined and shaped attitudes of South Africans towards Zuma, which were predominantly negative". Maseng *et al.* (2018:11618) add that, among other devices, news

framing “about his name would eventually be one of the sources of deposing him from power”.

Finally, the vilification frame suggests a remedy for the problem. It suggests a humane remedy, as the human interest frames are wont to do, to Zuma’s perceived vilification. It affirms Zuma’s leadership and urges *The New Age* audiences to focus on the former president’s positive attributes. The ultimate remedy, the frame suggests, is to vote for Zuma and ANC into power – again.

The data is also testimony that *The New Age* used the lens that Zuma handed to the media to report on his election campaign. The NDP policy document was one of the aces in Zuma’s campaign arsenal (Zuma, 2014). It morphed into a frame when *The New Age* elevated the NDP, through salience, above other issues. According to Entman (1993:53), salience entails making “a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences”.

*The New Age* achieved this through placement, repetition and linking the NDP to culturally familiar symbols (Entman, 1993:53). The NDP was a highly contested policy document among the ranks of ANC. The ANC’s tripartite alliance partners were strongly opposed to the NDP, as result, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa refused to campaign for the ANC in the 2014 general elections (Naidoo & Maré, 2015; Booysen, 2015). However, *The New Age* did not dwell much on dissenting voices. This conspicuous omission aligns with Entman’s (1993:55) assertion that frames call for consideration of some features of the truth while concealing others. Entman (ibid) adds that this could result in news consumers reacting differently to a particular issue. Also, *The New Age* took an explicit favourable stance on the NDP. Its editorials, highlighted above, are testimony to this. The editorial, which is written by the staff of the newspaper, highlights the publication’s posture on issues. Golan and Lukito aver that the “editorial section provides a voice to the institutional worldview of the newspaper” (Golan & Lukito, 2017:217).

Drawing from the data, one can deduce that the journalists stressed the South African electorate’s backing for Zuma and the ANC. One can also infer that *The New Age* embraced the Mandela news frame and covered Zuma’s campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 elections through a lens provided to them by the former president and his party. The ANC aligned news sources and Zuma dropped Mandela’s name in several stories. The late statesman’s name was used to jog the electorate’s memories of the country’s past and Mandela’s role in ensuring all citizens’ democratic right to vote. Zuma’s campaign message, which *The New Age* endorsed by adopting the news frame, sought to convince the electorate that voting for the ANC, which would guarantee Zuma a second presidential term, would be

tantamount to thanking Mandela for his selfless deeds. According to Booysen (2015:13), the “focus on Mandela helped elevate the ANC campaign above the reaffirmation of Zuma as the face of the ANC’s election quest”.

Based on the above information, one can deduce that the journalists used the news package that Zuma and the ANC provided in their coverage of Zuma’s campaign trail ahead of the 2014 general elections.





## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

### **7.1 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to establish how *The New Age* framed Zuma's campaign trial in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. This was attained through a qualitative content analysis of 150 articles, related to Zuma's campaign, published by *The New Age* during the research period. The research has established that *The New Age* adopted in frames, namely the good story to tell, vilification, nation builder, support, Mandela, electability, transformation, apartheid and jobs frames, to report and interpret Zuma's campaign. All the frames portrayed Zuma positively. For instance, articles framed around vilification sought to counter the negative publicity Zuma received from other press, due to his perceived political indiscretions, and depicted him as an innocent victim.

It is a small wonder that *The New Age's* framing of Zuma's campaign had the hallmarks of an endorsement. Zuma, his close allies and prominent ANC members were the sources of the information. Journalists quoted them extensively in the articles. The opinion pieces, which sang Zuma's praises, were written by members of the ANC. The editorials validated Zuma's campaign and even letters to the editor depicted him in glowing terms.

The frames, in the main, did not cater for nonconformist voices. This flies in the face of journalism's ethos of impartiality and the profession's proud badge of being a platform for diverse opinions (Cushion *et al.* 2022:698). The amount of positivity which *The New Age* displayed in its coverage of Zuma's campaign, as demonstrated by the frames, even went beyond the editorial stance adopted by its founders: that of reporting on Zuma's government from a half-full glass angle (Le Cordeur, 2012). From the results of this study, one can infer that *The New Age* gave Zuma the positive coverage he sought. He testified before the commission probing state capture that when he suggested the idea of the newspaper to the Gupta family, he had seen a "need for a different perspective in the news that would not be so 'negative' and critical of the government" (Zondo, 2022).

### **7.2 Contribution to knowledge**

This study is an invaluable contribution to news framing. It enriches the discourse of news framing of presidential election campaigns, which is lacking in Africa, particularly in South

Africa, by investigating not only how a newspaper framed a candidate's campaign trail, but also the frame sponsors. This is consistent with Carragee and Roefs' (2014:214) appeal for researchers to relate research to political and social issues about power that are key to the media hegemony thesis. This study attempts to demonstrate how framing studies might help scholars better comprehend the connection between politicians and the news media.

Also, this is the first study that has examined *The New Age's* framing of issues. This study examined an important media aspect – which is the publications' editorial stances and how they relate to the media's framing of political issues. As a contribution to knowledge, the study discovered that the relationship between Zuma and the founding owners of *The New Age* resulted in the frames that the journalists adopted and employed in their coverage of the election campaign. This dents media independence and affects journalists' impartiality, which is a cardinal pillar of journalism. Guided by the framing theory, this study discovered that *The New Age* chose to elevate information favourable to Zuma and ignored details that were considered adverse to his image. In so doing, the journalists' role was reduced to that of unquestioning endorsers. This tainted South Africa's journalism standards.

The findings of this study suggest that the media industry should jealously guard against political interference in editorial decisions. Reviewed studies showed that politics and government-aligned publications are likely to report favourably about the government and politicians.

In summary, this study has significantly contributed to knowledge in media and political studies.

### **7.3 Limitation of the study**

The study aimed to examine *The New Age's* framing of Zuma's campaign trail in the run-up to the 2014 general elections. The focus was, therefore, trained on a single publication. It would have been worthwhile to contrast *The New Age's* framing of the campaign with other publications. The data collection was limited to the period between 11 January 2014 and the elections on 6 May 2014. However, there are indications that Zuma kicked off his campaign trail as far back as 2012 (Booyesen, 2012:9). Most former *The New Age* journalists, who wrote the analysed stories, were unwilling to participate in the study even when given the option to do so anonymously. This study was therefore limited to textual analysis.

Studying source selection in frame sponsorship could also have been enhanced by using a critical political economy lens. Media content is strongly influenced by capital owners, according to critical political economy proponents (Negara & Rusadi, 2021). Media outlets use their power to frame the news through selection, according to Negara and Rusadi (2021).

The researcher argues that content selection also impacts the selection of news sources. According to Negara & Rusandi, 2021, studying frame-building in economic and political news involves interviewing journalists and editors to determine their sources of information. For this study, the hegemonic lens (Carragee & Roef, 2004) was used to analyse *The New Age's* text. To gain a deeper and holistic understanding of what informs the content selection and news source selection, future studies can incorporate the media hegemony thesis and the critical political economy lens.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

To overcome the above limitations, the researcher recommends that future studies should broaden the scope and not limit data collection period. Future studies should also consider examining more than one publication to achieve better results. Researchers should make an effort to tap into the journalists' ideas of the editorial decisions behind the adoption of certain frames in the coverage of elections. Such a study is fundamental to the South African media industry to understand the influence of media ownership on content.

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