The *Daily Dispatch’s* Political Coverage of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government:


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DECLARATION
In accordance with Rule G4.6.3

I, Ayanda Ramncwana, Student No 211249432, hereby declare that the treatise/dissertation/thesis for Masters: Media Studies to be awarded is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another university or for another qualification.

Signature

Date __2 November 2017___
Abstract

The *Daily Dispatch*, a newspaper based in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, has a long history of political reporting. Arguably, it reached the zenith of its prominence during the era of political activism of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), under the leadership of Bantu Steve Biko, who was martyred by the apartheid government in 1977. Biko was at the time based in King William’s Town, in the Eastern Cape.

The newspaper, at the time edited by Donald Woods, held the view that Biko was preaching a doctrine of hatred against White people, and Woods took it upon himself to challenge Biko. This saw Woods gaining a better understanding of the BCM and Biko, and hiring into the *Daily Dispatch*’s newsroom a number of pro-Black Consciousness journalists. The newspaper then proceeded to cover not only the BCM, but also other pro-democracy movements until the demise of apartheid and the emergence of the African National Congress-led government under the presidency of Nelson Mandela.

With the emergence of the ANC-led government, there was an expectation that newspapers and journalists that had opposed apartheid and supported the liberation struggle would continue supporting the freedom fighters-turned-career-politicians. This was especially so because some pro-ANC politicians-turned-businessmen acquired a stake in media ownership.

It is against this background that this study investigated the political coverage by the *Daily Dispatch* of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government during the period 1 January – 30 December 2013. Taking into cognisance the changing hands of the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch*, the Political Economy theory, which focuses on the link between ownership of the media and its role in society, was employed as a theoretical framework. The study utilised the qualitative research methodology, specifically interviews and content analysis, as research techniques (methods).

The research found that despite the changes in the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch*, the newspaper provided independent political coverage of the ANC-led government in the Eastern Cape during the research period.
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect on the road leading to the finalisation of this dissertation, I realise that God has indeed been at work. This study was the utmost test of my trust in the plans that The Almighty has for my life. This dissertation is a testimony that – just as it is written in Jeremiah 29:11 – God has great plans for us: plans to let us prosper, not plans that will harm us; plans to give us hope and a future. I give thanks to the Almighty for carrying me on His shoulders when the floods rose and for being my guiding light throughout. Words cannot express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Simphiwe Sesanti. Njingalwazi, I can truly say that if it was not for your guidance and your motivation, I would not have made it this far. You believed in me more than I believed in myself. You ignited a fire inside of me that I never knew I had. There were moments when I felt I could not go on, but having you on the sidelines, motivating and guiding me, made all the difference. Camagu Njingalwazi! Camagu Khwalo! Camagu, Ncuthu, Mzangwa.

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I dedicate this study to my three guardian angels – my late father, Mbambezeli Raymond Salayedwa, a legend in his own right, my late uncle, Pumzile Bessie Bushula, without whom
my journalism studies would have remained just a dream, and my late sister, Lindani Salayedwa – gone but not forgotten.
CHAPTER 1

1.1. Background and Context of Research

While journalists have been described as “social critics whose personal beliefs are more likely to be liberal than conservative”, Schulman (1982:3) notes that the history of journalism in South Africa does not necessarily reflect this. Journalism in South Africa, particularly during the apartheid era, was characterised by two broad categories. The first category comprised partisan journalists, who used journalism to “continually assert separation as legitimate and necessary and to hide the inequality with distortions and myths which would aim to satisfy all South Africans” (Bird & Garda, 2004:1). The second category, non-partisan journalists, saw the media situated as the responsible voice of reason, honesty and criticism against any form of inequality and that the responsibility rested on the media to inform the public honestly, whilst taking into cognisance their power of persuasion (Bird & Garda, 2004:1).

Harber (2004:79) adds another dimension to the two categories on analysing the history of the South African press during the apartheid era. He makes reference to liberal newspapers that opposed apartheid, but compromised with apartheid and censorship, due to their loyalty to the rule of law. Harber (2004:81) further notes that the liberal press “had opposed apartheid, but to remain alive they had accepted the parameters of debate set by whites-only parliamentary politics”. He also cites the alternative press, “born in the new spirit of defiance and resistance and prepared to support international sanctions, illegal protests and even armed struggle”.

Along similar lines, Switzer (1997:2) argues that although the “English-language newspapers did represent themselves as an opposition press during the apartheid era, the targets of dissent were carefully selected and comprised an insignificant proportion of the news”. With reference to the role of the alternative press in South Africa, Switzer further divides the history of the South African alternative press into four phases, namely the African
Missionary Press (1830s – 1880s); the Independent Protest Press (1880s – 1930s); the early resistance press (1930s – 1960s) and the later resistance press (1970s – 1980s).

The African Missionary Press was triggered by the advent of European mission enterprises in South Africa, which saw a rise in black literacy:

> The influence of the missions on black journalism cannot be overemphasised. Not only were they the suppliers of the skills and technical tools of journalism, but under their influence black progress was defined in terms of the assimilation of western civilization (Johnson, 1991:15).

This period saw the emergence of the first newspapers written by and for black people. While these newspapers were independent, they were narrowly focused on conforming to the beliefs of the mission-educated elite. The Independent Protest Press coincided with the rise in the “indigenous black literary tradition in English, Afrikaans and African languages” (Switzer, 1997: 4). It was rooted in African languages, literature and history and the realisation by Christianised and black elite that “mission overlordship” was not necessarily in their best interest (Johnson, 1991:16). With the realisation that there were differences between the beliefs of the missionary colonists and traditional African values, a differentiated ideological consciousness emerged.

The Early Resistance Press was characterised by shared principles of a “non-racial, non-sectarian and more militant alliance of left-wing working and middle-class interest” (Switzer, 1997:3). The period also saw the introduction of the Bantu Press, seen as the recognition by white capitalists of the profit-potential of publishing for the black populace (Opatrny, 2007:3). This, somewhat, watered down the impact of the Bantu Press, as “white-owned black newspapers were subject to white editorial policies and thus could never serve as organs of fundamental political protests and organisation (Switzer, 1997:34).

The Later Resistance Press saw a dramatic change in the form and content of resistance media. There was increased collaboration with commercial publications still aimed at segregated audiences, progressive academic journals and student publications from
historically white universities (Switzer, 1997:3). This allowed the mass communication of the fundamental ideals of alternative press. This phase also saw the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement – aimed at transforming consciousness, overcoming fear and building racial pride primarily among the urbanised black petit bourgeois intellectuals (Mzamane & Howarth, 2000:176). This period was one of the triggers for an active alternative media in South Africa.

1.2. Changing role of alternative media in South Africa

The role of the alternative media in apartheid South Africa was clear-cut:- it was to act as the voice of reason against racial prejudice and inequality in South Africa. Harber (2004:79) observes that there was a clear, identifiable, sitting target: the apartheid government. The situation was black and white! Apartheid was seen as evil; the minority government had to be opposed at every turn. There were as many as 200 alternative newspapers in South Africa (Heard, 1994:1), but given the fluidity of this sector, the number was never constant. The role of these media, according to Harber (2004:80), was to “expose government oppression at all times, to give voice to those the government was trying to silence and to hold up a light for the liberation struggle”. Berger (1996:2) suggests that the strategy of the alternative media in the 1980s was that they were not only an alternative to the complacent and compliant mainstream press, but the alternative:

The agenda was that they would become the new mainstream. After all, the alternative to the National Party government was an ANC government; the alternative to the mainstream media was correspondingly the Alternative Press.

While these authors agree on the role of the alternative media during the apartheid era, there are divergent views in the South African media industry about the role of the media post-apartheid. Since the dawn of democracy, there have been conflicting views between media activists and government in South Africa on the role of the media. Kupe (2007:141) argues that
the tension over the media’s role results in a division between media that is within direct or indirect control of the government tending to highlight things that appear to reflect national unity and media outside government control highlighting dissent, conflict and tensions within society.

Concurring, Harber (2004:83) notes that those -

who played the role of watchdog, showing the worst of crime and corruption were accused of undermining the new order and resisting change. Those who played the role of understanding were accused of pandering to the government.

He further argues that neither of these two paths is likely to produce good journalism and that finding the balance between praise and criticism, pressure and understanding was the most difficult aspect in alternative journalism post the apartheid era. It is this balance that, after all, underpins the principle of journalistic objectivity.

Anderson and Ward (2007:65) emphasise the criteria of objectivity, impartiality and independence as giving credence to the profession of journalism and empowering communities. He focuses on the presentation of independent and accurate information as the basis of journalistic objectivity. The existing tension regarding the true role of the media in South Africa post the apartheid era is the premise of this research.

The objective of this research was to investigate the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government between 1 January 2013 to 30 December 2013. This research period was of great political significance, since it was just a year and a few months before the 2014 national elections. National elections in South Africa are of significance for provincial governments, because it is from their outcomes that provincial premiers are appointed by the party that wins in a province. Political coverage by the media before and during elections plays a significant role in helping citizens decide how to utilise their voting power. A brief history of the Daily Dispatch below contextualises the choice of the Daily Dispatch for this study.
1.3. History of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper

Established in 1872 mainly as an advertising rag covering the former Border Kei region, the *Daily Dispatch* gained popularity and international recognition a century later (Williams, 1997:1). The main source of its popularity was based on the news values of the editorial team, led by Donald Wood, in the early 1970s. Woods, a staunch anti-apartheid activist, positioned the newspaper as an advocate for democratic rule and a voice for the marginalised (Williams, 1997:1). Under his leadership, the newspaper unapologetically took a stance against the government of the time. After the dawn of democracy, however, there was a need for a fundamental ideological shift for the *Daily Dispatch* specifically in how it reported political and government-related developments and post the democratic dispensation (Stewart, 2013:1).

This ideological shift was by no doubt influenced by a number of internal and external factors that impacted on the *Daily Dispatch* newsroom. After all, the implementation of objectivity and impartiality in newsrooms has always been influenced by many internal and external factors, some unique to each newsroom and others common in the media industry. Fourie (2008:233) identifies a number of these factors as follows:

- The nature and policies of the newsroom
- Its policy on and practice of newsworthiness, news values and news criteria
- The editorial organisation and quality of the news medium
- The quality of competition with other forms of media
- The demographic profile, wants and the needs of the audience
- The social (political, economic and cultural) system in which the news medium operates.

Post the dawn of democracy, there were obvious, fundamental shifts regarding some of the above-mentioned factors within the *Daily Dispatch*. The main shift was the change of
ownership, from private independent minority media owners, Dispatch Media, to media conglomerate Johnnic Media and later a bigger conglomerate, Times Media Group.

1.4. Problem Statement and Focus

The objective and focus of this study was to investigate how the Daily Dispatch newspaper reported on the Eastern Cape government in the last year (1 January 2013 – 31 December 2013) of the ANC’s fourth term of office as the ruling party of the Eastern Cape government. The inquiry sought to establish how, if any, the ownership of the newspaper influenced its coverage one way or the other. Considering the interest between the Daily Dispatch’s ownership and its role, the political economy theory was employed.

1.5. Research Question

The central research question of this study was formulated as the following: What factors influenced the Daily Dispatch’s political coverage of the Eastern Cape government between 1 January to 30 December 2013?

This question will help answer and give clarity to the following sub-questions:

1.5.1. How did the ownership of the Daily Dispatch influence political coverage of the Eastern Cape provincial government during this period?

1.5.2. Did the change in ownership from a small, locally-owned publication to a large multinational conglomerate impact on the Daily Dispatch’s political journalism role?

1.5.3. What attitudes towards the provincial government were found in the newspaper’s reporting during this period?

1.5.4. How did the Daily Dispatch’s journalists reflect on their professional practice during the research period?

1.6. Theoretical Points of departure
This study utilised the political economy theory. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.7. Research Design and Methodology

This study used a case study as the research design. A qualitative research methodology was used, though, to a limited extent, counting was involved, meaning that to a very limited extent the study had a quantitative research methodology element. The research techniques (methods) followed, were qualitative content analysis and interviews. Some use of the quantitative research method will, however, be evident in the analysis of the Daily Dispatch articles. This will be limited to the counting of the articles and editorials. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

1.8. Chapter Outline

This thesis is presented according to the following outline:

1. **Introduction**: This chapter unpacks the context and background of the research. It focuses on some aspects of the history of journalism in South Africa and how this has evolved since the apartheid era.

2. **The role of the media during the process of South Africa’s democratisation**: This chapter discusses the role of the South African media in the various stages of South Africa’s democratisation.

3. **Literature Review**: This chapter reviews pertinent literature, focusing on the role of media in a democratic society.

4. **Theoretical Framework**: This chapter discusses the theoretical framework for this study and the reason for the choice.

5. **Research Design and Methodology**: This chapter discusses the research design and methods employed in this study.

6. **Research Findings**: This chapter unpacks the findings of the study.
7. **Data Analysis**: This chapter analyses the research findings.

8. **Conclusion and Recommendations**: This chapter provides concluding remarks and recommendations for further studies.
CHAPTER 2
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF JOURNALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1. Introduction
This chapter does not present a comprehensive outline of the history of journalism in South Africa. It does, however unpack critical developments in the history of journalism in the country, and how these impact on the topic of this research. The chapter focuses on the impact of apartheid and racial prejudice on South African journalism, particularly “black journalism” and the “alternative media”. Furthermore, particular attention is given to the Daily Dispatch newspaper, as the focus of this research and, by implication, Dispatch Media, Johnnic Media and Times Media Limited as the owners of the Daily Dispatch newspaper during the period under review. The next section contextualises the research by focusing on the historical classification of South African media.

2.2. Historical Media Classification in South Africa
The history of South African journalism dates back to the early 1800s, with the introduction of what became known as the English Press (Leshin, 2010:51; Fourie, 2001:35). This later expanded into what scholars such as Hadland (2007:6) and Fourie (2001:39) have identified as the three traditions of the South African media: the English Language Press; the Afrikaans Press; and the Black Press.

Fourie (2001: 43) notes that it is a well-known fact that throughout the history of the press in South Africa “political agendas have always played a major role in shaping the media landscape”, further noting that in many countries “press alignments are usually organised according to political affiliations; the South African press, in addition, and from its very beginnings, has been organised according to language communities and race”. Fourie (2001:52) further observes that apartheid “exacerbated the segregation of newspapers and the predominance of the white mainstream press, which provided limited coverage of the social and political struggles of this time”. While Fourie makes use of the word “agenda”, this study prefers to use the word “role” in reference to the task/s that the media assigned to themselves, and with specific reference to the Daily Dispatch.
Mpofu (1996:19), in emphasising the link between the development of the South African Press and the various inter- and intra-class and racial tensions within the South African society, notes that the press, as it developed throughout the colonial and apartheid eras, “came to reflect the socio-economic and political antagonisms that were so replete in South African society”. Hadland (2007:69), however, disagrees with the extent of the categorisation of South African media along racial lines. In fact, he states that “it would have been more accurate to say there were only two media traditions in South Africa prior to 1994 – one that embraced the principles and history of the liberal tradition and the other that sought to use the press to fulfil specific ideological, political and cultural objectives”.

An interesting observation from existing literature regarding the categorisation of the South African press is the different views that exist on the extent of the categorisation along racial lines. Other authors on the subject differ from Hadland’s categories. While they all agree on the inclination towards racial categorisation of the South African media, Berger (1999:19), Fourie (2001: 52) and Leshin (2010: 51) also refer to the existence of Alternative Press as the fourth category in South African media. Roelofse (1996:70) also identifies four distinctive trends in the history of the South African press: the English Press; the Afrikaans Press; the Black Press; and the Alternative Press. Touwen (2011:1) observes that the alternative press in South Africa “stands on a long tradition of resistant voices”.

While South African political history made these categories relevant at the height of the apartheid era, there has been some debate on the relevance of these categories for modern day South Africa. Hadland (2007:71) observes that during the colonial and apartheid eras, “these categories have provided reasonably useful means for differentiating the varying political cultures, languages and histories that lay behind traditions”. However, Hadland (2007:69) argues that these particular categorisations are no longer relevant and that “what was once conceptually porous has now become obsolete”.

With this understanding of the categorisation of South African Press along racial lines, the next section will delve deeper into each of the four strands identified by Roelofse (1996:70)
and further attempt to place the *Daily Dispatch*, as the focus of this study in one of these categories.

### 2.2.1 The English Language Press in South Africa.

The history of the South African English Language press can be traced back to the first newspaper published in the Cape, in August 1800 (Crwys-Williams, 1989:16). Following a battle by the *South African Commercial Advertiser* against the Cape Authorities for more press freedom, a royal proclamation protecting freedom of speech was issued (Crwys-Williams, 1989:16). The English Language Press in South Africa has largely adhered to a press tradition based on the principles of liberal democracy (Hadland, 2007:71):

> From that time on, mainstream English-language newspapers, owned largely by mining houses, or wealthy businessmen, built and cherished the classic liberal fourth estate duties and principles.

This notion is supported by Bassey (2006:43), who, when drawing a comparison between the English and the Black Press, notes that the English Press was known to be fairly liberal, “a legacy which was inherited through the times with Britain”. Jackson (1993:17) takes this notion further, stating that while Britain was the inspiration of the South African English Language Press, they still maintained “their independence in what became a unique South African blend”. Two key players in the South African English Language Press were the Argus Printing Company, formed in 1889 and owned by mining giant Anglo American, and the South African Associated Press, owned by another mining tycoon, Abe Bailey (Ruggenberg, 2007:36). The South African Associated Press were the owners of the *Rand Daily Mail*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Express*.

Despite its classic liberal Fourth Estate duties, the English Press was often called into question, especially at the height of apartheid when “anti-press restrictions forced newspapers to publish shallow, biased, misleading and often self-censored information that was sold as news” (Hadland, 2007: 71). The English Press’ ownership domination by the bosses of the South African mining industry soon became a bone of contention for many. Smith (1945:16) highlights increasing opinions on how the ownership of the mainstream
English language press was reflected in the attitudes, content and agenda of the individual titles. Louw (1993:160) is more explicit about the influences of the mining bosses on the content of the newspapers:

From the beginning, these two newspapers (Argus Holdings and South African Associated Newspapers limited) were intimately tied up to the furtherance of capitalist and, more specifically, mining-capital’s interests.

2.2.2. The Afrikaans Press

The first Afrikaans newspaper, Zuid-Afrikaan, was started in 1830 by Christofell Joseph Brand and promoted the interests of the Dutch (Ruggenberg, 2007:37). The Afrikaans Press was established as a reaction to the growing voice and stature of liberal English Press and, as such, opposed some of its views relating to issues such as slavery, racism and the work of the missionaries in the Cape (Fourie, 2001:37). With ministers of religion at the forefront and control of the early Afrikaans newspapers, this category of the South African press was seen as a cultural and political weapon for the promotion of the Afrikaans language and political independence, as well as for drumming up support against the perceived threat of Black Nationalism (Ruggenberg, 2007:38).

Botma (2006:3) is bolder than Ruggenberg in defining the role of the Afrikaans Press. He outlines the aim of the Afrikaans press as being that of the “political and economic upliftment of the white Afrikaners”. The Afrikaans Press was dominated by Nasionale Pers Beperk (formed in 1915) and Perskor (1940s). Both companies were formed from the funds mobilised by the Afrikaners themselves in an attempt to promote their emergent nationalism (Louw, 1993:170). The Afrikaans Press is credited for its role in promoting Afrikaner politics and strengthening the position and support base of the National Party. It was its link with the National Party that broke the domination of the English Press after 1948, when British rule of South Africa came to an end. Hadland (2007:71) notes that “Die Burger was the formal mouthpiece of the Cape National Party for many years. There was clearly, in this section of the South African press, a high degree of party-political parallelism.”
The link between the Afrikaans Press and the National Party government resulted in a number of Afrikaans newspaper editors from the Afrikaans press taking up political office to the highest offices in South Africa. Hadland (2007:71) observes that newspaper editors from the Afrikaans Press “went on not to just political office, but to the highest office in the land, with editors such as HF Verwoerd and DF Malan becoming ministers in the apartheid period”. The end of British rule, however, in no way signaled the end of the tension between the Afrikaans and English Press in South Africa. While the Afrikaans Press became the official voice of the apartheid ideology, the National Party saw a lot of opposition from the English press (Bassey, 2006:43). The English Press positioned itself as opponents of apartheid and the main opposition voice in the country, displacing an ineffective official position (Potter, 1975:170). The ideological gap between the English and Afrikaans press, however, narrowed in the late 1980s as the National Party started to introduce political reforms.

While the Afrikaans Press is mainly represented as the more discriminatory of the two, a number of authors differ in the view and see the two groups in the same light. Mpofu (1996:28) sees limits in libertarian thinking about the media’s role in capitalist societies:

> The libertarian notation that the South African press acted as Fourth Estate, or as a check against a government’s excesses, is a fallacy. The liberal capitalist press could not be regarded as looking after the collective interest of the people as Fourth Estate. Rather, the South African newspapers and groups could and can only represent the interest of their owners as a class and not the whole of society.

It is partly due to this thinking and other concerns that the interests of the subordinate classes and races were neglected; leading to the grouping of the Afrikaans and English press as white-owned media and the introduction of the Black Press in South Africa.

### 2.2.3. The Black Press

The origins of the Black press in South Africa are attributed to the establishment of missionary stations (Fourie, 2001:49). The missionaries were key in establishing the base of
literacy among Black South Africans, and one of the key spin-offs was the transfer of literacy and publishing skills to Black South Africans (Fourie, 2001:49). While Hachten and Giffard (1984:145) identify four phases of the Black Press in South Africa, Roelofse (1996:82) identified a fifth stage after the democratisation of South Africa.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, five stages of the Black Press, a combination of the above, will be unpacked.

**First stage: Missionary period (1830-1880)**

Key to this stage was the establishment of European mission enterprises in South Africa. This period saw the emergence of the first newspapers written by and for black people. The first black newspaper was *Umshumayeli Wendaba*, which was printed at the Wesleyan Mission Society in Grahamstown from 1837 to 1841 (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:3). The Lovedale Missionary Institute produced *Ikwezi between* 1844 and 1845, with *Indaba*, a bilingual Xhosa/English newspaper, following in 1862 (Fourie, 2001:48).

A key milestone in this phase was the introduction of the first African newspaper, *Umshumayeli Wendaba*, edited by Africans in Southern Africa (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:3). The newspaper was an initiative of the Presbyterians and was published through the Lovedale Mission Press from January 1976. The newspaper’s content focused on news that was of general interest to African audiences, including political news and opinions (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:3). This was a notable milestone in the history of the Black Press, especially given the growing criticism on the extent of the missionaries’ influence on black readers’ views. In noting that the influence of the missionaries on black journalism “cannot be over-emphasised”, Johnson (1991:15) further observes that not only were missionaries “the suppliers of the skills and technical tools of journalism, but under their influence black progress was defined in terms of the assimilation of western civilization”.

It was the fight against the influence of the missionaries that led to the second phase in the development of a black press.
The second phase of a Black Press (1880s – 1920s)

One of the key contributors to this phase in the history of the Black Press in South Africa was John Tengo Jabavu. Initially an editor of the missionary-owned *Isigidi mi samaXhosa*, Jabavu resigned from this publication to start his own black newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, independent of missionary control, in 1884 (Ruggenberg, 2010:38). The main objective of the publication was to inform the African population about public issues and promote their participation in electoral processes (Ndletyana, 2008:35). The beginning of the *Imvo Zabantsundu* coincided with the early stirrings of dissatisfaction with the white-dominated churches and the move towards independent black churches (Couzens, 2010:8). *Imvo Zabantsundu* and Jabavu are credited with numerous successes in the fight against the oppression of black people.

Their intervention prevented an uprising in Pondoland and secured the release of Chief Sigcawu from Robben Island (1886 – 1887). The Native Disenfranchisement Bill was effectually destroyed by the Imvo-Jabavu partnership and a deputation consisting of Jabavu, Reverend Elijah Makiwane and Rev Isaac Wauchope secured a relaxation in the Cape Pass Laws (Couzens, 2010:10).

Other black-owned newspapers that followed were associated with the establishment of political movements for black people with editors more radical than Jabavu (Fourie, 2001:50). The newspapers included *Izwi Labantu*, started in 1897 by Walter Benson Rubusana, *Ilanga laseNatal*, started by John Dube in 1903, *Abanto-Batho*, started by the ANC in 1912, and the *Indian Opinion*, established by Mahatma Gandi in 1903. The establishment of these newspapers also saw growing tension between these publications and *Imvo Zabantsundu*.

One of the key bones of contention between Jabavu and the owners of the other Black Publications was the formation of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), later renamed the African National Congress (ANC), which saw Jabavu distancing himself and the publication from any association with a racially exclusive SANNC (Ndletyana, 2008:39). It was, however, the establishment of *Umteteli Wa Bantu* by the Chamber of Mines in 1920...
that saw a major shift in the Black Press (Johnson, 1991:20). Supported by the Chamber of Mines, the publication attracted journalists from some of the existing Black newspapers and saw a new trend in the Black Press – the entry of white capital into its ownership and control.

Switzer and Switzer (1979:7) observe that white business and financial interests were becoming aware of the Black Press:

Attracted by the potential market, the African reading audience - for example increased from an estimated 9.7% of the African population in South Africa in 1921 to 21.3% in 1946 – and fear of the potential influence of an increasingly militant protest press, the stage was set for a white takeover of the Black Press during the depression of the 1930s.

This trend heralded the beginning of the third phase of the Black Press.


This phase was dominated by the establishment of a Bantu Press by Bertram Paver. This saw the establishment of the *Bantu World*, a tabloid modelled on the *Daily Mirror* (Ruggenberg, 2010:42). Within 14 months of its establishment, the Bantu Press was taken over by the Argus Newspaper until 1952. The Argus Company soon became the first monopoly in the Black Press, with in its stable 10 weekly papers in the Southern African region and handling advertising for 12 publications in 11 languages (Fourie, 2001:51). The Argus specialised in identifying and buying out independent black publications that were “in grave financial difficulties”. While this met with reluctance from the writers and owners of the relevant publications, they were made to conform to the larger corporate concerns of the new white owners. This saw a number of changes in black journalism relating to the style of writing by black journalists, as well as the separation of news and opinions and a focus on events rather than issues (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:10).

The increased ownership of the Black Press by white capitalists entailed many more serious repercussions for Black journalists. By the mid-1950s, the captive Black Press had been
reduced even further in size. Africans were supervised at every level by whites (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:11). The third stage of the Black Press also coincided with the rise of political consciousness in South Africa and the introduction of the concept of Black Consciousness in black communities.

Black Consciousness is defined as the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together to break the shackles that bind them as a result of the blackness of their skin (Biko, 2005:53). Black Consciousness was aimed at transforming consciousness, overcoming fear and building racial pride primarily among urbanised black petit bourgeois intellectuals (Mzamane & Howarth, 2000:176). This concept did not only work to rally communities, it also increased the political consciousness of the Black Press. One of the black publications that broke the mould and resisted the influence of white owners on its content was The World. As the second largest daily newspaper in South Africa at the time, The World had broken out of the “straitjacket of non-political, pseudo-news sensationalism” dictated by its parent company – the Argus Company, (Switzer and Switzer, 1979:18):

The World was also a microcosm of the hopes and fears, the inner tensions and unresolved conflicts that beset the Black press. (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:18)

Soon, this style of black journalism attracted the attention of the apartheid government and saw the editor and news editor of the publication, Percy Qoboza and Aggrey Klaaste, detained and the publication banned (1977). This, however, did not see the end of anti-apartheid publications – the Sowetan (1981) and the Golden Press (later renamed the City Press) were launched under the banner of Black anti-apartheid press (Molefe, 2001:16; Whitehead 2007:6).

The urbanisation of black people and the increasing number of readers soon led to the realisation by white publications of the enormous potential market represented by the growing black readership. Black journalists initially hired for the township editions, or as stringers, now began to move into more regular major newspapers. Papers such as the Rand Daily Mail took the lead in integrating more black news into all sections (Fourie,
Switzer and Switzer (1979:16) identify a number of factors that contributed to the development of this phase. Amongst these was the fact that “white newspapers had exhausted their traditional market and the soaring costs of production and competition from television made it imperative that new markets be found”. Additionally, the Rand Daily Mail and the Daily Dispatch, the daily newspapers with the highest percentage of black readers, had taken the lead in integrating their news and opinions:

>This development could radically alter traditional concepts of news based on race in South Africa, and it suggest the shape of things to come from the black press. (Switzer & Switzer, 1979:16)

The fifth phase of the Black Press started in 1994 and involved the mainstream press and traditionally white newspaper groups restructuring the South African mainstream media landscape and incorporating black financial interests.

2.2.4. THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS

Also known as the protestant press, the Alternative Media in South came to the fore in the late 1970s, after two Argus newspapers, The World and The Post, were closed by the government (Fourie, 2001:52). The role of the alternative press in South Africa was to expose government oppression at all times; to give voice to those the government was trying to silence; and to hold up a light for the liberation struggle (Harber, 2004:80). The alternative papers were singled out for attack by the government, which grouped them with the collaborators of the anti-apartheid resistance movements (Mpofu, 1996:37).

A majority of the alternative press newspapers in South Africa were not profit-oriented, unlike the mainstream press, and were dependent on donor funding from various international players. This proved to be the key challenge facing this category of the South African media. Mpofu (1996:41) noted that the “fundamental problems that came to confront the alternative press, besides legal and political restraints, were basically two-fold:
funding and advertising”. This challenge was exacerbated when the 1990s reforms came to the fore. Most alternative newspapers that had depended on foreign funding from both the Western and Eastern countries landed in serious trouble after 1990, because Western countries were under pressure to stop funding the alternatives and channel funds into other development projects, such as education (Tomaselli & Louw, 1991:224).

The challenges faced by the alternative media, however, failed to overshadow some of the successes of this sector of the media. Jackson (1993:63) highlights the role played by the alternative media in enriching the choices of readers in the market and the extent to which this category of the press became an “important source of information that supplemented the reader’s own understanding of the country”. Mpofu (1996:43) expands on this, focusing on the role of the alternative press in providing information and viewpoints that the mainstream newspapers did not report on and countering the impressions that other newspapers created:

The alternative press thus made an invaluable contribution when one considers the high concentration of media ownership in this country, by providing society another vehicle of public expression.

Most importantly, however, is the role played by the alternative press as a catalyst for socio-political change and dismantling the rule of apartheid by opening up public debate. The alternative press “was in the forefront of covering the most contentious political issues of the day, the situation of political detainees, especially children; prison conditions; police and military action against protestors and the growth of trade union movements” (Tomaselli et al., 1987:64). However, most of the alternative media active in South Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s did not survive to see the dawn of the new democracy. As Touwen (2011:1) observes

The legacy of the alternative press in South Africa is not that of a victorious power block. Most of the alternative publications of the eighties did not survive the transition to a new and democratic South Africa, partly this was
because their cause was won, but most of all, they lost the battle in the commercial landscape of the new society.

2.3. The history of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper

*The East London Dispatch Shipping and Mercantile Gazette* was launched in 1872 in East London, South Africa. It was initially launched as a four-page tabloid under the ownership and editorship of Masse Hicks (Williams, 1997:1). With a change of ownership in 1879, and the appointment of the first professionally trained editor, Will Crosby, in 1898, the *Daily Dispatch* turned from a bi-weekly to an afternoon daily that covered more than just shipping news and advertising. According to Williams (1997:2)

Crosby considerably improved the newspaper, making extensive use of South African and world news sent by cable and telegraphic services.

By 1903, the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper was owned by Sir Charles Preston Crew, A J Fuller and Editor Will Crosby – Sir Charles Crew held the majority of the shares (70%), while the other shareholders shared the remaining 30% between them (Williams, 1997:3). Crew did not only have interests in the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper, but also harbored political office ambitions. A year after he acquired a controlling interest in the *Daily Dispatch*, Crew accepted an invitation from the Prime Minister of the Cape, Dr Starr Jameson, to become the Colonial Secretary, along with the important portfolios of Defense, Police and Education (Williams, 1997:4).

Taking into account the four categories of the South Africa press, the *Daily Dispatch*, based on its ownership and role, would fit into the English Press category. This is not only supported by the ownership of the publication and the role played by Crew during the rule of the colonial government, but was further confirmed by a historic document that was found in the old *Daily Dispatch* library in the 1960s. The document was

addressed to Sir Charles and came from Cecil Rhodes, who said he would be happy to lend 500 pounds to help the *Daily Dispatch* buy some new equipment, as long as the newspaper adhered to its policy of fair treatment
for all races – an early indication of the liberal values that were to stiffen into active opposition of apartheid policies (Williams, 1997:4).

One of the key milestones in the Daily Dispatch’s history was the appointment of Gordon Qumza, the first black reporter for the publication, to the editorial staff in 1963. Qumza was a key member of the Daily Dispatch’s editorial team until his retirement (Williams, 1997:4). A critical game-changer in the history of the Daily Dispatch was the recruitment of Donald Woods as its editor in 1965. During Wood’s tenure as editor of the Daily Dispatch, the publication grew its circulation figures from 18 000 to 33 000 in ten years.

Donald Woods was born in the rural Transkei and grew up amongst black people in Elliotdale, where his father owned a rural trading store (Williams, 1997:5). He studied law at the University of Cape Town. He stood for Parliament for the liberal Federal Party. When he lost, he turned to journalism (Reuters, 2001:1). His editorship of the Daily Dispatch marked his return to the publication; he had worked at the publication as a journalist in his younger days. A turning point in Woods’s editorship of the Daily Dispatch was the criticism of the paper’s understanding of Black Consciousness following an editorial Woods penned about Biko, titled Bantu Stephen Biko - The ugly threat of black racism. In 1973, Woods “met Dr Mamphela Ramphela, who challenged his assumptions and invited him to meet Steve Biko in order to rectify the misinformation that he was publishing about the Black Consciousness Movement” (Briley, 1987:10).

This was the start of Wood’s relationship with Biko and the trigger for the anti-apartheid activism for the Eastern Cape-born journalist. Woods “was persuaded that Biko was fighting for the upliftment of blacks, without aid of whites, but without violence. Woods saw him as a prime minister of a future South Africa.” (Williams, 1997:5). When Biko died in police detention, Woods demanded a public inquest. Eventually he got one, and the lies of the police and indifference of the politicians were exposed (Reuters, 2001:1).

This was not Woods’s first brush with the law as editor of the Daily Dispatch. By then, Woods was already challenging the John Vorster (South Africa’s Prime Minister) government in the courts. He was involved in 37 lawsuits with the regime in his years as editor and won
every case. He was once sentenced to six months in jail, but won on appeal. He was awarded damages for libel from several National Ministers and remarked that the proceeds had paid for a swimming pool and a piano (Reuters, 2001:1).

It was not long after these incidents that Woods, subject to constant Security Police harassment and surveillance, went in exile in London. He was subsequently banned from entering the country by the South African government. Woods, in his time at the Daily Dispatch, had served his purpose, which was contained in his appointment letter in 1965:

In his letter of appointment, from chairman and managing director, Mr ID Ross Thompson, he was reminded that the Daily Dispatch had a long standing tradition of adhering to the Rhodes policy of fair treatment for all (Williams, 1997:5).

Wood’s radical approach to journalism during the apartheid era was continued at the Daily Dispatch after his departure (Stewart, 2013:1). From 1993, the Crew Trust, which owned the Daily Dispatch, started diluting its shareholding in the Daily Dispatch by selling its publishing interests to a consortium of Terry Briceland (then managing director of the Daily Dispatch), Alan Beumont (Financial Manager of the Daily Dispatch), Times Media Limited and the Standard Merchant Bank. Briceland and Beumont continued to be majority shareholders (Williams, 1997:7). In 1995, Briceland and Beumont sold their share to Times Media Limited. Times Media Limited was established in 1987 from the old South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN). In 2001, the company was renamed Johnnic Publishing and, subsequently, the Times Media Group. Times Media Group still owned the Daily Dispatch during the period of this study. The role that the Daily Dispatch further played will be established in the Chapter dedicated to the research findings, based on interviews with the journalists that worked for the newspaper during the research period.

2.4. Chapter Summary
This chapter discussed the history of the South African Press, focusing on four categories, namely the English Press, the Afrikaans Press, the Black Press and the Alternative Press, and the importance of these stages in the contextual understanding of the Daily Dispatch.
newspaper. The chapter also paid attention to the history of the *Daily Dispatch* and how the publication could be classified based on the categories outlined above. The next chapter reviews the literature relevant to this study.
CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction
This chapter presents the findings of the literature review conducted on the role of the media in the context of democracy. Hart (1991:1) defines a literature review as “the use of ideas in the literature to justify the particular approach to the topic, the selection of methods, and demonstration that this research contributes something new”. Hart (ibid) further also notes that in respect of a literature review, “quality means appropriate breadth and depth, rigor and consistency, clarity and brevity, and effective analysis and synthesis”. Literature reviews assist researchers in discovering the most authoritative and recent theories about the subject matter and to find out what the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study are (Mouton, 2006:6).

Additionally, literature reviews are critical in ensuring that the researcher contextualises what has been published and appears relevant about the research topic at hand (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2007:565).

In line with this understanding, this chapter will unpack relevant literature on the role, position and product of the media during the process of state democratisation. This will be preceded by a discussion on the concept and process of democracy. It will further look at some of the fundamental pillars that shape and influence the development of news in the newsroom.

3.2. Democracy
In order to understand the depth of this shift in the role of the media in a democratic state, it is important to have consensus on the process of democratisation and how it impacts on the role played by the mass media. Key to this, is the meaning of democracy. Beetham (1993:55) defines both the concept of democracy and the theories of democracy. A critical part of the distinction between the two is that the concept of democracy centres around setting “the principles of popular control and equality”, while the theories of democracy are
more focused on operationalising the concept. The concept of democracy is concerned with setting “a mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control” and the most democratic arrangements are “those where all members of the collective enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision making directly” (Beetham, 1993:55). Chan (2001:1) takes this concept further and defines democracy as a “political system with a relatively equitable distribution of political power that is marked by government accountability, power checks and balances and systemic openness to fair political competition”.

The definition of Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1989: xvi) of democracy, however, is the most appropriate for the purposes of this thesis. It focuses on a “system of government” that is representative of three characteristics. These are:

- Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organised groups for all effective positions of government power at regular intervals and excluding the use of force.

- Highly inclusive levels of political participation in the selection of leaders and politicians through regular and fair elections with no exclusions.

- The existence of civil and political liberties, such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom to form and join organisations.

As such, this chapter continues to unpack the role played by the South African media in the process of democratisation. It does so with an understanding of democracy being centred on inclusive participation, extensive competition and freedom of expression. It is, however, critical to observe that democracy is in fact at the end of the process of democratisation and it will therefore be unjust to unpack this role without understanding the process of democratisation and the various stages within it.

### 3.3. Democratisation

Democracy does not happen overnight. It is an end-result of a process from one extreme to another. Democracy is the result of democratisation. Samarasinghe (1994:14) defines democratisation as a process of political change that moves the political system of any given
society towards a system of government that ensures peaceful and competitive political participation in an environment that guarantees political and civil liberties. Seo (2008:7) concurs with this view and adds that “democratisation is a concept of transition, defined by a change from an authoritarian (sometimes totalitarian) political dispensation to a democratic political dispensation”. Democratisation can also be understood as a complex, long-term dynamic and open ended process that consists of progress towards a more rule-based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics (Whitehead, 2007:2).

Mc Connell and Becker (2002:6) argue that the process of transition to democracy is not always one-directional. They (ibid) argue that countries “move towards democracy in starts and stops with regression at least somewhat common”. While there is consensus on the transitional nature of the process of democratisation, a number of theories exist on the phases and stages involved in the process of democratisation. A review of literature indicates the existence of various models that attempt to outline the various stages of the democratisation process. O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986:7) outline four critical stages that are required to conclude the process of democratisation. These are liberalisation, democratisation, socialisation and democratic consolidation. Giliomee (1995:17) later reduced these stages to three, namely liberalisation, democratisation and consolidation.

Mc Connell and Becker (2002:6), in reviewing the various democratisation models that exist, offer a consolidated view of some of the alternatives in mainstream literature. This alternative view is a four-phase transitional model with the following stages:

- Pre-transition stage (centred on the conditions of the old regime).
- Transition stage (the moment of shift from the old regime to the new).
- Consolidation stage (the moment where ideals of democracy are accepted and adhered to).
- Stable/mature stage (proven success in the functioning of a democracy).

For the purposes of this thesis, Mc Connell and Becker’s consolidated model was utilised to look at South Africa’s own democratisation process and the role of the media in each of the
stages outlined. This will be done taking into account the goals of democratisation as defined by Becker and Raveloson (2008:21). These are:

- Changing the authority structure of the power and the government.
- Creating new procedures, new mechanisms and new forms of social participation.
- Utilising the newly created procedures, mechanism and structures of power to realise development.

Becker and Raveloson (2008:22) take the concept further and state that the final litmus test of a successful democratisation process will be the existence of:

- Fundamental freedom and fundamental rights.
- Promotion of plural media and multi-party systems.
- Emergence of political culture and governance based on democratic values.
- Promotion of rapid and sustainable economic growth that takes into account the social interest of ranges of society.

3.4. **Media and Democratisation**

Literature on the role of the media in democracy highlights the different roles that the media plays and is required to play in the various stages of the democratisation process (Bennett, 1998:8; Randall 1998:1). Randall (1998:4) supports and advocates for a “staged approach” in unpacking the role of the media in democracy:

When a transition initially takes place, the media tend to be most supportive of democracy in the early, often euphoric and in the periods after the previous regime has fallen, journalists as well as other citizens are enjoying new found freedoms. But as the transition process moves towards consolidation, the media, as well as the public can become more cynical, particularly in the face of continued political wrangling.
There is general agreement that key to the role of the media during the pre-transition phase is that of witnessing, mirroring some of the challenges of the pre-transition government, whilst also legitimising the need for a transition into a more democratic form of governance process (Bennett 1998:8; Randall 1993:1; Randall 1998:1). On this point, McConnell and Becker (2002:9) note:

The witness role is the process of making public the transformations that are taking place in society, as the old regime starts to lose its hold on power. The reifying role of the media is to confirm and legitimate the changes taking place by providing a variety of images and information that co-incide with one another which in effect makes the shift in society see real.

During the transition stage, which is focused on working towards a consolidated democracy, the media are secured as an ally by various parties in an attempt to gain strength of voice and therefore support and legitimacy (McConnell & Becker, 2002:10). One of the key roles of the media during this stage is to further the resocialisation of the public to democratic processes through information on the basic values of democratic practices (Gunther, Montero & Wert, 2000:1). McConnell and Becker (2002:10) support this notation and further motivate that during this stage, the media are asked to educate the public, promote political and social co-operation and present information and facts in a fair manner.

There is a slight shift in the role of the media from the transition phase to the early stages of democratisation. The influence of the media is very strong; it has a strong impact on political decisions and political orientation (Salgado, 2009:15). During this stage, the media are expected to sustain democratic discourse and guard against backsliding, institutional decay and individual corruption. This often attracts public cynicism and mistrust of the media (Randall, 1999:6).

The media in a stable democracy are considered the principal institutions from which members of the public can better understand their society. Ideally, the media contribute to the public sphere by providing citizens with information about their world, by fostering
debate about various issues and by encouraging informed decisions about available courses of action (Mc Connell & Becker, 2002:10).

In unpacking the role of the media as a principal institution from which the public can better understand society, it is critical to focus on some of the key building elements of the practice of journalism and the impact of these on the growing role of the media in society.

3.5. Media And Objectivity

A number of definitions of the concept of journalistic objectivity exist. These range from “the ability by journalists to tell the truth as best they can ascertain it without bias or prejudice” (Porter & Ferriss, 1988:341) to the argument of Lane (2001:4) that journalistic objectivity starts with the ability of a journalist to surf contexts within a particular news story:

An objective journalist is one who gathers interpretations of reality from the smaller contexts of news participants, and presents them faithfully and accurately to the larger context of news consumers, so that the most objective truth can be determined.

Schudson and Anderson (1998:92) concur with Lane on objectivity being the core of journalistic best practice:

Objectivity serves as a normative endpoint, one enabled by modernisation and growing social differentiation among politics, business and journalism; it is seen not as a tool or a claim, but as a goal, a best practice made possible by historical progress.

According to some scholars, the key pillar and moral spine of journalism as a profession has been the concept of journalistic objectivity, with the ideal journalist being described as one who:

- Demonstrates effort never to allow personal prejudice, beliefs or emotions influence the spread of information or the interpretation of events (O’Sullivan, 2004:2);
- Interprets events in an unbiased way using provable sources (McKnight, 2001:2);
- Separates facts from values and reports only the facts (Schudson, 1996:141).

Schudson and Anderson (1998: 92) take the thought further and explore five orientations to the emergence of objectivity. On one extreme, the authors claim that objectivity serves as a normative end point, one enabled by modernisation and growing social differentiation among politics, business and journalism. They (Schudson & Anderson, 1998: 92) define it as a goal and best practice made possible by historical progress. On the other hand, the most extreme orientation in their research links objectivity to “the emergence of journalistic professionalism to questions of group cohesion, professional power, social conflict and cultural resonance of claims to occupational authority”.

Anderson and Ward (2007:65) take this thinking further when they say that

High-quality independent news which provide accurate and thoughtful information and analysis about current events is crucial to the creation of an enlightened citizenry that is able to participate meaningfully in society and politics.

Anderson and Ward (2007:65) emphasise the aspects of objectivity, impartiality and independence of journalists as a way of giving credence to the profession of journalism and empowering communities. They focus on the presentation of independent and accurate information as the basis of journalistic objectivity.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher opted to use MacNeil’s (1942:25) definition of objectivity, which describes objectivity as follows:

Objectivity means the coverage of the news on the basis of its facts and its importance. It means seeing the truth as a thing in itself, a thing that stands by itself regardless of what you may think of it or how it may affect you. It means that news facts have a real existence of their own and in themselves. Objective news coverage calls for the ability to see all sides of an issue or a happening and to determine the exact facts about it.
The core of the argument on the concept of journalistic objectivity, has, however, not been the way it is defined from one author to the other; it has been the true existence of objectivity as a requisite professional code of practice for the media industry. Lane (2001:1) observes that there has in fact been so much confusion and disagreement over the meaning of the term “journalistic objectivity”, that it has become fashionable to declare objectivity as an illusion. While many have argued that objectivity is in fact a myth that can never be achieved, others have argued that journalistic objectivity is an iconic code of practice that is broad enough to “allow its interpretation to accommodate specific circumstances and further allows a person to consciously set beliefs or prejudices aside when interpreting events” (O’Sullivan, 2004:1).

3.6. Understanding The Role Of The Media

It is critical to note that the implementation of objectivity and impartiality in newsrooms has always been influenced by many internal and external factors, some unique to a particular newsroom and others common in the media industry. Fourie (2008:233) identifies four critical factors and theories that he believes impact on the process of developing and distributing news and as such, on the practice of journalism.

The first factor is News Values, which primarily refer to the different values that “constitute news” in each newsroom. This talks to the ability by the news organisation to identify news based on various drivers, such as the character of the event, the consequences of an event as well as the impact of such an event. News values can differ from one newsroom to the other.

The second factor is Gatekeeping. A number of aspects impact on gatekeeping within a newsroom. These include the source of the news items, the abilities of the news people, the news policy of the medium, different influences on the news medium, such as financial impediments and legal constraints as well as the competition for space by various articles (White, 1950:383). White (1950:383) in his gatekeeping model argues that “news does not flow freely and untampered from one point to another” and that there are various factors that impact on the product. Shoemaker (1999:74) takes the concept of gatekeeping further
and argues that various factors, including the values, socialisation and views of various people in news organizations, all impact on how news will be selected and shaped.

The third factor identified by Fourie as critical to the practice of journalism is **Agenda-Setting**. Mc Combs (1997:1) defines agenda setting as the power of the news media to set a nation’s agenda and focus public attention on a few key public issues:

> What we know about the world is largely based on what the media decides to tell us. More specifically the result of this mediated view of the world is that priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public. Elements prominent on the media agenda become prominent in the public mind.

The last factor that impacts on the practice of journalism is **Framing and Representation**. Gamson and Mogliani (1987:143) define media framing as a “central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. The frame suggests what the controversy is about and the essence of the issue”. Entman (1993:52) argues that framing is the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation. As such, framing is not just about what is said, but about how it is said and what the areas of emphasis are. Framing is usually linked to media representation, which can be defined as the way in which the media portrays groups, communities, experiences, ideas and topics from a particular ideological or value perspective (Fourie, 2008:239).

While this study appreciates the factors outlined by Fourie, its focus is on the political role of the *Daily Dispatch* within a stipulated period in the context of changing patterns of ownership. Thus, while the theoretical frameworks underlined by Fourie speak to this study’s literature review, this study did not examine the issues investigated within the framework of these theories but within the context of the critical political economy of the media, discussed in the theoretical framework chapter.

3.7. **Chapter Summary**
This chapter highlighted that the role and the nature of the media change depending on the state or level of state democratisation. Democratisation itself is a process, with different stages that have different dynamics, tensions and end results. This paragraph also outlined the role of the media as an institution for information and knowledge dissemination in a mature democracy. This, however, is within the prescripts and standards of vital journalistic norms such as objectivity. While objectivity stands as an age-old blueprint of the norms and standards in the newsroom, this chapter also identified critical factors that impact on objectivity and impartiality in the newsroom.
CHAPTER 4
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Background
This chapter discusses the theoretical framework utilised for this study. The theoretical framework used, is the political economy of the media theory. The political economy theory of news production evaluates the link between the production of news and the trading of news as a commodity (Schudson, 1996:141). It focuses on the link between the role that the media have chosen to play and the influence of ownership in that chosen role. This is relevant in evaluating the Daily Dispatch, especially in the light of ownership changes post 1994, which shifted the publication from a private, family-owned newspaper to one that is part of a bigger media stable, Times Media Limited.

Schudson (1996:141) argues that in the political economy perspective of news production, there is a link between the news production process and the economic structure and control. He (ibid) further argues that “news tends to reflect the views of the political elite or of the large cooperation that owns major media organisations or support them through advertising”.

This chapter, will therefore, evaluate the relevance of this statement and others similar to it based on some of the fundamental perspectives that define the political economy theory of the media.

4.2. The definitions of the political economy of the media
The Political Economy theory on the media is a perspective that analyses the power and impact of media ownership and control over media content (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991:226). In drawing the differentiating factors between mainstream economics and the critical Political Economy, Golding and Murdock (2000:72) argue that the critical Political Economy theory of the media differs from mainstream economics in four main respects: firstly, critical Political Economy is holistic; secondly, it is historical; thirdly, it is centrally
concerned with the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention; and, fourthly, it goes beyond technical issues of efficiency to engage with basic moral questions of justice, equity and the public good.

It is impossible to review the political economy of the media without making reference to Marxist-inspired political economy theory. Marx’s political economy theory is centred on the direct link between the economic ownership of the media and the dissemination of “messages that affirm the legitimacy and the value of class society” (Marx & Engels, 1932: 2). Marx’s argument is that the class that has the means of material production at its disposal has control over the means of mental production so that “the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it” (Marx & Engels, 1932:2). Marx (1859:1) advocates in his political economy theory that the media are part of an ideological arena in which:

- Various class views are fought out, although within the context of the dominance of certain classes;
- Ultimate control is increasingly concentrated in monopoly capital;
- Media professionals, while enjoying illusions of autonomy, are socialised into internalising the norms of the dominant culture.

McChesney similarly (2000:110) centres the meaning of political economy around how media reinforces, challenges or influences existing class and social relations, while Saunders (2000: 4) suggests that the key to understanding the impact of the political economy is knowing the institutional structures that support capitalism and the “rules that restrict equitable access to the productive potential of market economies”.

Mosco (1996:3) takes this thought further by arguing that while the political economy theory has its basis in understanding the connections between the politics and the economy, “in essence, political economy treats the media as a business with the content and impact a product of the industrial, political and structural dynamics in which it is anchored”.


McQuail’s (2000:88) definition of the political economy theory, however, is one that summarises all the points raised above and in essence provides a framework to be used in this research. He argues that the political economy theory is a socially critical approach that focuses primarily on the relationship between the economic structure and dynamics of the media industries and the ideological content of the media. From this point of view, the media institution has to be considered as part of the economic system, with close links to the political system.

As such, in order to truly unpack the dynamics of this research, it is critical to outline the relationship between the economic structure of the Daily Dispatch and its ideological content, as well as unpack the dynamics of the South African media industry and the impact these could have on the Daily Dispatch’s media content during the period under review. To allow for this type of analysis, this chapter reviews various aspects of the political economy theory relevant to the case study in question. These include media ownership and other variations of the political economy of the media perspective.

4.3. Media Ownership as a key pillar of the political economy perspective

One of the key pillars of the political economy perspective is the concentrated “ownership power” of the media. McQuail (2000: 88) argues that the media are invariably related in some way to the prevailing structure of political and economic power.

In analysing the power of the media, McQuail highlights three principles that further support the foundational literature of the political economy perspective specifically around the link between ownership, power and control in the media industry. McQuail (2000:88) argues that firstly, it is “evident” that the “media have an economic cost and value, are an object of competition for control and access”. Secondly, he (ibid) further argues that the media are “subject to political, economic and legal regulation”. Thirdly, the mass media are “very commonly regarded as effective instruments of power, with the potential capacity to exert influence in various ways” (ibid).
McQuail (2000:89), however, adds a new dimension to the thinking around the political economy by segmenting the types of media ownership into two models, namely, the dominant media model and the pluralist media model.

The first of these sees the media as exercising power on behalf of other powerful institutions and, in doing so, concentrating the views represented in the media to those of the ruling interests and dominating elite. Media organisations, in this view, are likely to be owned or controlled by a small number of powerful interests and to be similar in type and purpose. They disseminate a limited and undifferentiated view of the world, shaped by the perspectives of ruling interests.

McQuail (2000:89) further observes that audiences are

constrained or conditioned to accept the view of the world offered, with little critical response. The result is to reinforce and legitimate the prevailing structure of power and to head off change by filtering out alternative voices.

The pluralist model is the opposite of this. The media sources based on this model are the competing political, social and cultural interests and groups, while the media industry ownership is decentralised, with a variety of independent media owners.

McQuail (2000:88) points out that there is “no unified and dominant elite, and change and democratic control are both possible”. He (ibid) further points out that differentiated audiences initiate demand and are able to resist persuasion and react to what the media offer. In general, the ‘dominance’ model corresponds to the outlook both of conservatives pessimistic about the ‘rise of the masses’ and also of critics of the capitalist system disappointed by the failure of the revolution to happen.

This supports the notion by Shoemaker and Reese (1991:219) that in the pluralist model, power is seen as distributed across many competing interests, which “act as veto groups as
they vie with one another to create a more or less table, self-maintaining and balanced political equilibrium”. While the models are described as total opposites, McQuail (2000:89) argues that it is possible to envisage mixed versions, in which tendencies towards mass domination or economic monopoly are subject to limits and counter-forces and are ‘resisted’ by their audiences. Understanding the ownership model in South Africa during the period of review by this study is, as such, a vital component of exploring the extent to which the ownership model of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper, in accordance with McQuail’s model, would impact on news generation. Literature reviewed on the political economy theory indicates that since the documentation of the initial theory, there have also been various modifications and variations of this theory. Understanding the key modifications in this regard will give a better context for this study.

### 4.4. Variations of the political economy theory

While the literature above illustrates the continued relevance of the political economy theory for the analysis of media content and context, there are also increasing views on the modification of the basis of the political economy perspective to take into account the variations in the ownership and control of the media from country to country.

#### 4.4.1. Funding Source Variation of the Political Economy perspective

One of the key motivating factors for this review is the nature and source of funding for media houses. Altshull (1984:254) proposes the variation of the political economy perspective and related ideologies around media ownership, based on the existence of four sources of media control and funding patterns. These are:

- The official pattern, which refers to media controlled by the state.
- The commercial pattern, which refers to commercially owned media.
- The Interest pattern, which focuses on the existence of financing interest groups such as political parties and religious groups.
- Informal pattern which reflects the goals of individual contributors who what to promote their view.
Altshull (1984:254) argues that “the content of the press is directly correlated with the interests of those who finance the press” and as such, depending on the extent of influence and the agenda of the owners, the content of the press will vary. This, however, is not the only aspect that should be given consideration. Ownership and business interests, as highlighted in the Propaganda model below, are also key factors to be considered.

4.4.2. The Propaganda Model variation of the Political Economy theory

One of the key variations of the political economy theory is Herman and Chomsky’s (1988:2) propaganda model. This model argues that the media, by nature, is a group of profit-seeking businesses, owned by very wealthy people (or other companies), and funded largely by advertisers who are also profit-seeking entities, and who want their advertisements to appear in a supportive selling environment.

Herman and Chomsky (1988:2) argue that the media also lean heavily on government and major business firms as information sources, and both efficiency and political considerations, and, frequently, overlapping interests, cause a certain degree of solidarity to prevail among the government, major media, and other corporate businesses.

The model identifies five filters through which news must pass in order to become news. These filters are:

- The size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth and profit orientation of the dominant mass media firms.
- Advertising as the primary income source of the mass media.
- The reliance of the media on information provided by the government, business and experts funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power.
- Flak as a means of disciplining the media.
• Anticommunism as a national relation and control mechanism.

Herman and Chomsky (1988:2) consider the first three filters to be the most important of the list. Shoemaker and Reese (1991:225) argue that the ownership and advertising filters link the media to economic power and “make it difficult for alternative media to gain a hearing”. The fourth filter, however, is not to be underestimated. Herman and Chomsky (1988:2) define ‘flak’ as negative responses to the media, including complaints, threats, petitions, letters and articles.

The Propaganda Model, has, however not been without criticism. Key criticisms of the model range from an alleged pessimistic thrust and objection concerned with its applicability to local conflicts where the possibility of effective resistance was often greater than in the case of national issues. Others feel that the model constitutes a condemnation of mainstream media and fails to take into account the maturing professionalism of the media industry (Herman, 2003:4):

Many of the critiques displayed a barely-concealed anger, and in most of them the propaganda model was dismissed with a few superficial clichés (conspiratorial, simplistic, etc.), without fair presentation or subjecting it to the test of evidence (Herman, 2003: 5).

The model does, however, remain relevant on a number of fronts. González (2013:4) observes that at the turn of the century “a small group of authors has emerged on a similar theoretical and ideological basis to that of Herman and Chomsky working to strengthen, update, refine and enlarge the model”. The key question that begs further consideration, however, is the extent to which all these factors that influence the political economy theory should be given the same level of importance or whether the influences carry varying degrees of importance. The consideration of the Hierarchy of Influences in the next section responds to this critical question.
4.4.3. Political Economy within the Hierarchy of Influences Model

Shoemaker and Reese (1991:225) locate the political economy within a wider “ideology” categorisation of what they classify as the various influences of media content:

At the ideological level we must be concerned with the nature of power in society. We must ask to what extent media’s symbolic content systematically serves to further the interest and power of certain groups – a class, a gender or a race.

While they acknowledge the political economy theory as one that impacts on news content, Shoemaker and Reese (1991:225) also argue that there are various other influences of media content and further illustrate this in their Hierarchy of Influences Model.

This model is in line with an earlier model by Gans (1979) and Gitlin (1980), who group influences of media content into: Social reality; media workers’ socialisation and attitudes; media routines, social institutions and forces; ideological positions and the status quo.

The hierarchy of influences model is a “theoretical framework for analysing the media based on levels of analysis, which help classify influences operating both separately and in conjunction with each other” (Reese: 2001:178). The model contains five levels of influence: individual, routines, organisational, extramedia (institutional), and ideological (sociocultural). These five levels of influence constitute an analytical tool in terms of which media content analysts should be able to determine the extent to which ownership alone impacts on news content. Reese (2001:178) argues that the hierarchical aspect of the model draws attention to the idea that the five forces operate simultaneously at different levels of strength in any shaping of media content.

4.5. Summary

This chapter explored the critical Political Economy theory of the media on the political role of the media. Key in the chapter was the understanding that the Political Economy of the
media perspective is focused on analysing the power of the media, based on an understanding of ownership and control.

In applying this theoretical perspective to the analysis of the political reporting of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper, it is, however, critical that a number of variations of the Political Economy be taken into account. These variations pay closer focus to issues such as the financing of media institutions and the impact of such on the content, as well as various factors that also influence media content, such as individual beliefs and ideology, journalism routine, organisational ideology and other external factors.

The next chapter deals with the research design and methodology chosen for this study.
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology chosen for this study. The researcher starts off by first stating the research design chosen and then defining it. This is followed by an introduction to the research methodology chosen and the research techniques (methods) utilised in the study.

5.2. Research Design

A research design is defined as a procedural plan utilised by a researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically (Kumar, 2005:84). A research design enables a researcher to conceptualise an operational plan in various procedures and tasks to successfully complete a study (ibid). The research design chosen for the purpose of this study is a “case study”. A case study is a research design that focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single unit (Eisenhardt, 1989:532). This single unit can be an individual person, a society, a family, a team, or any other unit of social life (Babbie et al., 2007:280). A case study is utilised to understand the case in question in depth, in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and context (Punch, 1998:150). In the context of this study, the “case” studied is the Daily Dispatch.

Appreciating that a case study is most appropriate when a researcher wants a wealth of information, in that it enables her/him to make use of documents such as memos, agendas and historical records (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991:150 – 152), a case study research design was considered appropriate for this study. Recognising that a case study requires a researcher to identify a “unit of analysis”, which refers to the “what” of the study, that is, the object, the phenomenon, process or event that the researcher is interested in investigating (Mouton, 2006:51), in this study, the “unit of analysis” refers to the interviews (to be discussed below) and the Daily Dispatch’s journalists’ writings, identified as editorials, columns and opinion pieces on the subject question.
The central research question of this study is: **What factors influenced the Daily Dispatch’s political coverage of the Eastern Cape government between 1 January to 30 December 2013?**

This question will help answer and give clarity to the following sub-questions:

- How did the ownership of the Daily Dispatch influence political coverage of the Eastern Cape provincial government during this period?
- Did the change in ownership from a small, locally-owned publication to a large multi-national conglomerate impact on the Daily Dispatch’s political journalism role?
- What attitudes towards the provincial government are found in the newspaper’s reporting during this period?
- How did the Daily Dispatch’s journalists reflect on their professional practice during the research period?

The following section deals with the research methodology utilised for this study.

**Research Methodology**

While two research methodologies can be used in scientific research, namely quantitative and qualitative research methodologies – this study will utilise only one of these. To achieve the objective of researching the trends in the Daily Dispatch’s political journalism of the Eastern Cape government during the period outlined above, it is proposed that a qualitative research methodology be undertaken. Qualitative research is characterised by the aim to understand aspects of social life. Its end product will assist in creating deeper understanding of the underlying factors that impact on the trends in the Daily Dispatch’s political report for the period under review. There will, however, be some use of the quantitative research method in the analysis of the Daily Dispatch articles. This will be limited to the counting of the articles and editorials.
Wimmer and Dominick (1991: 139) observe that in quantitative research, reality is objective, exists apart from the researcher and can be seen by all. As such, quantitative research assumes that reality is made up of component parts which, when combined, give an observer a view and knowledge of the whole (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991:139).

Parkinson and Drislane (2011:1) state that qualitative research is an investigation using methods such as participant observation, which results in a narrative, descriptive account of a setting or practice. Sociologists using these methods typically reject positivism and adopt a form of interpretive sociology (Parkinson & Drislane, 2011:1).

Priest (1996:4) notes that qualitative research as an interpretive research method makes use of the “thoughts, feelings and reactions of the researcher rather than trying to eliminate them entirely”. Iorio (2004:6) concurs with Priest and observes that qualitative research methods focus on subtle aspects of human life and its reliance on the interpretation of what people do and say.

Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009:7) state that qualitative research is critical in ensuring a broader understanding of society and the reasons why certain activities unfold. Hancock et al. (2009:10) emphasise the role of qualitative research in giving researchers flexibility to probe initial participant responses and drive the subjects to further clarification and elaboration of their initial responses.

Additionally, Jensen (2002: 236) identifies three distinctive features of qualitative research methods, which this researcher found to be appropriate for this study. These are: the naturalistic context; meaning; and the interpretative subject.

The research’s sub-questions around the Daily Dispatch’s political journalists’ position can be easily linked to these three features. The questions around the role of political journalism can be linked to the interpretive subject aspect while the questions around the change in ownership can be linked to the meaning aspect and the questions around the political journalism pre and post the democratic era can be closely associated with the aim of establishing the underlying naturalistic context. In this study, the researcher utilised two
research techniques or methods, these being “interviews” and “content analysis”, as defined and discussed below.

5.2.1. Interviews

Interviews are among the most common methods of collecting data in qualitative research (Babbie et al., 2007:289). One of the key advantages of interviews is the ability to collect considerable amount of data from an interview. Babbie et al. (2007: 289) identify three different interview techniques, namely basic individual interviewing, in-depth individual interviews, and focus group interviews.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher utilised semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured approach is usually intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interview. It does, however, allow for some flexibility and adaptability in the interviews, while still providing more focus for the conversational approach (Bloom & Crabtree, 2009:314).

Bloom and Crabtree (2009:314) also argue that the key distinction of semi-structured interviews is the organisation of the interviews around a set of predetermined open-ended questions that will prompt the emergence of other questions in the interview process.

The researcher interviewed two groups of audiences. The first group of respondents were former and current Daily Dispatch political reporters and contributors, as well as senior members of the Daily Dispatch editorial team.

The second group of respondents comprised politicians and administrators who had been in office in the Eastern Cape government, as well as senior representatives of the different political parties represented in the Eastern Cape Legislature in the period 2009-2013.

The interviews took place over a period of five months, the first being held in July 2016 and the last being held in November 2016. Arrangements for these interviews were made electronically through telephone conversations and through emails. In total, 11 respondents
were interviewed, with 9% being government officials, 45% being former and current journalists and editorial leadership of the *Daily Dispatch*, while the remaining 46% were politicians that were members of the Eastern Cape Legislature, members of the ruling party or part of the opposition parties during the study period.

The same ten interview questions were posed to the interviewees, in a question and answer form. Respondents were given two options to respond to the questions – either in writing or verbally with the interviewee. Of the total respondents, 18% provided written responses, while the remaining group selected a verbal interview response. The researcher took notes during the interviews and did not use a recorder. To ensure accuracy, the questions with answers were emailed to the respondents so that they could give feedback.

**Ethical Considerations**

The following undertakings were made to the interviewees:

- That if they were uncomfortable with any question, they could recuse themselves from answering that specific question.
- That the interview contents would be published.

The interview questions were sent to them in advance prior to physical contact between the researcher and the interviewees. The correspondence to this effect is available.

**5.2.2. Sampling**

Sampling refers to the gathering of data from “a subgroup of a population” (Frey *et al.*, 2000:125) or a representative “taste” of a group (Berinstein, 2003:17). Latham (2008:2) categorises sampling into probability or non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is also known as random sampling. The key distinguishing feature for probability sampling is that each unit in the population has a “known, non-zero probability of being included in the sample” (Henry, 1990:25). Henry (1990:18) refers to four types of non-probability sampling. Below is a table illustrating the key differentiating features of each type.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sampling</th>
<th>Selection Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Select cases based on their availability for the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>Researcher selects subjects who appear to be representative of the population. Sampling also depends on the judgement of the researcher – with some purpose or focus in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>Researcher selects subjects who feature the necessary characteristics. The subjects identify additional members to be included in the sample.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quota</td>
<td>Interviewers select a sample that yields the same proportions as the population proportions on easily identified variables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purpose of this study, the researcher utilised purposive sampling.

Below are the details of the interviewees and the reason for their selection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Former/Current Position</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Reason for Selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric Naki</td>
<td>Former Daily Dispatch Political Editor (2000-2010)</td>
<td>To provide a perspective of the political journalists that were reporting on stories regarding the Eastern Cape government for the Daily Dispatch pre- and post-apartheid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zine George</td>
<td>Current Daily Dispatch Senior Political Correspondent</td>
<td>To provide a perspective of the political journalists that were reporting on stories regarding the Eastern Cape government for the Daily Dispatch post-apartheid era.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mphumzi Zuzile</td>
<td>Former Daily Dispatch Deputy Political Editor (2001-2013)</td>
<td>To provide a perspective of the political journalists that were reporting on stories regarding the Eastern Cape government for the Daily Dispatch post-apartheid era.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sbu Ngalwa</td>
<td>Current Daily Dispatch Editor</td>
<td>To provide a perspective of the political journalists that were reporting on stories regarding the Eastern Cape government for the Daily Dispatch post-apartheid era.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Louw</td>
<td>Former Eastern Cape News Contributor and current</td>
<td>To provide a perspective of the political journalists that were reporting on stories regarding the Eastern Cape government for the Daily Dispatch post-apartheid era.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar Mabuyane</td>
<td>ANC Provincial Secretary – Eastern Cape</td>
<td>To provide the perspective of a subject / source of the political reports the <em>Daily Dispatch</em> published during the period under review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mlibo Qoboshiyane</td>
<td>MEC: Agrarian Reform – Eastern Cape and spokesperson of the African National Congress in the Eastern Cape.</td>
<td>To provide the perspective of a subject / source of the political reports the <em>Daily Dispatch</em> published during the period under review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cupido</td>
<td>Former MPL : Democratic Alliance Party, Eastern Cape Legislature.</td>
<td>To provide the perspective of a subject / source of the political reports the <em>Daily Dispatch</em> published during the period under review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Mhlati</td>
<td>MPL : United Democratic Movement, Eastern Cape Legislature.</td>
<td>To provide the perspective of a subject / source of the political reports the <em>Daily Dispatch</em> published during the period under review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mxolisi Siphondo</td>
<td>Government Spokesperson, Eastern Cape Office of the Premier.</td>
<td>To provide the perspective of a subject / source of the political reports the <em>Daily Dispatch</em> published during the period under review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The content from the above interviews will be analysed further together with articles and editorials in the *Daily Dispatch* during 2013 using the Political Economy Theoretical framework. The combination of the content analysis and the interviews by the researcher is a research method know as triangulation, an approach that asks different questions, seeks different sources, utilises different methods, and allows the researcher to overcome the limitations that stem from the use of one research method (Babbie *et al.*, 2007:277).

5.2.3. **Content Analysis**
Content analysis methods are used to analyse mass media contents and transcripts (Du Plooy, 2002:191) and may be applied to virtually any form of communication, including books, magazines, poems, newspapers, songs, painting, speeches, letters, laws and constitutions (Babbie et al., 1998:383). Nachmias and Nachmias (1976: 132) define content analysis as a method where the content of the message forms the basis for drawing inferences and conclusions about the content.

Kerlinger (1973:2) goes further and identifies content analysis as a method of observation, in the sense that instead of asking people to respond to questions, it “takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of communications”. Neuman (2006:322) describes content analysis as a technique for gathering and analysing the content of text. He further argues that content analysis allows a researcher to “probe into, and discover content in a different way from the ordinary way of reading a book or watching a television programme”.

There are two types of content analysis – qualitative and quantitative content analysis. In trying to draw a comparison between qualitative and quantitative content analysis, Wigston (1997:152) argues that while quantitative content analysis includes the implementation of a scientific method and counting, qualitative content analysis is more critical in nature and penetrates the deeper layers of messages.

Prasad (2008:3) highlights three basic principles to which content analysis should conform to. These are:

1. **Objectivity**: The analysis is pursued on the basis of explicit rules, enabling different researchers to obtain the same results from the same documents or messages.
2. **Systematic**: The inclusion or exclusion of content is done according to some consistently applied rules, whereby the possibility of including only materials that support the researcher’s ideas is eliminated.
3. **Generalisability**: The results obtained by the researcher can be applied to other similar situations.
Prasad’s (2008:3) observations on the building blocks of content analysis are very similar to those made by Wimmer and Dominick (1991:137), who also cite both objectivity and a systematic approach to be the very vital elements of content analysis.

In analysing the purpose of content analysis, Berelson (1952:1) highlights three aspects of the characteristics of content analysis, namely to describe the characteristics of content; to make inferences about the causes of content; and to make inferences about the effect of content.

The principles identified by Prasad lean to the side of quantitative content analysis. This study, however, has used qualitative content analysis to enable the researcher to delve deeper into the underlying editorial policy that underpins the analysed news articles, editorials and columns. This is mainly because qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, is more exploratory and aims to generate rather than prove hypotheses (Kruger, 2009:33).

Content analysis of the articles, editorials and columns enabled researcher to make inferences about the Daily Dispatch’s focus during the research period. It further allowed the researcher to understand the key political journalism trends within the Daily Dispatch during the period of study and highlighted the political stance in the period under review.

The researcher analysed the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of political news, politically related editorials and columns for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013. Political articles, editorials and columns for the purpose of this study refer to reports and analysis relating to the ANC and opposition parties and the government of the Eastern Cape province. The period of study was the last year of the ANC government’s fourth term of office in the Eastern Cape. The researcher specifically selected the Daily Dispatch’s news reports and editorial opinions, as well as opinion pieces written by both the newspaper’s journalists and other authors on politics on the work of provincial government in the Eastern Cape during that period. A total of 104 copies of the Daily Dispatch newspaper were utilised and relevant material was selected from these copies.

5.2.4. Coding
As part of searching for the meaning behind the content being analysed, the researcher utilised the concept of coding to classify the articles into themes. Coding is linked to the classification of material into themes, topics and concepts (Babbie, 2002:317). Seidel and Kelle (1995:1) view the role of coding as identifying relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures. In line with these principles of coding, the articles were divided into four key themes, which were representative of the focus and trends in the reporting of political news by the *Daily Dispatch* in this period.

The key themes are:

1. Eastern Cape Government Service Delivery
2. African National Congress (ANC) news
3. Opposition Political Parties
4. Corruption and Maladministration

The details of the articles, editorials and opinions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>News Articles</th>
<th>Editorials</th>
<th>Opinions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape Government Service Delivery</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African National Congress (ANC) news</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Political Parties</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption and Maladministration</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>165</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.5. Summary: Chapter 5

This chapter focused on the research design and methodology for this study. It unpacked the underlying principles for both qualitative and quantitative research and further motivated the use of qualitative content analysis for this research. This chapter also outlined the key two research methods utilised for the study, namely interviews and qualitative content analysis. This chapter concluded with a brief overview of the content analysis, the identified categories for this, as well as the extent of the split in the content analysed in terms of news articles, editorials and published opinions. This was further contextualised in the detailing of the research design methodology of a case study review and the reasons why this was considered as best suited for this study.
CHAPTER 6:
RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the research findings of this study. The research findings are presented in two sections. The first section relates to the findings from the news articles, editorials and columns on the Eastern Cape government and politics in the Province, as published in the Daily Dispatch between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013.

The second section is on the findings relating to the 11 interviews conducted by the researcher with journalists, politicians and administrators identified to have been key central to the study.

6.2. Findings on the Daily Dispatch Content

As outlined in the previous chapter in the section on coding, this researcher, in examining relevant content for this study, focused on news articles, editorials and columns. The exercise organised and arranged these according to key themes, in line with the requirements of coding. Altogether, 104 editions of the Daily Dispatch were examined.

Key to these themes was the understanding of the concept “politics” and how it relates to government and power. While Leftwich (1984:1) defines politics as a political act, Schumaker (2010:1) argues that politics is concerned with “how we live in community with others, how we co-operate to achieve benefits, how we engage in conflict for greater shares of the things valuable and how people are governed”. Peters (2004:25) relates politics to the relations of power and influence between communities and societies. Heywood (2000:3), on the other hand, identifies a broad four-fold classification of politics. This refers to:

- Politics as government - Politics is primarily associated with the art of government and the activities of the state.
- Politics as public life – Politics is primarily concerned with the conduct and management of community affairs.
• Politics as conflict resolution – Politics is concerned with the expression and resolution of conflicts through compromise, conciliation, negotiation and other strategies.

• Politics as power – Politics is the process through which the production, distribution and use of scarce resources is determined in all areas of social existence.

It is these four classifications of politics that were used as parameters, by the researcher to identify and group the content analysed into four main themes.

The table below illustrates the link between Heywood’s (2000:3) classifications and the streams identified in the content analysed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEYWOOD’S CLASSIFICATIONS</th>
<th>STREAMS IDENTIFIED BY RESEARCHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• POLITICS AS POWER – Politics is the process through which the production, distribution and use of scarce resources is determined in all areas of social existence.</td>
<td>An analysis of the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of the African National Congress (ANC) as the ruling party of the Eastern Cape during the period of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• POLITICS AS CONFLICT RESOLUTION – Politics is concerned with the expression and resolution of conflicts through compromise, conciliation, negotiation and other strategies.</td>
<td>An observation of the publication’s coverage of Opposition Political Parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• POLITICS AS PUBLIC LIFE – Politics is primarily concerned with the conduct and management of community affairs.</td>
<td>The analysis of the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of corruption and maladministration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• POLITICS AS GOVERNMENT - Politics is primarily associated with the art of</td>
<td>The coverage of content on government’s Eastern Cape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following section provides research findings sourced from the *Daily Dispatch* in terms of the four broad themes that came out of the above exercise. These are:

- *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of the Eastern Cape government’s service delivery, including education.
- The *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of corruption and maladministration relating to the Eastern Cape government.
- The *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of other political opposition to the ANC.
- The *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of the ANC as the ruling party in the Eastern Cape.

### 6.3. Politics as public life - Contextualising the Eastern Cape government’s service delivery focus

In defining service delivery, Hemson and Owusu-Ampomah (2005:512) argue that the definition of service delivery in South Africa includes not only the ability to provide users with the services needed or demanded, but also a sense of redress; and that the services should raise the standard of living of the majority and confirm their citizenship in the new South Africa.

Shaidi (2013:87) concurs and states that “in a society of growing inequality and uneven advances in education and training, service delivery is seen, at times, as an instrument for leaping over the contradictions and ensuring social economic justice”. Shaidi (2013:80) draws a vital link between service delivery in South Africa and the politics of distribution, focused on providing access to services to some of the communities that were previously disadvantaged as a result of the apartheid policies.
Mc Lennan and Munslow (2009:22) take this thought further and argue that in unequal societies (such as the Province of the Eastern Cape), “service delivery has to attain more than simply redistribute existing resources or provide entry rights - the expectation is that delivery will also shift established deprivation and poverty”.

Based on the definitions above, it is clear that at the core of service delivery lies government’s ability to redress the imbalances of the past, to improve the lives of the citizens of the Eastern Cape through growing economic and social justice for all. Taking these definitions of service delivery into account, the next section summarises the nature, level and tone of the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of service delivery by the Eastern Cape government.

6.3.1. The coverage of the Eastern Cape government’s service delivery trends

Key to its coverage of the Eastern Cape government’s service delivery trends was the Daily Dispatch’s ability to dedicate editorial opinions, commentary and general news coverage articles to the topic of service delivery in the Eastern Cape. In the period of study, within the boundaries defined in Chapter 5, the Daily Dispatch published a total of 103 articles related to service delivery in the Eastern Cape.

For the purpose of this study, the research findings of these articles on service delivery will be broken down into a focus on general service delivery as well as education – as this was one of the key areas of emphasis in the Daily Dispatch’s reporting of the service environment in the period under review. General service delivery accounted for 77 of the 103 articles analysed under the service delivery theme. Of these articles, 71% was news articles, 23% was Daily Dispatch’s editorials and the remaining 6% was opinions and commentary from other sources.

6.3.1.1. Broader national policy and service delivery trends

While a larger portion of the articles focused on service delivery, particularly by the Eastern Cape government, the Daily Dispatch contextualised some of the service delivery issues to the broader national policy and service delivery trends. This was evident in their coverage
of not only the activities of the State President, Jacob Zuma, but also in their editorial analysis of his decisions and leadership milestones. On 16 February 2013, in its editorial opinion titled “More Vague Promises” (Editorial, 2013:14), the Daily Dispatch pointed out that President Jacob Zuma’s State of the Nation Address was vague, with no concrete solutions of addressing some of the historical imbalances that were crippling most of the communities in South Africa.

What we got instead was a summary of the status quo with a few still vague promises to fix some of the most pressing problems we face (Editorial 2013:14)

Similarly, on the 8th of April 2013, in its editorial opinion entitled “Time for Zuma to explain”, the Daily Dispatch’s editorial called for more accountability from the South African President in relation to the deployment of the country’s military troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It is one thing for the president and his party to use the state’s economic resources to their own narrow advantages without parliamentary approval or oversight. It would be quite another to put South African soldiers in danger for any reason other than the carefully considered interests of peace and stability on the African continent. Zuma must explain this deployment, its motivation and the likely cost immediately – and parliament is in place to do that (Editorial, 2013:14).

The Daily Dispatch’s coverage of President Zuma, however, was not always negative or critical. It also focused on the coverage of a number of service delivery interventions that President Jacob Zuma launched in the Eastern Cape Province during the period. These included the launch of infrastructure projects in five high-poverty areas in the Province (Vena, 2013:1) and the later inspection of progress on these infrastructure projects (Mgaqelwa, 2013:5). President Zuma, however, was not the focus of the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of service delivery.
6.3.1.2. Provincial government’s service delivery trends

Key to the Daily Dispatch’s focus was the ability by the Eastern Cape government to deliver an improved service delivery environment to the impoverished communities of the Eastern Cape. For the period of this study, a total of 14 articles were published by the Daily Dispatch around some of the service delivery shortfalls of the Province. Of the 14 articles studied, 64% were news articles, while the remaining 36% were editorials by the publication.

In these articles, what emerges is that the dilapidated and sometimes non-existent community-serving infrastructure was, in the period of the study, one of the fundamental challenges around service delivery in the Province. The infrastructure delivery backlog identified by the Daily Dispatch ranged from inadequate health service infrastructure (Vena, 2013:5) to dilapidated community development infrastructure (Nkonkobe, 2013:2).

Additional to the infrastructure woes, the Daily Dispatch also focused extensively on government’s challenges in resourcing service delivery points with enough adequately skilled staff to unlock vital community services. These included under-resourced traffic services (Editorial, 2013:7), inadequately resourced prisons (Fuzile, 2013:1) and shortage of critical skills in the Province’s hospitals (Vena, 2013:4; Vena, 2013:4).

The administrative leadership of the Eastern Cape Province was also under the constant eye of the Daily Dispatch, and their ability to provide inspiring and effective leadership of the administrative arm of the Province was constantly under scrutiny. This ranged from the government’s ability to ensure clean administration (Nini, 2013:1) to the effectiveness of the political leadership of provincial government (Zuzile, 2013:4).

6.3.1.3. The voice of the community

One of the glaring findings in the Daily Dispatch’s articles on service delivery over the period of study was the publication’s ability to amplify the voice of impoverished communities by publishing human interest stories and giving a face to service delivery concerns in the province. Over the period of study, 21 such articles were published in the Daily Dispatch – of these, 15 were news articles, while 6 were editorials. An example of this was an article by Mamela Gowa on the link between terminal illnesses and child-headed families living in
poverty. In this article, the writer successfully illustrates the severe dependence of these child-headed homes on state security grants, through the lens of such a family (Gowa, 2013:7).

Similarly, the story of Nomboniso Fuba, a “forgotten” potential beneficiary of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) paints a picture of the impact of the inflexibility in the Sassa registration system on a bed-ridden senior citizen (Plaatjie & Fuzile, 2013:6) – it further illustrates the extended impact of this problem in other similar cases to show that the situation is not unique to Fuba. Other similarly packaged articles during the period of study focused on youth unemployment (Miti, 2013:1); the non-delivery of basic services (Linden, 2013:5); the difficulties of accessing state social grants (Feni & Mgaqelwa, 2013:13); and the plight of the unemployed (Mukhuthu, 2013:1).

In its role as the voice of the community, the Daily Dispatch used a mixture of both news articles and editorials. On 27 April 2013, as part of its focus on Freedom Day commemorations, the Daily Dispatch’s editorial titled “After 19 years let’s get it right” was very critical of the lack of service delivery by government (Editorial, 2013:14).

Our inability to offer every child a dignified and effective education, to create jobs for half of the born-free generation and to maintain the infrastructure we inherited, is inexplicable. Crime leaves no one untouched. The corruption that is corroding the foundations of our economy and the values of the nation makes most of us sick to the stomach (Editorial, 2013:14).

On the 26th of October 2013, the Daily Dispatch’s editorial titled Izinyoka kill yet again challenged government, which it claimed “lacked the will to deal with individuals who blatantly flout the law” regarding illegal electrical connections, which led to the death of two young children in East London (Editorial, 2013:14).

It lacks the ability to properly address the poor level of services, including electrical reticulation in very many communities, which, almost 20 years after democracy, are no better than they were under apartheid (Editorial, 2013:14).
One of the key topical issues during the research period was the growth of service delivery protests in communities in response to the slow progress of development. In the material studied, what emerged was that the *Daily Dispatch* did not just cover these protests, but in certain instances went more in-depth into the communities to understand and contextualise these protests. Among these were the rolling service delivery protests in Sterkspruit. The protests flowed from multiple concerns by the Sterkspruit community, including their dissatisfaction with service delivery from the Senqu Local Municipality and the refusal by the Municipal Demarcation Board to allow for a separate municipality for Sterkspruit. While, at the time of the protests the *Daily Dispatch* covered the protests, the newspaper also wrote a double-page spread investigative news article on the state of Sterkspruit (Fuzile & Majangaza, 2013:16).

While the above facts prove that the *Daily Dispatch* was indeed focused on giving a voice to the voiceless community, the next section presents evidence that this was not at the cost of silencing the voice of government.

### 6.3.1.4. Projecting government’s voice

One of the key findings for this research is that the *Daily Dispatch*, whilst it focused a great deal of its content on telling the stories of the forgotten communities, in various instances also assisted in amplifying the government’s voice on service delivery matters. For the period of study, altogether 19 articles were seen to be assisting in amplifying the voice and messages of government. These 19 were broken down into 13 news articles, 3 editorial opinions, and 3 commentaries from other sources, including the provincial government leadership.

Of the 13 news articles, a number were focused on communicating government’s response to identified service delivery challenges, such as housing, teacher shortages and local government mismanagement (De Klerk, 2013:4; Fengu, 2013:7; Fengu, 2013:4). There were also a number of articles that were communicating identified government strategic interventions and notable progress on these to the broader community of the Eastern Cape (George *et al.*, 2013; 4; Miti, 2013:1).
It is also vital to note the role of the published *Daily Dispatch* editorials in projecting and amplifying the voice of government. One of these is the editorial published on 11 March 2013 titled “*Sisulu must not blink*”, which focuses on the work of Lindiwe Sisulu as the Minister of Public Service and Administration (Editorial, 2013:9). The editorial unpacks some of the plans by the Minister and expresses confidence in her ability to deliver.

Within two weeks, Sisulu plans to present a public service charter that will commit civil servants to be civil and to serve. There will also be no second chance under her new regime for public servants who have once been fired for fraud, mismanagement or misconduct (Editorial, 2013:9).

The *Daily Dispatch* did not only project the voice of government through editorials and news articles, but also allowed for Insights from government and other stakeholders through the publishing of commentary on its Leader Page. For the period of study of this research, this was evident in an insight penned by the then MEC for Planning and Finance, Phumulo Masualle, on the role of citizens in supporting the Eastern Cape Planning Commission (Masualle, 2013:9).

Similarly, Mcebisi Jonas, then MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, also expressed his insights on the new direction for the Eastern Cape economy (Jonas, 2013:4).

It is evident from the evidence presented above that the *Daily Dispatch* was not just a critic of the state, but also afforded the state an opportunity to set the record straight. The next section looks at the extent to which this was the case in the publication’s coverage of education in the Province.

**6.3.1.5. A focus on education**

There has been a continued spotlight on the state of education of the Eastern Cape as a result of historical poor performance and an under-developed educational institution. Of the articles studied, 24 were focused on service delivery in education. These could be
categorised into four areas, namely infrastructure backlog (De Klerk, 2013:9); (Nini, 2013:1); (Nkonkobe, 2013:3); staffing issues (Nkonkobe, 2013:2; Fengu, 2013:5; Boya, 2013:5); and learner performance (De Klerk et al., 2013:5; Nkonkobe, 2013:4).

The next section, the last of the sections on service delivery, also illustrates that the Daily Dispatch, did, in various instances, give credit where it was due with respect to strides made by the Eastern Cape government in service delivery.

6.3.1.6. Recognising excellence in service delivery

While it is clear from the above cases that a bulk of the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of the service delivery capabilities in the Eastern Cape were critical, the examination of the content for the period of study also revealed that the Daily Dispatch, did, in its coverage of provincial government, recognise and report on service delivery excellence 13 times. The recognition was in various pockets of service delivery, including infrastructure development (Ntshobane, 2013:8; Fengu, 2013:3), and accountability (Vena, 2013:13).

An editorial published on 15 July 2013 titled Saving public integrity (Editorial, 2013:9) lauds the then Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, for calling for the resignation of the Commissioner of Revenue at the South African Revenue Services, Oupa Magashula, following perceived underhand dealings with a convicted drug dealer. This is indicative of the ability of the Daily Dispatch to recognize and report on service delivery excellence and dedication.

The above section on the Daily Dispatch’s reporting on service delivery trends within the Eastern Cape government was the first theme in the researcher’s findings. The next section unpacks the second theme, which is focused on The Daily Dispatch’s coverage of corruption and maladministration relating to the Eastern Cape government.

6.4. Contextualising corruption and maladministration in government

In defining corruption, Leys (1965:221) argues that corruption often points to the existence of a standard of behaviour according to which the action in question breaks some rule, written
or unwritten, about the proper purposes to which a public office or a public institution may be put. Lodge, on the other hand (1999:57) defines corruption as the “misperformance or neglect of a recognized duty, or the unwarranted exercise of power, with the motive of gaining some advantage, more or less personal.”

Contextualising corruption in South Africa, Madonsela (2010:2) draws a sharp contrast between corruption and good governance:

> While good governance represents the ideal for governments, corporations and nations globally, corruption is a scourge that decent people, organisations and governments seek to eradicate. In the simplest of terms, corruption involves the abuse of power for private gain. Actual acts range from a simple act of bribing someone to skipping a queue or bribing a traffic officer to avoid a speed fine to serious conduct such as the irregular award of tenders or even buying political patronage.

Looking at trends of corruption in South Africa, Van Vuuren (2013:1) contends that two trends are emerging in South African society that deserve far more attention than they have thus far received.

> Firstly, levels of corruption are peaking, and are perhaps at the highest level they have been since the final years of apartheid. Secondly, elite networks within government and business are deeply compromised, and this appears to be shaping and destabilising current anti-corruption efforts. This culture indicates a return to apartheid-style secrecy and the use of security agencies to deal with political conflict and intervene in high-level corruption investigations (Van Vuuren, 2013:2).

It is with this understanding of corruption in South Africa in mind that the researcher for this study investigated the Daily Dispatch’s content on corruption and maladministration.
6.4.1. The *Daily Dispatch*’s coverage of corruption and maladministration

This study revealed that the *Daily Dispatch* was very critical of any acts of corruption within the government of the Eastern Cape. A total of 11 news articles, 5 editorials and 1 commentary were published for the period of study. The news articles published focused on a number of aspects including the negligent and inappropriate use of state resources (Zuzile, 2013:1; Majangaza & Solomon, 2013).

There was, however, a notable coverage of corruption cases linked to key African National Congress personalities that were published in the *Daily Dispatch*. These included the involvement of ANC’s Chief Whip and former Eastern Cape Education MEC, Stone Sizani in the hostile takeover of Elitheni Coal Mine (Louwe & Fuzile, 2013:1); the arrest of former ANC youth leader, Andile Lungisa, over the embezzlement of funds allocated for an event by the Department of Arts and Culture (Mgaqelwa & Zuzile, 2013:1); and the arrest of a former ANC Youth league treasurer, Pule Mabe, in connection with theft, fraud and money laundering (SAPA, 2013:6).

Another trend concerning corruption covered in the *Daily Dispatch* was the misuse of state funds meant to relieve poverty-stricken households by political office-bearers and their families (Mgaqelwa, 2013).

The continuous calls by the *Daily Dispatch*, through its editorials, for accountability and corrective measures by government to root out corruption are a clear indication of the publication’s stance on the matter. In its editorial on 18 February 2013, titled “Stop public fund looting” (Editorial, 2013:9), the *Daily Dispatch* called for the political leadership of the Eastern Cape government to take a stand against corruption.

We have heard that hundreds of government employees do business we the state. In 2010-11 a total of 698 awards totalling R978 million were made to public servants or their close family members. This raises a sinister spectre that the spiraling financial chaos is not the result of simple incapacity, inability or lack of political will (Editorial, 2013:9)
In a similar vein, the *Daily Dispatch* editorial titled *Fire yourself Minister*, directed to Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi for his role in the upgrade of President Zuma’s Nkandla home (Editorial, 2013:14); *Pule should be ditched*, directed at the disgraced former Minister of Communication, Dina Pule (Editorial, 2013:14) for her role in directing business transactions for her Department to benefit her partner; as well as *School heads must roll* – directed at schools who were inflating pupil numbers in the Province (Editorial, 2013:14) confirm the active role played by the newspaper in exposing and bringing corruption to the fore.

The next section focuses on the *Daily Dispatch’s coverage of the African National Congress in the Eastern Cape*.

### 6.5. Contextualising the coverage of the African National Congress and opposition parties in the Eastern Cape

During the period of study, the African National Congress was the governing political party in South Africa, with majority rule in 8 of the 9 provinces in the country. The Eastern Cape Province was one of the 8 provinces under the leadership and rule of an ANC-led government. While the ANC enjoyed majority rule since the dawn of democracy in 1994, a number of new political parties have since emerged, mainly as a result of the aftermath of the ANC’s Polokwane Conference in 2009 and dissatisfaction in many corners about the course taken by the ANC in leading the country, (Bristow, 2014:1).

Concurring with this view, Melber (2009:452) points out that in South Africa, factionalism has increased following internal divisions because of the rivalry between the current ANC President, Jacob Zuma and the former ANC President, Thabo Mbeki, as well as the breakaway from the ANC of the Congress of the People (COPE) and, more recently in 2013, the breakaway from the ANC of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

Bristow (2014:2) argues that these developments within the ANC have some benefits for democratic South Africa.
After 20 years of democracy, the emergence of parties like Agang and the EFF indicates a strengthening of our multiparty system. Strong opposition parties are an important element in creating and consolidating a strong democracy. They keep the ruling party on its toes, but they also offer support to different constituencies of people (Bristow, 2014:2).

It is with this understanding of the South African political landscape that the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of the African National Congress (ANC) and other opposition political parties was studied.

6.5.1. Coverage of the ANC by the Daily Dispatch

The research period coincided with the illness and death of ANC stalwart and the first president of democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela. This led to 28 articles being published by the publication on this topic. These were broken down into 3 editorials, 4 political commentaries and 21 news stories. While the majority of the news stories were coverage of the funeral logistics and the actual funeral, one of the key observations made was the extent to which the editorials and political commentaries utilised the death of the former statesman to review and reflect on the current state of the ANC.

In his political commentary titled The idea of Mandela is what we must not forget (Pithouse, 2012:9), Pithouse draws a distinct comparison between the ANC of Nelson Mandela and the current ANC.

Mandela’s ANC carried the hope of so many for so long. Today the ANC the ANC is corrupt and brutal, its emancipatory energies have been squandered (Pithouse, 2012:9)

In a similar vein, many other commentators published in the Daily Dispatch called on the ANC to honour Mandela by following in his footsteps (Editorial, 2013: 4; Editorial, 2013:9). The Daily Dispatch also added its editorial voice to the call and during this period drew various comparisons between Mandela and the ANC’s current leadership. In an editorial titled A difference in leadership (Editorial, 2013: 9), the Daily Dispatch alluded to the
unavoidable consequences of the end of the Mandela era. “While Mandela could have perhaps done more to ensure accountability inside the ANC, under Zuma the floodgates of corruption have been opened wide and justice is now applied selectively” (Editorial, 2013:9).

In an editorial on the 16th December 2013, the *Daily Dispatch* (Editorial, 2013:9), in response to President Zuma’s address at Mandela’s funeral, responded by saying

> How we wish we could believe Zuma. We are not convinced, however that the current crop of leaders will be able to take forward Mandela’s legacy. The difference between him and them is too great (Editorial, 2013:9).

Nelson Mandela, however, was not the only ANC leader that made it to the *Daily Dispatch’s* headlines in the period of the study.

With 2013 being the year for a provincial elective conference for the ANC in the Eastern Cape, the *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of the political party focused was on the run-up to the elective conference. There was a total of 37 articles published about the ANC in the *Daily Dispatch* during this period. The majority (60%) of these focused on the run-up to the conference and some of the internal ANC politics leading up to this conference. Additionally, 14 of these focused exclusively on the divisions within the ANC in the Province and attempts by a number of provincial and local ANC personalities to address some of the divisions within the party (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rival faction wants new PEC execs (George, 2013:4)</td>
<td>20 May 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Battle for control at ANC conference (George &amp; Zuzile, 2013:4)</td>
<td>5 October 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ANC elections in EC to be hotly contested (George, 2013:4)</td>
<td>4 March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Unofficial lobbies at conference show which way the wind blows (De Klerk &amp; Zuzile, 2013:4)</td>
<td>2 November 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Chairman blasts factions in the ANC (Fuzile, et al. 2013:5)</td>
<td>28 June 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Masualle makes intentions clear (George, 2013:4)</td>
<td>22 June 2013</td>
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7. Elective conference last throw of the dice for top ANC official (George, 2013:16) 15 June 2013
8. Mapisa-Nqakula calls for unity (Fuzile, 2013:4) 4 February 2013
9. ANC to act on infighting (Miti, 2013:1) 11 February 2013
10. Unified party essential to freedom (Areff et al., 2013:4) 14 January 2013
11. Masualle appeals for party unity (Zuzile et al., 2013:6) 1 July 2013
12. Stop fighting for positions-Zuma (Fengu, 2013:4) 10 June 2013
13. Mantashe hits out ANC greed (George, 2013:7) 1 June 2013
14. 18 years for plot to kill ANC five (Ntshobane, 2013:2) 20 July 2013

**FIGURE 1: Detail of the article published on internal divisions within the ANC**

The *Daily Dispatch* also had a number of opinions on the current state of the ANC. In an editorial published on 10 June 2013, titled *The sharper side of Gwede* (Editorial, 2013:10), the *Daily Dispatch* praised the “new side” of the General Secretary of the ANC showing his impatience about corruption and maladministration in government. “We like this side of Mantashe, he appears to have sharpened his spear and is emerging as a leader with the interest of the country at heart” (Editorial, 2013:10). In another editorial published on June 3, 2013, titled *In a political mouse trap*, the *Daily Dispatch* again focused on Mantashe’s call to other ANC cadres to root out corruption and personal gain from politics (Editorial, 2013:9). The publication commended and supported Mantashe’s call for the ANC to not allow corrupt individuals to “taint the noble movement which led to the liberation” of South Africa.

In its coverage of the ANC, the *Daily Dispatch* also published a number of articles that demonstrated the declining support for and growing public revolt against the party in the Eastern Cape. This included coverage of residents burning ANC T-shirts during a speech by the Province’s then Premier, Noxolo Kiviet, in Sterkspruit (Mgaqelwa, 2013:2); the public attack by Abathembu King, Buyelekhaya Dalindyebo on the ANC (Mpalantshane, 2013:11); and claims by former provincial ANC leadership that the ANC was part of Anti-Christ movements (Nini, 2013:1).
Having said that, there is also evidence that the publication allowed itself to be used to amplify the ANC’s message around service delivery and working to improve the lives of the poor (De Klerk, 2013:10; Mgaqelwa, 2013:4). It must, however be noted that the Daily Dispatch’s focus on the ANC did not in any way mean that they did not look or focus on the coverage of other political parties in the Eastern Cape. The next section focuses on the extent to which the Daily Dispatch covered news about the main opposition party in the Eastern Cape, the Democratic Alliance and other opposition parties, such as the Economic Freedom Fighters, the United Democratic Movement and the new kid on the block, Agang.

6.5.2. The Daily Dispatch’s coverage of opposition political parties

While there was a great deal of focus on the ANC by the Daily Dispatch during this period, it also focused a great deal on other existing and emerging political parties in the Province. Of the published articles studied, 41% were focused on the Democratic Alliance (DA), while the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Congress of the People (Cope) shared 50% of the focus on the articles. The rest was shared between Agang and the United Democratic Movement (UDM).

While the coverage of Cope was focused on its campaigning, the battle between the two leadership factions within Cope was not the subject of any editorial by the Daily Dispatch. On the other hand, the Democratic Alliance’s coverage was focused on political campaigning (Feni, 2013:4) and the defection of personalities to the party (Fuzile, 2013:4). The DA, during the study period, also had political commentary, written by the party’s provincial legislature leader, Athol Trollip, titled Failing ANC scapegoat is to blame white land owners published (Trollip, 2013:15). The opinion, published on 8 June 2013, criticised the ANC’s attempts to apportion all the blame relating to the failure of land restitution to apartheid laws.

The coverage of the party by the Daily Dispatch, however, was not always positive. An editorial published on 25 November 2013 criticised the DA for taking advantage of a charitable cause to earn itself political mileage and “championing the misfortune of others to garner votes and funds” (Editorial, 2013:9).
The coverage of the new party, the EFF, by the *Daily Dispatch* during this period was also notable, despite some doubts about the sustainability of the party’s content contributors. One of these was a political commentary by political analyst Stephen De Grootes (De Grootes, 2013:15), who argued that the EFF did not have staying power. In his opinion titled *EFF: Who is afraid of an Economic Freedom Fighter?*, De Grootes called on readers to “stop worrying”, as the EFF would not make a big impact in elections. Interestingly, the *Daily Dispatch* also published another opinion, which had more optimistic sentiments about the party. Published on 13 July 2013, William Gumede’s opinion piece (Gumede, 2013:9) saw potential in the EFF. Titled *Malema’s new party could pull youth votes*, it predicted that the EFF was “likely to take voters from the margins of the ANC rather than the opposition parties”.

It is conceivable that with their youth vote alone the Malema party could secure at least 5% of the national vote if they can persuade angry youths to turn up and vote (Gumede, 2013:9).

Other coverage of the EFF included resistance by certain circles in the provincial ANC to allow the party to canvass in the Province (De Klerk & Nini, 2013: 1); reactions by the ANC to the launch of the new party (SAPA, 2013:1; Mbeki, 2013:9; Editorial, 2013:1; Solomon, 2013:4).

6.6. Section Summary

This section provided an overview of the political coverage of the *Daily Dispatch* during the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013. This was done through the categorization of the studied articles into four key themes namely service delivery, coverage of the ANC, the coverage of political opposition and the coverage of corruption and maladministration activities in the Province. It is clear that while the *Daily Dispatch* was critical of the ANC government, this was balanced with the publication’s ability to not only amplify its own voice, but that of the communities it represented and, in certain instances, also that of the government it was critically monitoring.

It was also evident in the material studied, that the ANC in the Province was a topical issue during the period of the study mainly because of internal divisions and factions, as well as the public contestation of ANC office positions leading up to the provincial elections conference.
in 2013. The ANC, however, was not the only party the *Daily Dispatch* focused on – there was also significant coverage and analysis of the other political parties in the Province.

The next section gives an account of interviews held with the *Daily Dispatch*’s journalists and other political personalities in the Province.

6.7. **Section 2: Interviews**

6.7.1. **Discussion**

This section provides an account of the interviews conducted by the researcher with the list of respondents listed in Chapter 5 of this study. The respondents are grouped into two categories - political journalists and editors who worked at the *Daily Dispatch* during the period of study, and Eastern Cape politicians and administrators who were active in provincial politics and government administration during that period. The interview questions, written in full in Chapter 5, are attached herewith as Addendum A.

**On the *Daily Dispatch*’s writing style and editorial policy during at the height of the apartheid era (1965 – early 1990s)**

All of the journalists interviewed for the purposes of this study identified the era of Donald Woods as the defining moment in the *Daily Dispatch*’s history. Woods was a critical game changer in the history of the *Daily Dispatch*. Woods was appointed the editor of the *Daily Dispatch* in 1965 and during his tenure as the editor of the *Daily Dispatch* the publication grew its circulation figures from 18 000 to 33 000 in just ten years (Williams, 1997:5).

A turning point in Woods’s editorship as the editor of the *Daily Dispatch* was the criticism of the paper’s understanding of Black Consciousness following an editorial Woods penned about Biko titled *Bantu Stephen Biko - The ugly threat of black racism*. In 1973, Woods “met Dr Mamphela Ramphela, who challenged his assumptions and invited him to meet Steve Biko in order to rectify the misinformation that he was publishing about the Black Consciousness Movement” (Briley, 1987:10).
This was the start of Woods’s relationship with Biko and a trigger for anti-apartheid activism for the Eastern Cape-born journalist. Woods “was persuaded that Biko was fighting for the upliftment of blacks, without aid of whites, but without violence. Woods saw him as a prime minister of a future South Africa.” (Williams, 1997:5).

When Biko died in police detention, Woods demanded a public inquest. Eventually he got one, and the lies of the police and indifference of the politicians were exposed (Reuters, 2001:1).

Ngalwa (2016) identifies the Woods era as one that was characterised by liberal political views and the passion to defend the oppressed. He argues that the newsroom was diverse in terms of gender and race and the editorial policy was centred around telling the truth. During Woods’s tenure, the Daily Dispatch newsroom was transformed to include black journalists such as Thenjiwe Mthintso and Mapetla Mohapi. Mthintso, despite her limited writing experience, was given an opportunity to write for the Daily Dispatch as one of its journalists, while Mohapi was responsible for a regular column on Black Consciousness when Woods opened up space in the publication for the Black Consciousness Movement (Wilson, 2012:96). Mohapi later died in police custody in 1977, while Mthintso was arrested and tortured by the apartheid government. She later went into exile (South African Democracy Education Trust, 2004:190).

That Daily Dispatch (led by Donald Woods) is the kind of Daily Dispatch that any editor who comes into the newspaper, wants to have. It was an era where plurality of voices thrived, one where the newspaper listened to both sides of the story (Ngalwa, 2016).

Louw (2016) contends that while the Daily Dispatch was known to be a liberal newspaper – before Woods, it was actually quite conservative in its approach.

Donald Woods changed the rules. He was a white East Londoner, but he punched through that and was successful to pick up the real pulse of black people – he passed through that artificial veil that most liberals had. To him it became more than being relevant to the black audience. It was about standing up for what is right (Louw, 2016).
Key to the “Woods era” was a clear stance of being “a watchdog against the prevailing regime of the time” (Spondo, 2016). Reflecting on the *Daily Dispatch* during this era, Spondo (2016) argues that the *Daily Dispatch* was very critical of the government of the day, while it upheld good journalism principles. The newsroom, according to Spondo, not only produced some of the best journalists of the time, but also some of the best liberators of the time.

Interestingly, Naki (2016), maintains that initially under Woods the paper was not politically strong, but more slanted towards community issues, nature and heritage.

When Prime Minister Verwoerd, founder of Apartheid, intensified his discriminatory separate development policies, the paper started to campaign against apartheid (Naki, 2016).

The campaign intensified during the time of the birth of the Black Consciousness in the late 1960s when Woods developed a friendship with Black Consciousness leader, Steve Bantu Biko. Woods’s friendship with Biko influenced his newspaper’s approach towards apartheid and it became more radical in its opposition to the system (Naki, 2016). Woods was involved in 37 lawsuits with the apartheid regime in his years as editor - and won every single case. He was once sentenced to six months in jail, but won on appeal. He was awarded damages for libel from several ministers and remarked that the proceeds had paid for a swimming pool and a piano (*Reuters*, 2001:1).

It was not long after these incidents that Woods, subject to constant security police harassment and surveillance, went to exile in London, and was banned from returning to South Africa by the government of the day.

Spondo (2016) contends that the *Daily Dispatch*, during the height of apartheid, was “very much focused on being a watchdog and analytical in its journalism”. Ngalwa (2016), on the other hand, points out that the *Daily Dispatch*’s newsroom, particularly during Woods’s era, was racially mixed and that a plurality of views and experiences was represented. Ngalwa (2016) argues, however, that while every member of the newsroom had his or her own
convictions, the core of editorial policy and style was about telling the real story, “focused on telling the truth at all times”.

While Naki (2016) concurs with this thought, he further advocates that in a number of instances the publication pushed its editorial policy to the extreme in its bid to illustrate the injustice of apartheid.

During the inquest into Biko’s death, the Daily Dispatch ran mounds of copy including centre-piece spreads about the inquest proceedings. Interestingly the paper even preferred to run the discussion verbatim, including the evidence given by the doctors who treated Biko prior to his death (Naki, 2016).

One of the key findings, from some of the interview respondents regarding the publication’s writing style and editorial policy, is that while the Daily Dispatch had adopted a progressive posture and employed people who were associated with the struggle and clearly positioned itself as a more liberal publication that was advocating for equality, it was not very robust and radical in its fight against the apartheid government post the intimidation and exile of Donald Woods (Mabuyane, 2016; Qoboshiyane, 2016).

Naki (2016) attributes this change in editorial policy to the underhand tactics of the National Party, which used the opportunity of a vacant editorship of the Daily Dispatch, following Woods’s exile, to appoint a very conservative editor, George Farr. Under his editorship, the newspaper considered its civic duty as that of supporting the apartheid status quo, which meant playing down any news of civil strife (Switzer & Adhikari, 2000:261).

Farr reversed Woods’ achievements against apartheid and the paper’s editorial stance was completely altered to take a strong pro-government approach. The atrocities committed by apartheid were not condemned but were somehow justified in the paper’s commentaries (Naki, 2016).

Recalling the Farr era, Louw (2016) draws a stark comparison between the headlines during this era that called for “Nelson Mandela to be hanged” and those during Woods’ era that led
to “a white man going to exile because of fighting for the rights of black people”. Farr was editor of the *Daily Dispatch* from 1978 to 1987. In 1987, Glynn Williams, who had been with the publication, took over as editor, retiring in 1993. Williams’s successor was Professor Gavin Stewart. Stewart joined the *Daily Dispatch* from Rhodes University, Grahamstown, where he had been professor and head of the Department of Journalism. He had previously been a senior lecturer in journalism at Natal Technikon. Stewart had worked on a number of newspapers, including the *Natal Witness*, *Golden City Post*, the *Northern Reporter*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Rand Daily Mail* (Williams, 1997:7).

**On the *Daily Dispatch*’s reporting in the dawn of democracy**

As South Africa moved into a democratic state, the editorship of the *Daily Dispatch* remained under the reign of seasoned academic, Professor Gavin Stewart, whose leadership style was almost “transitionary between old and new” (Spondo, 2016).

The stance of the newspaper changed to being pro-democracy (Naki, 2016). Naki (2016) credits Stewart with allowing the development of a culture of free political reporting without fear or favour and driving transformation and affirmative action in the *Daily Dispatch*’s newsroom.

Louw (2016), reflecting on Professor Gavin Stewart’s editorial leadership style at the dawn of democracy, reveals that Stewart was “in touch, he was fair, had a heart, believed in the Eastern Cape and was interested in its history”. Steward understood and lived the universal principles of journalism, centred on fairness, objectivity and accuracy (Louw, 2016).

Recalling some of the *Daily Dispatch*’s critical coverage post the dawn of democracy, George (2016) highlights the corruption that unfolded post 1994 during the merger of the former homelands into the Eastern Cape government as the first post-apartheid development that forced the media such as the *Daily Dispatch* to take a very critical stance.

There were gaps that the media had to report on – the taxpayers’ money was not reaching the intended recipients. Yes, it happens in liberation governments that the new government is overwhelmed by the extent of the technical and oversight
requirements of being in government and is in certain instances not ready. It was, however, unfair to expect the media to be lenient and act as if they could not see anything (George, 2016).

According to Ngalwa (2016), this was a difficult period for many newspapers.

There was a new government and the question was always about who would be the first to ask questions and dare to criticise this new government. Additionally, the reality was that a change in government, did not mean that there would be an immediate change in attitudes on both sides of the fence – the media and the politicians (Ngalwa, 2016)

Ngalwa argues that this dilemma was perpetuated by the fact that a lot of South African media were still unreformed.

Some of the media of the day had supported apartheid and became involved in various initiatives, such as the Muldergate scandal, to drive the apartheid propaganda agenda (Ngalwa, 2016).

The Muldergate Scandal was a result of government attempts to influence international and local public opinion about the Apartheid government. It saw to the bribery of international news agencies, the purchase of various newspapers and the secret establishment of a government-controlled newspaper, The Citizen (Rees & Day, 1980:2).

Recalling some of the key milestones of the first term of the democratic government, under the leadership of Nelson Mandela in the country and under the Premiership of Raymond Mhlaba in the Eastern Cape, Ngalwa (2016) admits that mistakes were made by both the media and the government of the day.

There will always be a healthy tension between government and the media. In the case of the Daily Dispatch – the one thing that we had, and continue to have on our side, is that the Daily Dispatch had been on the good side of history during the apartheid era and had always been an advocate for the oppressed (Ngalwa, 2016).
On the evolution of editorial policy post the dawn of democracy

Reflecting from a politician’s perspective, Qoboshiyane (2016) argues that while post 1994 the *Daily Dispatch* continued to integrate its content to be suitable for one government instead of catering for the interests of the various homelands, its own transition into the new dispensation was not well managed.

They adopted a wait and see attitude and did not really change much from pre to post democracy. While they reported about the euphoria and election of Nelson Mandela, they did not sustain that for long and very soon started to punch holes into service delivery (Qoboshiyane, 2016).

On the evolution of editorial policy post the dawn of democracy, Ngalwa (2016) is of the view that editorial content and policy are driven by the editor of the day. With this, he notes the shift in the *Daily Dispatch*’s editorial content and focus following the departure of Professor Gavin Stewart and the introduction of a younger, more dynamic breed of editorial leadership in the Daily Dispatch’s newsroom. A key figure in this new era in the *Daily Dispatch* newsroom was Phylicia Oppelt, who was the editor of the *Daily Dispatch* from 2005 to 2008.

Ngalwa (2016) credits Oppelt with having the power to “restore the *Daily Dispatch*’s image as a ground-breaking newspaper which championed the cause of the voiceless”:

Her strength was her ability to walk into the *Daily Dispatch* environment and do everything in her power to restore the place of the *Daily Dispatch* on the national pedestal (Ngalwa, 2016)

One of the most ground-breaking moments in this regard was the award-winning Frere Babies death exclusive series. Dr Nokuzola Ntshona and the vocal Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Nozizwe Madlala Routledge lost their jobs as a result of the scandal (Fengu & Kimberley, 2011:1).
Suddenly the focus of the *Daily Dispatch* wasn’t just about publishing an edition every day, it was also about shaping and being part of the national conversation (Ngalwa, 2016)

While other respondents also identified Oppelt’s editorship of the *Daily Dispatch* as memorable, their reasons differed from those stated by Ngalwa (2016). Key to these was the vigorous drive of the *Daily Dispatch* to be a commercially-focused publication.

Yes, Phylicia Oppelt did well to drive this new path of the commercialisation of the publication, which included rebranding of the paper and the introduction of the *Saturday Dispatch* but the move towards commercialisation had its own unintended consequences (Spondo, 2016)

These included the reliance of a lot of the content on leaks, scandals and alleged corruption – the paper was moving away from being an analytical thought leader to more of a commercial stance, focusing on churning out new “minimally researched” stories (Spondo, 2016).

**On the *Daily Dispatch*’s coverage of politics in the Eastern Cape**

Naki (2016), in contextualising the importance of political journalism to the *Daily Dispatch* as one of the main driver of sales, argues that the Eastern Cape was known to many in South Africa as

the cradle of South Africa’s black nationalism, for it was where Mandela, Dr Walter Rubusana, Dr Tengo Jabavu, Alcott Gwentshe, Malcomess Mgabela and many other black radical leaders were initiated in the struggle. The Eastern Cape, especially the border region, which was the centre of the *Daily Dispatch*, was the terrain of the black liberation struggle.

With the dawn of democracy, the *Daily Dispatch* established a satellite office at the Eastern Cape legislature and this was resourced with senior journalists.
The *Daily Dispatch* became a leader in the coverage of the provincial government with weekly scoops on development and even later corruption and administrative inefficiencies that characterised the early stages of the democratic government (Naki, 2016).

One of the sources of news for the *Daily Dispatch*’s office in the Eastern Cape Legislature were the Members of Parliament, particularly those that were part of Parliament’s oversight committees (Mhlathi, 2016; Naki, 2016).

From the perspective of MPLs and opposition parties, the relations with the *Daily Dispatch*’s political desk were very good. We were interacting every two or three days. They could phone us any time and give us the agenda of the day for the various oversight committees. They were not spokespersons of the opposition party or one particular party – they were finding information that they couldn’t be given by the ruling party and they thrived on the openness of political opposition (Mhlathi, 2016).

Naki (2016) concurs with Mhlathi and further points out that the portfolio committees were the sources of news and that the *Daily Dispatch* reported both “all the good, the bad and the ugly” of the new democratic government.

Despite this, the new ANC government never showed any dislike of the manner the paper was reporting its activities. Instead the government of the first Eastern Cape Premier, Raymond Mhlaba, and his successor Makhenkesi Stofile, exposed more corruption, and the legislature became more radical in its oversight function to police the administration’s service delivery inefficiencies (Naki, 2016).

George (2016) credits the Eastern Cape political administration, under Premier Makhenkesi Stofile, as being “frank enough to engage and challenge the media while contextualising some of the challenges the province faced”.

In that era, he was also surrounded by people who had a grasp of the obligations of the media to remain objective and represent the interests of the public. Those were
the best times for the *Daily Dispatch* – the role of the media was clearly understood. The media was engaged, the relationship was professional and even from an advertising revenue perspective the *Daily Dispatch* drew a lot of benefit (George, 2016)

**On the *Daily Dispatch’s* editorial policy during the period of study**

A number of the respondents interviewed (Mabuyane, George, Sondo and Qoboshiyane), however, noted that there were changes in the *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of politics post the second term of office of the ANC-led democratic government in the Eastern Cape. While they all agree, their perceived reasons for the changes in the *Daily Dispatch’s* reporting differed. These varied from a renewed focus on the commercialisation of the publication, factions within the ruling party to a more robust investigative reporting focus within the *Daily Dispatch*.

On the renewed focus on commercialisation, Sondo (2016) argues that while many good things were taking place at government level, the *Daily Dispatch’s* commercial stance made it difficult to cover good news stories by government, because “good news don’t sell newspapers”.

These are the things that impacted on the relationship between the *Daily Dispatch* and provincial government. Sometimes the government would say there is an agenda, but I believe more than the existence of an agenda within the *Daily Dispatch* against government, the *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of political news was driven by its new commercial stance – the paper was looking at news that would sell the paper (Sondo, 2016).

Louw (2016) echoes Sondo’s sentiments:

Readership of newspapers globally is dropping because of the impact of the digital age. This means that the journalists have to push even harder to remain relevant and keep audiences. At the *Daily Dispatch*, we are not driven by a set agenda to cover negative news but the reality is that media mirrors society (Louw, 2016).
George (2016) cites some of the internal politics within the ANC as being a contributing factor to some of the perceived shifts in the *Daily Dispatch*’s coverage of politics.

What spoiled everything were the factions – there were suddenly associations of various media personalities with the factions and information was closely guarded. The reality is that as the media, you cannot know something you are not told – if the government suddenly stops communicating with the media, then their side of the story will never be told. And so in the third and fourth term of the ANC’s term of office, programmes of government were poorly communicated, challenges were not contextualised (George, 2016).

Qoboshiyane (2016) concurs and further explains that in its first two terms of office, the ANC government had a very strong communication centre, but that that had become less of a priority in its third and fourth terms of office.

Those things are now managed in units and the strategic nature of communication – the pro-activeness and communication of direction is not prioritised and well exposed. There are also elements of territoriality and an unnecessary concealment of information, and that contributes to the tension between the EC government and the media. To rectify this, government needs to build capacity to be proactive and shoulder the burden of communicating with everyone (Qoboshiyane, 2016).

Naki (2016), in looking at the shift in the *Daily Dispatch*’s political reporting, argues that the change in the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch* has been key in some of the changes in its political reporting stance:

The coverage has evolved. Remember that the *Daily Dispatch* was an independent paper up to early 1990 when it was taken over by Johnnic or Times Media Group. Before that it had its own approach to news coverage that was governed by ‘reporting it as it is’ during the independent period of the paper, to being more critical of the ANC government as democracy progressed.
The changes in the resourcing of the newsroom are quoted by a number of the respondents (Zuzile, Spondo, Mhlathi) as a vital game changer in the reporting of political news by the Daily Dispatch. Mhlathi (2016) argues that the “the excellent calibre of journalists in the Daily Dispatch newsroom” post the dawn of democracy is key in keeping the citizens of the Eastern Cape informed:

We have seen some of the best editors in recent years and they are black. This means that our people are able to lead by example in the newsroom, you can’t doubt them. I have full confidence that that profession is opening the minds of the people of the province.

Zuzile (2016) attributes the change in the newspaper’s political reporting to a growth in knowledge and understanding within the Daily Dispatch’s newsroom about the workings and operations of provincial government.

We now see more positive reporting on government and the paper has improved in its understanding of how government operates. But this can be further improved with the employment of more senior journalists to report on politics (Zuzile, 2016).

Spondo (2016) differs with this view and argues that the “juniorisation of the Daily Dispatch newsroom” has impacted on the publication’s political reporting:

The juniorisation of the Daily Dispatch newsroom has meant that the new breed of journalists is no longer research focused – they don’t spend weeks internalising and researching a story and as such, it becomes easy to leak info to them and get it published.

Qoboshiyane (2016), however, argues that the issue is bigger than just the years of the experience the journalists have, but more about the socialisation of those in the newsroom:

Like most newsrooms in South Africa at the moment, the Daily Dispatch newsroom is filled with a new breed of African journalists who don’t only understand the state of
politics in the country, but at some level had been actively involved in politics during the apartheid era.

According to Qoboshiyane (2016) the socialisation of the South African newsroom brings various dimensions to the newsroom and ultimately to the content of a newspaper such as the *Daily Dispatch*. These dimensions include “the elevation of ANC intra dynamics more than state programmes” and “the elevation of subjective elements in the reporting of stories and growth of fabricated, un-named source-based stories that can be equated to the publishing of mere gossip” (Qoboshiyane, 2016).

In agreement, George (2016) argues that due to the nature of South Africa’s history, newsrooms in South Africa are “are spread with former student activists”:

> We can’t lie to ourselves – while editorial policies have an influence on journalists, what impacts on us the most is socialisation and understanding of issues. Those things define who you are and how you write.

George (2016) however, argues that the highest point in journalism is a journalist’s ability to analyse facts presented and looking into the untold stories beyond than just the facts presented. George (2016) further argues that the exposure and understanding of political journalists of politics in their earlier years allows this level of journalism.

**On the relationship between the *Daily Dispatch* and the Eastern Cape government**

Ngalwa (2016) admits that there have been instances when the relationship between the publication and various government departments have been strained because of various stories that have been published:

> The reality, however, is that as a publication, we are not about favours, we do our job – we will always strive to be fair and where parties are aggrieved we will hear them out and always give everyone a fair chance to represent their view point (Ngalwa, 2016).
Naki (2016) on the other hand makes a link between the *Daily Dispatch*’s relationship with government and its focus on “investigative stories”:

The relationship had been cordial until the *Daily Dispatch* started with the exposes. The issue of investigative stories involving the government intensified under the newspaper’s youngest black editor, Bongani Siqoko. This affected the relationship between the newspaper and the provincial government.

Zuzile (2016) argues that while the relationship depends on each government’s department and the personality of each politician, there is room for improvement from each of the two parties involved:

Politicians need to understand that the media is out there to make a profit and are not friends, but are in a working and professional relationship. The media also need to understand how government operates, and the terminology used. This can be solved by having much senior journalists covering politics and government.

Mabuyane (2016) stresses that trust is vital in the relationship between the *Daily Dispatch*, government and political parties. He further points out that while there was a cordial relationship between the *Daily Dispatch* and the ANC, it was not always that way:

We took each other head-on on numerous occasions, but we never degenerated it into being personal. We are at work and are partners in informing public – we both need each other to remain credible. (Mabuyane, 2016)

Mabuyane (2016) also stressed that the existence of the relationship with the newspaper and “a lot of off-the-record engagements” were key to balanced reporting.

Cupido (2016) emphasised his focus on the role and impact of sub-editors in the relationship between the *Daily Dispatch*, government and political parties:

With the *Daily Dispatch* there would be instances when, because of the sensitivity of the matter being covered, we would request to do a factual clearance of the article after the journalist had finalised it. On numerous occasions we found that there would
be a drastic change between what we looked at and what would be in the newspaper the following morning. When we approached the journalists, they would pin it on the sub-editors. Whether it is unique to the *Daily Dispatch* or is phenomenon in all newsrooms, the power of sub-editors to alter a story can damage relationships between the journalists and their sources.

**On the impact of the change in leadership of the country in the ANC’s third and fourth term of office and its impact in the *Daily Dispatch’s* political reporting**

Spondo (2016) draws a stark link between the changes in the ANC, the ANC- led government and the *Daily Dispatch’s* stance in the coverage of politics in the Eastern Cape:

The ANC was moving away from being a liberal organisation into a political party and the dynamics of internal party politics became more evident both at a national level and a provincial level. Yes, the *Daily Dispatch* had its own commercialisation pressures but the ruling party was shedding off its pedigree and had its own dynamics with factions and these things fitted in very well with commercialisation of the *Daily Dispatch*.

George (2016) concurs and cites the factions within the ruling party as having been instrumental in shaping the *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of politics in the province:

There are views within the ANC that we are more sympathetic to one of the factions and this then carries itself through to even our relations with government because top government officials are accountable to politicians. The reality, however, is that the perceived sympathy towards one faction is actually a result of the ability by certain individuals within that faction to build relations with the media and communicate their programmes instead of clamming up and neglecting the media queries.

The factions within the ANC in the third and fourth term were cited by the respondents as being a catalyst for some of the changes in the *Daily Dispatch’s* political reporting.
Most of the insights about what we are writing are coming from the factions. Government has been politicised and the state has strayed from its mandate, they don’t want to take responsibility. It is natural – this is what happens when politics and factions capture the state (Louw, 2016).

Qoboshiyane (2016) admits that the lack of unity within the ANC system, with different messaging sometimes led to the members of the ANC as the ruling party in South Africa, second guessing each other in public. It is sad that the informal communication is gaining traction – people within the ANC design alternative communication systems, and there is generosity of factions to volunteer information on their internal opposition. That does not invoke confidence from someone who is not part of that and is looking at it from the side-lines. (Qoboshiyane, 2016).

Mabuyane (2016) links the increase in the Daily Dispatch’s critical reporting to the growth in socio political and economic challenges in the country:

The Daily Dispatch does definitely help in reducing service delivery blockage. Everyone who wants attention goes to the media. Sometimes it is blown out of proportion but ultimately if the media covers it, their issue is solved. The Daily Dispatch delivers politicians to the door step of the communities. So there are definitely developmental consequences to their reporting.

Mhlathi (2016) concurs with Mabuyane and argues that the terms of President Jacob Zuma were marred in controversy and have “destroyed the integrity of a black South African government”:

We are not going have a media that will portray a different picture to what is happening now. They are mirroring the decay that has taken place in society as a result of the weaknesses of the current ruling party’s leadership.
Ngalwa (2016) admits that the *Daily Dispatch* has been more critical during Jacob Zuma’s term of office:

The *Daily Dispatch* – like everyone else – as a result of President Jacob Zuma’s style of leadership in his first term, the controversies that have surrounded him during his term of office and his own behaviour, have become more critical of government – and rightfully so.

Ngalwa, however, argues that the ideas and perceptions of the public about President Jacob Zuma were not just informed by what the newspapers were reporting, but were also “influenced by the president’s own behaviour”.

His presidency is one of the worst things to have happened in South Africa – it shapes the *Daily Dispatch*’s own approach. We now have a magnifying glass over everything that happens in government because of what we know and what we have seen. Yes, people ask if in doing this we are being fair. But maybe the question that should be asked is whether President Zuma, himself is being fair to South Africans (Ngalwa, 2016).

**On the changes in the *Daily Dispatch*’s ownership and the impact thereof**

With respect to the changes in the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch*, all of the respondents interviewed were aware of the changes in the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch*. All of them were also aware of the linkages between Times Media Group and some key figures in the African National Congress.

These figures included Tokyo Sexwale whose company Mvelaphande Holdings held shareholding in Times Media Group and Cyril Ramaphosa who was a non-executive Chairman of Johnnic Holdings (Times Media Group’s predecessor).

The interviewed respondents, however, differed in their view of the impact of the links with the ANC in the publications owned by the Times Media Group and the *Daily Dispatch* in particular. Mabuyane (2016) held the view that the change in ownership of the *Daily Dispatch*
and the links of the new owners to some ANC politicians did not have any impact on the content of the publications.

This was in contrary to Cupido (2016)’s statement that the *Daily Dispatch*, at some point, had a cap on the number of stories it could write about the Democratic Alliance in any particular edition due to the newspaper’s links with the government.

There was a point where as the opposition party the DA became aware of what was said to be an unwritten rule within the *Daily Dispatch* during Andrew Trench’s tenure, that there would be no more than one article on the DA a day – almost rationing the voice of the opposition. Having said that – I believe that generally the *Daily Dispatch* hasn’t silenced the opposition (Cupido, 2016).

One of the benefits of the change in the ownership, according to Naki (2016) and Qoboshiyane (2016) is the extended exposure of the publication’s content through publication in sister publications such as *The Times* and the *Sunday Times*.

This syndication approach has invigorated the *Daily Dispatch*’s reporting style towards the government and therefore increased tension between it and the ruling ANC. This is a clear indication that the take-over by the TMG has had a huge influence in the *Dispatch*’s writing style from a small publication to look at issues broader and in a more radical way (Naki, 2016).

Zuzile (2016) credits the new owners of the *Daily Dispatch* for the ability to put their money where their mouth is and employing local black journalists into senior management of the publication. Naki (2016) concurs and further advances the view that the transformation of the editorial management from white to black in the *Daily Dispatch* has been a key strategy by the Times Media Group to ensure revitalisation and transformation of the newspaper.

One of the key areas of tension, however, identified by some of the respondents was the ability by the owners of the large conglomerate to understand the dynamics of operating a newspaper in the rural Eastern Cape. Alluding to this, George (2016) argues that
the monopolisation of the Eastern Cape media by people who do not come from the provinces leads to injustice because sometimes they fail to understand the dynamics of a rural area such as the Eastern Cape and tend to be more sensitive to the bigger advertisers than the local entrepreneurs or businesses.

Using the example of the digital age journalism hype, George (2016) argued that some of the strategies driven at a head office level would not make sense in the context of a rural province like the Eastern Cape where there are issues regarding data and accessibility.

Someone who is not in this province and doesn’t understand those dynamics will not understand that in such cases, we are leaving our historical readership in the cold. (George, 2016)

Ngalwa (2016) admits that there are certain pressures relating to the ownership of the newspaper by a large conglomerate such as Times Media Group.

The media and newspapers are contested terrains. Media owners have views. The beauty about being in a region away from head office, is that you are able to be effective – the distance from owners does give a bit of leeway (Ngalwa, 2016).

6.7.2. Summary: Interviews
The section above reflects some of the thoughts of the interviewed respondents on the factors that impacted on the *Daily Dispatch*’s reporting of politics in the Eastern Cape during the period of study. It further compares this to the *Daily Dispatch*’s reporting style prior to the dawn of democracy. Moreover, the section above, through the interviews, considers the respondents’ view on the impact on the change in ownership of the *Daily Dispatch* during the period of study.
6.7.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter has given a broad account of the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of politics in the Eastern Cape based on both the focus on media coverage during the period of study, as well as the views of identified interview respondents. There were four main themes that were identified in the analysis of the media coverage – these related to service delivery, media coverage of the ANC, the coverage of opposition parties and corruption and maladministration. While a majority of the articles examined, were critical of the government and the ANC, there were also a number that were positive and those that assisted in amplifying the voice of both government and the ruling party. The interviews undertaken as part of this chapter provided diverse views on the role of the Daily Dispatch both during and post apartheid. While there was a divergence of views on the current factors that had led to “changes” in the Daily Dispatch’s reporting of politics in the Eastern Cape – there were common views in terms of the impact of the Woods era on the approach of the publication and the extent of the influence of ownership on the content of the publication.
CHAPTER 7: DATA ANALYSIS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on this study’s research findings using the critical political economy theory of the media as an analytical tool. Specifically analysed are the findings drawn from the Daily Dispatch’s editorials, columns, opinion pieces and news reports on the newspaper’s political coverage during the research period. Included in the data analysis are the findings based on interview with the newspaper’s former and current journalists.

7.2. Brief overview of the Political Economy Theoretical Framework

Whilst the simplest definition of the Political Economy theory of the media considers it to be a perspective which analyses the power and impact of media ownership and control over media content (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991:226), for the purposes of this research, the definition that was utilised was McQuail’s (2000: 88) definition of the political economy theory. McQuail (2000:88) advocates that the Political Economy theory, amongst other things

- focuses primarily on the relationship between the economic structure and dynamics of the media industries and the ideological content of the media.
- Considers the media as part of the economic system, with close links to the political system.

As such, key to the analysis of the existing data of the Daily Dispatch, was the investigation of the influence of the publication’s ownership and its economic structure, in the execution of its task as a journalistic institution in the Eastern Cape.
7.3. The Analysis of the Daily Dispatch’s content

7.3.1. Service Delivery

The central question of this research relates to the manner in which the political journalism of the Daily Dispatch newspaper covered the Eastern Cape government in the last year of the ANC’s fourth term of office as the ruling party of the Eastern Cape government. In order to be able to answer this to its full extent, it was vital to understand the role of the media in society.

Mc Connell and Becker (2002:9), in trying to define this, argue that the role of the media in society can be linked to the state of politics and democracy in a particular case. If this is the case, the role of the Daily Dispatch, in the last years of the fourth term of office of the ANC-led government in the Eastern Cape, cannot be identical to that of the last year of the first term of office.

According to Salgado (2009:15), the role of the media in the early stages of democratisation is to “sustain democratic discourse and guard against backsliding, institutional decay and individual corruption”, while in a stable democracy it is to inform, educate and foster debate.

Based on the analysis of the editorial content of the Daily Dispatch, the publication seems to be caught – to some extent – in the middle of these two stages.

Not only is the publication, through its focus on service delivery, keen to sustain democratic discourse through the elimination of inequality and poverty (Vena, 2013:5), it is also strategic in the way in which it puts a human face, gives a human voice to a social problem such as the non-payment of social grants (Feni & Mgaqelwa, 2013:12) and youth unemployment (Mukhuthu, 2013:1).

The focus and the tone of some of the editorial opinions of the Daily Dispatch relating to inequality and backsliding on the gains of the new democratic era (Editorial, 2013:9) were
critical of the slow pace of transformation and service delivery in the Eastern Cape. It is, however, also vital to note that in its coverage of service delivery trends in the Eastern Cape, the *Daily Dispatch* also did not just focus on reflecting just the voice of the communities, but also played a role in educating and informing readers about the agenda and the message of the government.

Not only did the publication continuously cover positive government developments, but it also allocated ample space to the communication of critical topics such as economic development and planning challenges (Masualle, 2013:9). Additionally, the *Daily Dispatch*’s content illustrates a careful balance between the criticism of government, awareness about its programmes and the recognition of pockets of excellence within the government such as improvements in the service and infrastructure of state hospitals (Vena, 2013:13).

7.3.2. Corruption and maladministration

In his analysis of shifting media roles in different stages of democracy, Salgado (2009:15) highlights guarding against institutional decay and corruption as key roles of the media during the early democratic stages. The analysis of the editorials and articles of the *Daily Dispatch* revealed that corruption and maladministration were some of the key focus areas for the publication. Not only did it write news articles on the matter, but there was a high concentration of editorial opinions that continuously called for accountability and corrective measures by government to root out corruption – even at some of the highest political offices in the land (Editorial, 2013:14).

7.3.3. Coverage of the ANC and other political parties

As the governing party in the Eastern Cape, the African National Congress received its fair share of coverage with the majority of this coverage focusing on the internal wrangling within the party and the evidently declining support for the party. One of the key observations, however, in the coverage of the *Daily Dispatch*, was the extent to which the *Daily Dispatch* again created a careful balance in its coverage of the political organisation ensuring that it covered both the controversial conferences (see Figure 1 in Chapter 6) as
well as the successful voter campaigns by the party. Additionally, in its editorial opinions about the party and its senior members, there was no noted consistent negative tone about the African National Congress.

While there were moments of criticism, there were also moments of accolade, recognition and even motivation (Editorial, 2013:9; Editorial, 2013:10). In the coverage of the editorial content analysed, while the ANC had the majority of the coverage, the extent to which the *Daily Dispatch* covered the programmes and views of (and about) other political parties was also noted. In the coverage of the Economic Freedom Fighters, the Democratic Alliance and Agang, the *Daily Dispatch*’s ability to cover differing opinions and commentaries about the potential (and flaws) of the political parties was also indicative of the publication’s non-partisan stance and its ability to remain independent of political influence.

### 7.3.4 Analysis of editorial content based on the Political Economy theory

While the Political Economy theory investigates the influence of media ownership in the execution of journalism practice, the analysis of the *Daily Dispatch*’s editorial content during the study under review revealed no visible signs of the influence of its owners – the Times Media Group on its content and output. In fact, it was the opposite, because one of the significant findings made in Chapter 6 is the ownership of a stake in the Times Media Group’s predecessor, Avusa, by Mvelaphande, a company owned by a prominent ANC leader, Tokyo Sexwale (Rumney, 2012:1). However, despite this, Sexwale’s very own political party is given no favour in terms of its coverage, exposure and criticism in the *Daily Dispatch*.

In addressing some of the questions that motivated this research based on the analysis of the editorial content of the *Daily Dispatch*, it is clear that the *Daily Dispatch*’s coverage of politics in the Eastern Cape tried to strike a balance between giving a voice and an ear to all stakeholders in the province and in certain instances being the voice of reason, the guard of public interest and advocate for the poor. Based on the analysis of the content there seems to be no impact of the change in the publication’s ownership on the editorial content and focus – it continued to publish stories that were about the state of local communities, the
concerns of the Eastern Cape’s citizens and the day-to-day struggles of the youth of the province. The extent to which these trends will continue into the analysis of the interview undertaken by the researcher will be reflected in the next section.

7.4. Interview Analysis

7.4.1. Introduction
This section analyses the responses to the interview questions stated in Chapter 5. It uses the three categories of responses identified in the interviews namely – the role of the *Daily Dispatch* at the height of apartheid, the nature of the *Daily Dispatch*’s political journalism post the dawn of democracy, and the impact of the changes in ownership of the *Daily Dispatch*.

7.4.2. The transition of the *Daily Dispatch* from apartheid state to a democratic state
It is clear from the analysis of the responses that the *Daily Dispatch*, at the height of Apartheid was a publication that was pro-equality and anti-apartheid. From the interviews analysed this approach of the *Daily Dispatch* during the apartheid era was a source of both confusion and unrealistic expectations post the dawn of democracy as there were expectations for the publication to be supportive and uncritical of the ANC government (Ngalwa, 2016; George, 2016).

It is also vital to note that one of the first areas of contention between the *Daily Dispatch* and the Eastern Cape government was the corruption that unfolded in the merger of the various homeland administrations into one single provincial government (George, 2016). This point is critical evidence that the fight against corruption by the *Daily Dispatch* in the 21st century, is as serious as the publication’s fight against the scourge of apartheid in the 20th century. This was significantly characterised by scoops on the government developments, corruption and administrative inefficiencies (Naki, 2016). In analysing the content of the interviews, one of the glaring observations is that in reflecting on the *Daily Dispatch*’s coverage of politics in the Eastern Cape, not a single one of the 11 respondents associates the publication with having been pro of either the apartheid or the democratic government in the Eastern Cape.
7.4.3. Maturity of democracy and its impact on the *Daily Dispatch’s* political reporting

It is interesting to note that the journalists, politicians and administrators interviewed by the researcher all agreed that the second term of the ANC government saw changes in the *Daily Dispatch’s* management style, its focus and its level of criticism. They, however, disagreed on the reasons and logic behind these changes. While there are views that this change was driven by a quest to drive commercialisation and sell newspapers, there was also a strong argument that, in fact, the changes in the *Daily Dispatch’s* coverage of politics in the Eastern Cape, were in fact influenced by politicians and government itself.

One of the peculiar observations in the interviews conducted is the shared realisation by all the respondents that the *Daily Dispatch* was a battle ground for some of the internal ANC politics and squabbles, and was privy to information leaks that were motivated by internal ANC battles. In fact, it is this observation that leaves one with an unanswered question on whether the ANC, in realising the focus of the publication on its internal politics, could have better utilised the publication to drive internal ANC cohesion and garner public support as also observed by Cupido (2016).

This observation, and further admissions by some of the interview respondents (Qoboshiyane, 2016; George, 2016) that some of the changes in the *Daily Dispatch’s* political reporting were a result of “unnecessary concealment of information” and poor commitment, however, also beg the question as to whether the ANC government, in its self, was not the main reason behind “perceived” shifts in the *Daily Dispatch’s* political journalism in the period under review. One cannot deny that there were more negative stories about government corruption, lack of service delivery and maladministration. However, as Louw (2016) and Mhlathi (2016) state, the media mirrors society.

In fact, Naki (2016), Louw (2016) Mhlathi (2016) and Ngalwa (2016), are unapologetic about pointing fingers back to the highest office in the land – that of President Zuma – for the changes in the *Daily Dispatch’s* reporting of politics.

The *Daily Dispatch* – like everyone else – as a result of President Jacob Zuma’s style of leadership in his first term, the controversies that have surrounded him during his
term of office, and his own behaviour, have become more critical of government – and rightfully so (Ngalwa, 2016).

7.4.4. The changes in the ownership and management of the *Daily Dispatch*

The analysis of the responses from the interviews drew a largely positive association by the respondents with the change in the *Daily Dispatch*’s ownership from a family-owned Dispatch Media, to the Johnnic group, Avusa Media and ultimately Times Media Group. This was mainly driven by the extent to which the new owners allowed for more a wider exposure of the editorial content, increased professionalism and meaningful diversification of the *Daily Dispatch* newsroom. There, did, however, seem to be underlying concerns about the ability of the new owners to understand and respond to some of the unique contextual traits of the largely rural Eastern Cape readership (Louw, 2016; George, 2016).

7.4.5. The political economy theory analysis

To assess the extent of the ownership’s influence on the media content, this research used the political economy theory. In analysing the content of the interview, it is clear that the ownership changes within the *Daily Dispatch*, can, have and will continue, to some extent to influence the publication’s content. The sentiments about whether the influence is positive or negative – depended largely on the role of each respondent. Naki (2016) argues that the change in ownership has invigorated the *Daily Dispatch*’s reporting style towards the government and increased tension between it and the ruling party; Spondo (2016) associates the change with the increased focus in commercialisation and sensationalism. Ngalwa (2016) admits that “the media and newspapers are contested terrains and media owners have views”.

Based on these observations one draws a conclusion that even in matured newsrooms of experienced newspapers such as the *Daily Dispatch*, influence and power need to be carefully guarded as these could potentially sway the focus and objectivity of the publication. There is, however, a fair amount of comfort in the observation made by Mabuyane (2016) that despite extended ownership links to the ANC, the *Daily Dispatch* “continued to be purely professional without political influence”.

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7.4.6. Summary Interview Analysis

This section saw the analysis of the interview responses against the initial research questions in Chapter 5. It further saw the examination of the responses against the underlying Political Economy theoretical framework to assess the views of the respondents about the extent of the ownership influence on the Daily Dispatch’s journalistic obligations. It was pointed out that the transition into a mature democratic state saw a shift in the Daily Dispatch’s political coverage. There were three shared sources of the shift identified – these were the shift in political conduct of the ANC leadership; negligence in the administration and service delivery of the ANC led government and changes in the ownership of the Daily Dispatch.

7.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter was divided into two sections which both attempted to analyse editorial content and stakeholder perceptions about the Daily Dispatch’s political coverage of the Eastern Cape government. Both sections were also analysed utilising the Political Economy Theory which evaluated the influence of media ownership on media content.

The next chapter provides the conclusion and recommendations.
CHAPTER 8:
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Introduction
The major focus of this study was to investigate the political coverage by the Daily Dispatch newspaper of the Eastern Cape government in the fourth term of the ANC as the Province’s ruling party post the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994.

The research focused on the Daily Dispatch’s news articles, columns, opinion pieces and editorials written in the period 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014. The period coincided with the first term of office of President Zuma and the first and only term of office of former Eastern Cape Premier Noxolo Kiviet. It also coincided with an evident political race within the ANC for potential Provincial Premier candidates.

The research referred to all political coverage of the Eastern Cape during this time, including news articles, columns, editorials and opinion pieces that were published by the newspaper and took into account the role played by media ownership and leadership of the Daily Dispatch in determining the role and focus of the newspaper. Analysis was carried out within the context of the political economy theory of the media in examining the Daily Dispatch’s role.

8.2. Literature Review
In line with the focus on the research on political journalism of the Daily Dispatch, this study reviewed literature that contextualised democracy and the role of the media in the process of democratisation. The literature further analysed the shifting mandate of the media in the transitional maturity of democracy.
8.3. Theoretical Framework

This research study was framed in the context of the political economy theory of the media. The theory was utilised to understand some of the influencing factors in the *Daily Dispatch*’s political reporting and how these impacted on its reporting on the Eastern Cape government.

8.4. Research Design and Methodology

To achieve the objective of researching the trends in the *Daily Dispatch*’s political journalism of the Eastern Cape government during the period outlined above, the case study research design and the qualitative research methodology were employed. Specifically, the study utilised two qualitative research techniques/methods, namely interviews and qualitative content analysis. Though this was not a major methodology in this study, a lot of counting took place, meaning, therefore, that this study also used the quantitative content analysis.

8.5. Conclusion on the political coverage of the Eastern Cape government by the *Daily Dispatch*

8.5.1. Content Analysis

This study’s content analysis revealed four main focus areas in the *Daily Dispatch*’s published content for the research period. These were service delivery, corruption and maladministration, the coverage of the ruling political party, and the coverage of opposition political parties. The study concluded that the *Daily Dispatch*, in its political coverage of the Eastern Cape, while it was an advocate for the historically oppressed and disadvantaged, allowed for the amplification of the voices and views of all members of the public, including political leaders, government and nameless persons in the street. It was also concluded through the analysis of the editorial content of the *Daily Dispatch* that there was no evident bias towards the views of its owners or against government, despite changes in the publication’s ownership.

8.5.2. Interviews

The analysis of the interviews revealed three main issues that contributed towards increased criticism in the *Daily Dispatch*’s coverage of the Eastern Cape government during
the Jacob Zuma era. These were the shifts in the political conduct of the ANC leadership, negligence in the administration and service delivery of the ANC led government, and changes in the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch*.

### 8.6. Recommendations for Future Study

This study focused on the ANC’s fourth term of office. The reality is that political developments in South Africa and the Eastern Cape in particular have seen a more complex political environment and related political coverage, especially with the loss of various key municipalities to the opposition and the intensification of political contestation both within the ANC and between the ANC and opposition parties. This researcher recommends that more research should be done on the political economy of the media, with particular reference to the *Daily Dispatch* beyond the period of this study.
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Trollip, A. 2013. Failing ANC's scapegoat is to blame white landowners. *Daily Dispatch*, 8 June, p. 15.


ANNEXURE 0

Newspaper Articles and Editorials Analysed

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ANNEXURE 1: QUESTIONNARE

1. INTRODUCTION:

My name is Ayanda Ramncwana. I am currently a final year student for an MA: Media Studies at the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth South Africa. In fulfilment of this qualification, I have to undertake research on a media related topic. My student number is 211249432.

2. TOPIC:

The central research question of my study is “How has political journalism of the Daily Dispatch newspaper covered the Eastern Cape government in the last year of the ANC’s fourth term of office as the ruling party of the Eastern Cape government”. As such my research proposes to analyse the impact of state democratisation as well as changes in media ownership and leadership in the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of the Eastern Cape government in the last year of the ANC’s third term of office in the province. The primary objectives of this research are:

- To investigate, how, if at all, there has been a shift in the Daily Dispatch’s style of political reporting comparing to the first two terms of the ANC in the post-apartheid era.

- To investigate whether ownership and leadership of the organisation had any impact in the newspaper’s political reporting agenda.

- To analyse the impact of changes in the ownership and leadership of the newspaper on the newspaper’s political reporting agenda and focus.
REQUEST: You have been identified as my targeted respondents because of your current role and your profession in general. As such, this correspondence serves as a request to interview you at your earliest convenience.

QUESTIONS
My questions would be as stated below.

SECTION 1: GENERAL EDITORIAL POLICY AND WRITING STYLE
2. How would you describe the publication’s writing style and editorial policy during this phase?
3. Do you think there were any changes in the ELIDZ’s writing style and editorial policy from the apartheid era to the first term of the ANC led democratic government?

SECTION 2: COVERAGE OF POLITICS IN THE EASTERN CAPE
1. How did the Daily Dispatch’s political coverage of government in the Eastern Cape evolve from an apartheid state to a democratic state? (early stages of democratisation)
2. Literature on media and democracy suggests that the role of the media evolves as a state’s democracy matures. Has the Daily Dispatch’s coverage of politics and government evolved from the early stages of democracy to its what a more mature democratic state at the end of the ANC’s third term of office?
3. How would you describe the relationship between the Daily Dispatch and Eastern Cape politicians and government communications?
4. Did the change in political leadership of the country during this period impact on the Daily Dispatch’s political reporting agenda?

In addition to these questions relating to changes in the demographical representation of the Daily Dispatch’s ownership and leadership representation as well as questions relating to the role of the media in democratic South Africa will be posed to the interviewees.
SECTION 3: OWNERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

1.7.1. Did the change in ownership from a small, privately owned publication to a large multi-national conglomerate impact on the Daily Dispatch’s political journalism agenda?

1.7.2. To what extent would you say the Times Media Group influence the editorial policy and writing style of the Daily Dispatch?

1.7.3. In your opinion, what would you say have been some of the most notable changes in the strategic direction and management of the Daily Dispatch following the change in ownership.

RESPONSE FORMAT: Ideally, I would like to interview you to collect responses. If, however, you would like to submit written responses that is also welcome.