

**By the stroke of a pen: An evaluation of the *Cape Times*  
and *Die Burger*'s portrayal of racial reclassification from  
1980-1990.**

by  
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## **Declaration**

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## Abstract

During apartheid, South Africans were assigned one of four main racial categories: white, black, Indian, or coloured. Given the fluidities of race, “misassignment” was common, leading individuals to apply for a different government-imposed racial classification. In 1950, the racial canvas of South Africa gained definitive lines with the passing of the Population Registration Act. On paper, the racial fluidity that existed before was gone, but on the ground, classifications were in limbo. The *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* newspapers reveal the startling statistics, political agendas and emotive stories linked to the complex racial transitions that occurred by the stroke of a government pen.<sup>1</sup> This dissertation evaluates how two major newspapers portrayed reclassification during a decade of severe media restrictions. By employing a method of qualitative coding, the discourse styles present in 50 newspaper articles are evaluated. The results reveal the significant comparisons between the Afrikaans *Die Burger* and the English *Cape Times*. Reclassification is used as a lens to assess the newspapers and their potential to affect the racial agenda of the day. The lived experiences of individuals affected by the country’s reclassification legislation are also analysed by means of a close reading. This microhistory approach uses the newspaper articles to highlight the stories of the reclassified and in doing so, incorporates them into a history of South Africa from below.

**Keywords:** Racial reclassification; Population Registration Act; Die Burger; Cape Times; Media regulations in South Africa

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<sup>1</sup> This phrase appeared in the *Sunday Star* on 24 April 1988. It succinctly displays the ease with which government-imposed racial classifications could be changed, showing just how senseless the legislation was.

## Opsomming

Tydens apartheid is Suid-Afrikaners in een van vier hoof ras-kategorieë ingedeel: wit, swart, Indiër of bruin. Gegewe die vloeibaarheid van ras, was “verkeerde toewysing” algemeen. Dit het daartoe gelei dat individue aansoek gedoen het om ’n ander rasseklassifikasie as wat deur die regering opgelê is. In 1950 het die ras-landskap van Suid-Afrika definitiewe lyne gekry met die aanvaarding van die Wet op Bevolkingsregistrasie. Op papier was die rasvloeibaarheid wat voorheen bestaan het, weg, maar op die grond was klassifikasies in die weegskaal. Koerante soos die *Cape Times* en *Die Burger* onthul die verrassende statistieke, politieke agendas en emosionele verhale wat gekoppel was aan die ingewikkelde proses van ras-herklassifikasie wat deur ’n staatspen getref is. Hierdie tesis evalueer hoe twee koerante herklassifikasie uitgebeeld het gedurende ’n dekade van streng media beperkings. Deur ’n metode van kwalitatiewe kodering word die diskoersstyle wat in 50 koerantartikels voorkom, geëvalueer. Die resultate toon die beduidende verskille tussen die Afrikaanse *Die Burger* en die Engelse *Cape Times*. Herklassifikasie word gebruik as ’n lens om die koerante te evalueer en hul potensiaal om die ras-agenda van die dag te beïnvloed. Die ervarings van individue wat geraak word deur die land se herklassifikasie wetgewing, word ook deur middel van ’n noukeurige analise ontleed. Hierdie mikro-geskiedenis benadering gebruik die koerantartikels om die verhale van die geherklassifiseerde individue te beklemtoon en sluit dit sodoende in ’n nuwe geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika “van onder” in.

**Sleuteltermes:** Herklassifikasie; Wet op Bevolkingsregistrasie; Die Burger; Cape Times; Media beperkings in Suid-Afrika

**Table of Contents**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| General Introduction  | 9         |
| Chapter Outline   | 12        |
| Use of Terminology  | 14        |
| Methodology   | 15        |
| <b>Chapter 1: The Backstory: Literature, theories, and media history</b>  | <b>18</b> |
| Introduction  | 18        |
| The origins of print media in South Africa  | 19        |
| The press during apartheid  | 22        |
| Racial reclassification in South Africa   | 25        |
| Racial Fluidity: Passing, covering and reclassifying  | 27        |
| Theoretical Frameworks: Race Self Complexity  | 30        |
| Agenda-Setting Theory   | 31        |
| The <i>Cape Times</i> and <i>Die Burger</i> : A decade of media muzzling and misconceptions                       | 34        |
| The English media watchdogs   | 35        |
| “Don’t watch this space”  | 38        |
| The Afrikaans press and the National Party: A heated affair   | 42        |
| Journalists face the cocoon of inaccessibility  | 44        |
| State President P.W. Botha: “The crocodile with the thin skin”  | 45        |
| Chapter conclusions   | 48        |
| <b>Chapter 2: Let the newspapers talk: Coding reclassification in <i>Die Burger</i> and the <i>Cape Times</i></b> | <b>50</b> |
| Introduction  | 50        |
| Selection of texts  | 52        |
| Ethical considerations  | 52        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Method  | 53        |
| Comparing discourse styles in <i>Die Burger</i> and the <i>Cape Times</i> | 58        |
| Newspaper discourse styles over time                                      | 63        |
| Chapter conclusions   | 70        |
| <b>Chapter 3: A close reading of racial reclassification stories</b>      | <b>72</b> |
| Introduction  | 72        |
| Method  | 74        |
| Close reading procedure   | 74        |
| Selection of texts  | 75        |
| Overview of selected families and individuals                             | 76        |
| Close reading analysis  | 78        |
| Chapter conclusions   | 98        |
| General Conclusion  | 102       |
| Bibliography  | 105       |
| Addenda   | 114       |

**List of Figures**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1.1: Cartoon depicting the press in South Africa   | 18  |
| Figure 1.2: Illustration of media censorship  | 35  |
| Figure 1.3: Photograph of <i>Cape Times</i> Editor, Tony Heard on his way to court  | 39  |
| Figure 1.4: Example of a technique used by journalists to avoid media regulations and bans  | 41  |
| Figure 2.1: Number of newspaper articles over time  | 56  |
| Figure 2.2: Comparison of newspaper discourse styles  | 58  |
| Figure 2.3: Discourse styles for <i>Die Burger</i> over time  | 63  |
| Figure 2.4: Discourse styles for the <i>Cape Times</i> over time  | 64  |
| Figure 2.5: Emotive discourse style over time   | 66  |
| Figure 2.6: Political discourse style over time   | 67  |
| Figure 2.7: Fact-driven discourse style over time   | 68  |
| Figure 2.8: Fluid discourse style over time   | 69  |
| Figure 3.1: Cartoon displays state officials as they attempt to classify Lize   | 72  |
| Figure 3.2: Photograph of Mrs Green with her fiancé and daughter in <i>Die Burger</i>   | 85  |
| Figure 3.3: Photograph of the Whiteley family in the <i>Cape Times</i>  | 92  |
| Figure 3.4: Photograph of baby Lize in <i>The Star</i>  | 98  |
| Figure 4.1: The Reclassification database in which the primary source material was stored and sorted. This is an extract from the database reflecting the details of 25 newspaper articles collected from the <i>Cape Times</i> | 114 |
| Figure 4.2: The Reclassification database in which the primary source material was stored and sorted. This is an extract from the database reflecting the details of 25 newspaper articles collected from <i>Die Burger</i>     | 115 |

## **List of Tables**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 2: Code names, descriptions, and inclusion criteria for the qualitative coding analysis | 54 |
| Table 3: Details of selected texts for the close reading analysis                             | 76 |



## General Introduction

“For a whole decade we had constantly been asking ourselves the question: ‘Can we uphold journalistic standards in an authoritarian society?’ Finally, in December 1986 we had to answer publicly: ‘No. We can no longer report fairly in this unfairly restricted society.’”<sup>2</sup> These candid words by former *Cape Times* editor, Tony Heard, succinctly describe the state of the South African media throughout the 1980s. During the apartheid era, South Africa was at war with itself, and with the press. Many social observers and historians have commented on this unique period of racial tension.<sup>3</sup> The media played a pivotal role in communicating what was happening in the country to a local and international audience. Secondary literature has shown that the news disseminated by the Afrikaans and English press was severely biased.<sup>4</sup> Although not without validity, this stance is one-sided and neglects significant shifts that took place within the media toward the end of apartheid.

The Afrikaans media were often cornered into the pro-establishment side of the apartheid debate. This view ignored the intricate web of motivations at play. Conversations happened behind closed doors and divisions of Afrikaans pressmen were not supportive of the government.<sup>5</sup> The chapters that follow serve to question the Afrikaans press’s unwavering loyalty toward the state.

It will also assess the English liberal side of the debate. The analysis will determine whether they were as vocal as assumed or if they perhaps deserved critique. This critique came from radical anti-apartheid groups, and later the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who stated:

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<sup>2</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 398.

<sup>3</sup> See: W.A. Hachten & C.A. Giffard: *The press and apartheid: repression and propaganda in South Africa* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); D.M Smith: *Apartheid in South Africa 3rd ed.* (England: Cambridge University Press, 1990); N. Worden: *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2012); L. Rubin: *This Is Apartheid* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1959); A. Suzman: *Race Classification and Definition in the Legislation of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1960 : a Survey and Analysis* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1961) & P. Maylam: *South Africa’s Racial Past: the History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation, and Apartheid* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> See: T.A. Cutten: *A History of the Press in South Africa* (Cape Town: National Union of South African Students, 1935); G. Botma: *Race Talk in The South African Media* (Stellenbosch: SUN PRESS, 2019) & W.A. Hachten & C.A. Giffard: *The press and apartheid: repression and propaganda in South Africa* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van ’n Koerantman: ’n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na ’80, p. 1.*

“by not challenging the centrality or providing significant oppositional utterances to apartheid, the English-language press unwittingly validated the apartheid state.”<sup>6</sup>

In this thesis, reclassification is the framework with which I examine the complex role of the English and Afrikaans press during apartheid. By focussing on how differing sides portrayed the same topic, I offer a more nuanced understanding of the nation’s media landscape. The issue of racial reclassification provided a chance for liberal English papers to publish an exposé on the senselessness of the government’s race policies. The conservative Afrikaans side had to think carefully about how they circumvented these sensitive stories that saw individuals change race by the stroke of a pen. While restrictions on news content were tighter than ever, newspapers were allowed to publish reclassification statistics and papers such as the *Cape Times* frequently did:

Applications by 1142 South Africans to change from one race group to another were approved last year but a further 275 applications were rejected, the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Stoffel Botha, said yesterday. He said that 13 whites were reclassified as coloured people, while 514 coloured people became white. He added that one coloured became Chinese, four Chinese became white, 22 Malays became white, 55 Indians became coloured, 63 coloured people became Indian, 47 Indians became Malay, 30 Malays became Indian, seven other Asians became coloured, 316 blacks became coloured, 15 coloured people became black, two blacks became Indian, three blacks became Griqua, 24 coloureds became Malay, three Chinese became coloured, four Indians became white, and 19 Malays became coloured. Mr Botha said 167 applications by coloured people to be reclassified white were rejected.<sup>7</sup>

These numbers also made it onto the pages of Afrikaans publications like *Die Burger*. An analysis into the innerworkings of the press uncovers how every word, statistic, photograph, cartoon, and quote published on the pages of South African newspapers was dissected and often forcibly retracted by the state.

Scholarship has divided the press into boxes—should this assumption be adjusted to make space for a more nuanced understanding of media behaviour and influence in the second half of the twentieth century? This thesis engages with the English and Afrikaans print media and utilises interdisciplinary methods to reconsider stories hidden within newspaper data.

An analysis of newspaper sources opened an unexpected view into reclassification motivations and consequences. On more than one occasion, *Die Burger* reported about the tragic nature of reclassification. An article published in 1984 with the headline, “Die verhaal van ’n seun nòg

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<sup>6</sup> R. Davenport & C. Saunders: “The English-Language Press Under Apartheid,” *South African Historical*, (43), (1), 2000, p. 275.

<sup>7</sup> “More than 1000 SA citizens change race,” *Cape Times*, 13 May 1989, p. 3.

swart nòg bruin [The story of a boy neither black nor brown],” demonstrates the unexpected and deeply personal narratives found in Afrikaans newspapers.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the English side of the media was misunderstood. They were labelled “sell-outs” by the alternative press<sup>9</sup> and faced immense scrutiny for not speaking up more.<sup>10</sup> This view remained despite the many English pressmen who put their freedom, and sometimes their lives, on the line to publish articles that questioned apartheid.<sup>11</sup> They had to tread lightly around every word that left their media rooms and were often chastised for what they printed.

Work on racial reclassification is scant. This is due to the elusive and private nature of the topic; the secrecy sometimes required to successfully change racial categories, and the rarity of sources that commented on reclassifying. Race is an issue that has perplexed people in social and scientific spheres for centuries. By searching through numerous newspaper pages, this thesis discovers the often-unseen world of racially ambiguous South Africans. This thesis accompanies the findings of scholars who have commented on race in a South African context, highlighting its fluid nature. It offers a nuanced analysis of the complex role played by the South African media in both perpetuating and disrupting apartheid norms. Much of the coverage on passing and racial fluidity has been focused on the Americas.<sup>12</sup> By presenting a diversified portrayal of reclassification and the media, this thesis addresses a broad question: How did *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* frame their articles in an attempt to shape the South African society’s understanding of race? This consideration is essential to how we make sense of race in South Africa over time. It assists in determining whether there was a difference between what was stated as facts on governmental proclamations, in contrast to what was published by the media during the 1980s.

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<sup>8</sup> “Die verhaal van ’n seun nòg swart nòg bruin,” *Die Burger*, 25 February 1984, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Discussed in more detail on p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> R. Davenport & C. Saunders: “The English-Language Press Under Apartheid,” *South African Historical*, (43), (1), 2000, p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, pp. 295-306.

<sup>12</sup> See: M. A. Sandweiss: *Passing Strange: A Gilded Age Tale of Love and Deception Across the Color Line* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009); A. Hobbs: *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); EE. Telles & T. Paschel: “Who is black, white, or mixed race? How skin color, status, and nation shape racial classification in Latin America,” *American Journal of Sociology*, (120), (1), 2014, pp. 864-907; A. Saperstein, & A. Gullickson: “A Mulatto Escape Hatch? Examining Evidence of U.S. Racial and Social Mobility in the Jim Crow Era,” *Demography*, (50), (5), 2013, pp. 1921-1942; V.M. Keith & C. Herring: “Skin Tone and Stratification in the Black Community,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, (97), (3), 1991, pp. 760-778 & J. O. Burrell, K. E. Freeman & C. E. Winston: “Race-acting: The varied and complex affirmative meaning of ‘acting Black’ for African-American adolescents,” *Culture & Psychology*, (19), (1), 2013, 95-116.

The 1980s ushered in a time of reform with features of a new multiracial President's Council that formed the basis of the tricameral Parliament. Established in 1983, it included legislative houses for whites, coloureds and Indians.<sup>13</sup> The United Democratic Front who aimed to oppose constitutional proposals, was also established in 1983. The decade was a time of mounting tension and unrest in townships across the country. Police maintained a permanent presence in these areas and often engaged in violence with citizens. In 1984 more than 60 people had reportedly been killed in one month.<sup>14</sup> During the decade mass protests were also being held with people rallying to make their grievances known and to demand better treatment. By 1986 a nationwide state of emergency was declared that restricted funerals, imposed harsh curfews and prohibited organisations from meeting.<sup>15</sup> Quickly the state's race laws were making the country ungovernable as situations grew increasingly volatile.

The apartheid era has many grey areas, one of which is racial reclassification. The overarching aim of this work is to shed light on how the media portrayed this topic. Despite only affecting a small share of the total population, these stories remain vital in an attempt to understand more of South Africa's rich history. By placing a magnifying glass over reclassification stories in the press, another layer was added to this analysis. Was the media in South Africa firmly dichotomous in their reporting? This is an argument that persisted and which has long provided a one-sided narrative for understanding the media landscape in a significantly diverse nation.<sup>16</sup> In the following chapters, many features of racial fluidity are explored with reference to how race change was observed in academic literature, and by the press. To support the assumptions that underpin much of what is discussed, this thesis implores two methods of data analysis: qualitative coding and close reading. Both techniques are covered at length in the subsequent chapters and allow for a detailed exploration into a complex racial process that was unique to South Africa.

## **Chapter Outline**

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/general-south-african-history-timeline-1980s> (14/02/2022)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> E. Bird, & Z. Garda: "The role of the print media during the apartheid era," *Media Monitoring Africa*, (4), (1), 1996, p. 2-3 & 8.

The end of the twentieth century was a tumultuous period for people of colour in South Africa as it witnessed severe racial segregation and violence. Racially ambiguous citizens faced considerable anxiety regarding their futures. Legislation such as the Population Registration Act, forced them into neat categories that did not consider their diverse backgrounds and family structures. The first chapter addresses reclassification in a broad sense, laying the foundation for the deep analysis in the consequent chapters. An overarching narrative that will be explored is one in which the Afrikaans press was represented as the state's unquestioning mouthpiece. This is in contrast to them being "Jagters na die waarheid, [hunters of the truth]" as former editor of *Die Volksblad*, Hennie van Deventer said.<sup>17</sup> The liberal English side's plight will also be considered in all of its different interpretations. In the first chapter of this thesis, I examine how this narrative came into being and trace the evolution of both racial fluidity and press history in South Africa.

In the second chapter, I utilise a unique method of data analysis, namely qualitative coding. I take a broad brushstroke approach to ascertain the general sentiment present in the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger*. By employing a dataset of 50 articles, 25 from each publication (all mentioning reclassification between 1980 and 1990) I examine the discourse styles most apparent in the textual evidence. The method used is explained in detail at the start of the second chapter and conveys the details of the technique. The results succinctly display how different—and perhaps more striking—how similar the narratives in the press were. This confirms the hypothesis that the media in South Africa was more complex than often painted out to be in historiography.

In the third chapter, I move to evaluate specific instances of reclassification by means of a close reading. The textual data was drawn from newspaper sources that were collated into a Reclassification database. I compare two publications, the English *Cape Times*, and the Afrikaans *Die Burger*. Using various text analytical techniques, such as framing and use of terminology, I investigate a selection of cases about the same individuals and families, published on the same day. These results inform various assumptions presented in this thesis, including extending the lived experiences and potential motivations linked to race change. This chapter reduces the scale of observation and takes a microhistory look at reclassification, ensuring the cases of reclassified individuals are not overlooked.

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<sup>17</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 3.

## Use of Terminology

Before embarking on a study interlaced with sensitivities, it is essential to briefly outline some of the significant terminology and concepts that will be relied upon in this thesis. Racial reclassification, a phenomenon specific to racially ambiguous people, had especially far-reaching social implications in a society where every facet of life was determined by race. This complex issue requires clear and consistent terminology. Where possible, I make use of accepted alternatives for offensive racial terminology but for directly quoted historical texts, I have kept the original terminology. This is in the interest of accuracy and to display the notable differences in how newspapers reported on reclassification. Bernard Magubane notes that the “lexicon may be offensive to modern sensibilities, but it would be a-historical to tone down the language used.”<sup>18</sup> When referring to race I write white, black, and coloured without capitalisation, unless it is a direct quotation. This thesis uses the term, coloured, similarly to Richard van der Ross in his book, *Myths and attitudes: An inside look at the coloured people*, acknowledging that while racial concepts are not static, using the term recognized in a South African context provides a better understanding of the topic at hand.

The words of Heard also express how and why racial terminology is used. He said:

South Africa’s history of discrimination makes it unavoidable to identify people frequently on the basis of colour. South African law has for years distinguished between African, coloured, Indian and white persons and these terms are used when referring to those groups separately. The term black is generally used when referring to the first three groups collectively, but sometimes is used for African. The use of these terms does not imply acceptance of the statutory divisions of the South African population—divisions which have largely caused the crisis in the country.<sup>19</sup>

These terms were commonly used by the state to describe race at the time and have been included in this thesis for the purposes of contextual accuracy. Racial terms which were discriminatory in nature under apartheid have become a crucial element in community and identity formation.<sup>20</sup>

In this thesis, the words “media” and “press” have been used interchangeably to refer to the newspaper publications in question. The term “fluidity” is also used interchangeably with

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<sup>18</sup> B. M. Magubane: *Race and the construction of the dispensable other*, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. xiii.

<sup>20</sup> The author does not support these socio-legal constructs.

“ambiguity” as this is prevalent in most of the literature. The main purpose of both words is to indicate that racial classifications and identities are changeable and not fixed.

### **Methodology**

A range of academic sources was consulted for an overview of the historical press in South Africa. The Stellenbosch University Library provided access to a helpful collection of international and South African academic texts. The electronic database, SA Media, which is hosted by Sabinet was used to explore a vast collection of newspaper clippings from 1977 onwards. The original SA Media archive from 1977 to December 2014 contains articles from around 204 publications (including newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and journals). The search functions of this database allow for an in-depth analysis but was also supported with a manual search through the newspapers used within this study. These newspapers were accessed from the Compact storage collection of the Stellenbosch University Library. This data collection process had limitations as I could not analyse all the appropriate texts due to the sheer volume of available newspapers. Despite these shortcomings, the findings still offer insight into South Africa’s racial landscape through the eyes of the media.

A Reclassification database<sup>21</sup> containing 50 newspaper articles that mention racial reclassification from 1980 to 1990 was created in Microsoft Excel. 25 articles were located in the *Cape Times* and another 25 articles in *Die Burger*. Each article was transcribed and then sorted into media type, date of publication, presence of imagery and various other identifiers. The transcribed textual data contained 13160 words. This aided in both a close reading and qualitative analysis of the texts and allowed for an effective detection of distinct similarities and differences.

The arguments in this thesis were enriched by a critical reading of *Race Talk in the South African media* by Dr Gawie Botma. Hilton Robert Kolbe’s PhD thesis, *The South African print media: from apartheid to transformation*, was a helpful resource that contributed to the historical sections of this work. Former editor of the *Cape Times*, Tony Heard provided insight into the perspective of the press through his book, *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*. Additionally, media doyen, Harvey Tyson supplied useful material

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<sup>21</sup> See pp. 114-115.

with his book, *Editors Under Fire*. Former editor of *Die Volksblad*, Hennie Van Deventer's *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, offered another valuable account.

The period that is relevant for this dissertation is between 1980 and 1990. The rationale for this is that the years after 1980 recorded relatively higher numbers of racial reclassification than the earlier years. It was also a time of media frenzy, with the harshest instances of state control and restrictions. Additionally, 1990 was the final year of classifications according to the Population Registration Act, which was repealed in 1991.<sup>22</sup>

In this thesis, newspaper cartoons and visual materials are used where applicable. They are meaningful because their natural ambiguity survives scrutiny as historical texts.<sup>23</sup> Each chapter features a selection of cartoon art and assists in making sense of how stories and issues were portrayed. The advantage of a visual portrayal is twofold: it presents the historical source without any changes or interpretations and thus offers the viewer an authentic glimpse of the publication's stance.

In this thesis I relied on newspapers and collected clippings about reclassification for the selected period. While a more detailed account of the method used to analyse this primary source will be included in the third chapter, it is important to note that for the purposes of this thesis, two major publications serving predominantly the Cape, have been analysed. Although an effort has been made to include as diverse a selection of literature and secondary accounts, a limitation of studying racial reclassification is the rarity of readily available information due to the sensitivity of such a private issue. A further limitation of the newspaper data is that it often provides a very general picture of a complex and deeply personal issue such as reclassification. To overcome this limitation Chapter 3 performs a close reading on a selection of detailed case studies from the newspapers. Frequently featuring direct statements from affected individuals, these stories function as helpful subjective accounts of a largely undocumented phenomenon. Through careful close reading, these sources uncover some of the emotions, experiences, and individual histories of people trapped within the race maze of South

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<sup>22</sup> Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 29 June 1991, No. 114 of 1991: Population Registration Act Repeal Act, found online: [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201505/act-114-1991.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201505/act-114-1991.pdf) (15/02/2022).

<sup>23</sup> R. G. Khanduri: "Gandhi and the Satyagraha of Newspaper Cartoons," *Visual Anthropology Review*, (29), (1), p. 1.



Africa. These personal pieces help to humanize the stories that otherwise might have remained mere statistics on paper. Where newspaper articles mention the names of private individuals, extra precaution is taken, and full names are not used to safeguard their identity.

This thesis incorporated qualitative coding to further identify trends within the textual data. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* by Johnny Saldana was a useful resource that displayed the techniques and benefits of qualitatively coding textual data. The technique focuses on discovering specific voices, emotions, conflicts, and various other patterns.<sup>24</sup> Qualitative coding does not claim to be objective; instead, researchers assign meaning to data by means of a code. This is informed by their knowledge of the literature surrounding their topic and is necessary to evaluate the data. As Saldana expressed, “‘Objectivity’ has always been an ideal yet contrived and virtually impossible goal to achieve in quantitative research.”<sup>25</sup> Criticism toward qualitative coding includes claims that the coding may place distance between the researcher and the data. However, if the technique is performed thoroughly, it creates an intimate familiarity as you immerse yourself in the data corpus. Additionally, qualitative coding does not see frequency of occurrence as a key indicator of significance. When combing through the newspaper text, the focus was not placed on how many times words were mentioned. Instead, the attention shifted to uncover the significance of *what* was being said and *how* it was being said. Fundamentally the approach is less about counting and more about an in-depth analysis. Saldana explains that the approach asks researchers:

To ponder, to scrutinize, to interrogate, to experiment, to feel, to empathize, to sympathize, to speculate, to assess, to organize, to pattern, to categorize, to connect, to integrate, to synthesize, to reflect, to hypothesize, to assert, to conceptualize, to abstract, and – if you are really good – to theorize. Counting is easy; thinking is hard work.<sup>26</sup>

In Chapter 2, more detail will be provided about this methodological approach, the codebook used and the specific style of qualitative coding that was incorporated in this thesis.

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<sup>24</sup> J. Saldana: *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 1: The Backstory<sup>27</sup>: Literature, theories, and media history

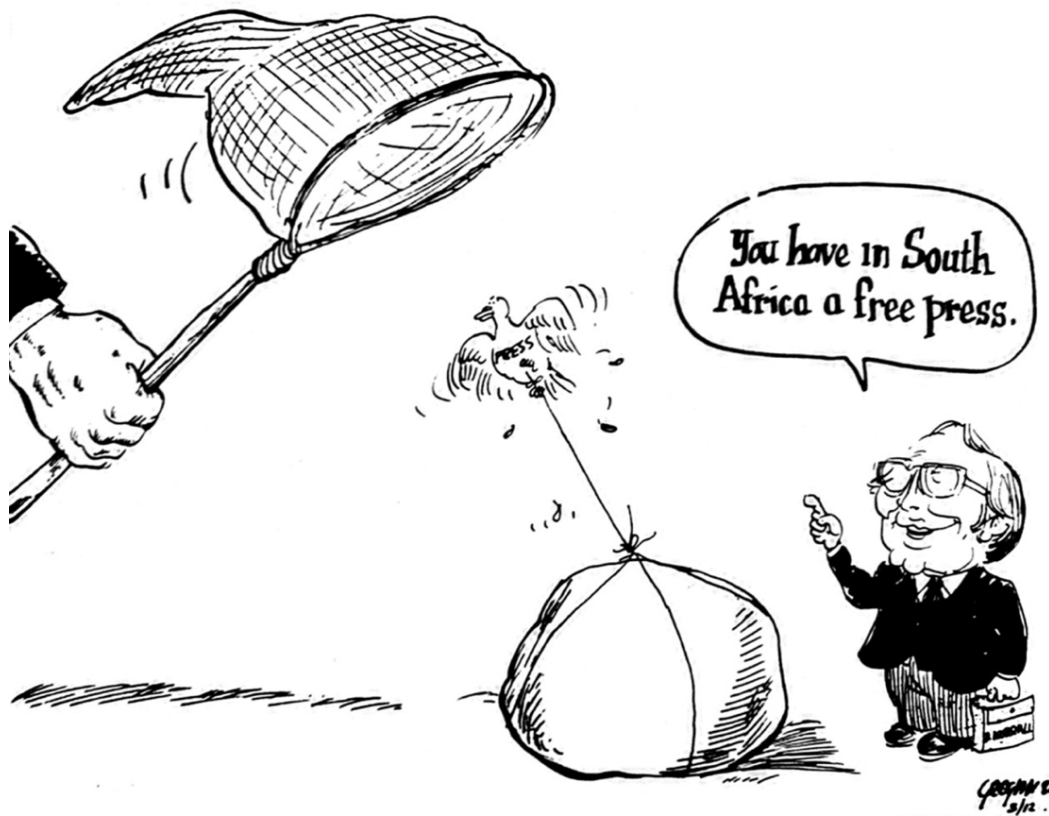


Figure 1.1: Cartoon depicting the press in South Africa. Featured in *Editors Under Fire* by Harvey Tyson, p. 294.

### Introduction

In South Africa, as in many other areas of the world, race has been an issue of contestation. Over time, a variety of social narratives emerged to account for its fluidity and to deal with the tension and segregation present within many societies. This chapter assesses secondary literature to examine how the media evolved and reported on sensitive issues such as racial reclassification. To comment on the state of the media during the 1980s, it is imperative to trace the evolution of a free press in South Africa. This thesis commences with the sequencing of major events from the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck, until the end of South African media censorship in 1990. The press under the thumb of an oppressive government will receive focal attention. This is owing to the limiting effect the harsh state restrictions had on reporters' abilities and the narratives they were able to present.

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<sup>27</sup> In journalism the backstory refers to a media device which adds credibility to a story by offering readers more contextual and circumstantial information.

The following chapter will present the theories of racial fluidity and agenda setting to consider the broader context within which race, and the media ground this body of work. In conjunction, it outlines the phenomenon of racial reclassification in South Africa. By providing background information on the laws and motives believed to influence this issue, this introductory chapter sets the context for the analysis that will occur in Chapters 2 and 3. While the formal system of racial reclassification is unique to South Africa, countries around the world display similar occurrences, albeit less regulated and precise. In the following chapter ideas surrounding racial passing and covering are also presented to make sense of the varying levels of racial fluidity globally.

The first chapter concludes by calling upon the experiences of editors such as Tony Heard (*Cape Times*), Harvey Tyson (*The Star*), Elf Rie (*Die Burger*) and Hennie van Deventer (*Die Volksblad*). Their accounts, which have been detailed and recorded in biographies, assist in making sense of the underpinnings of the publications in question. Both the Afrikaans and English press found themselves in hot water with the state. *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* act as a window into this complex relationship throughout the chapter. Ultimately it charts the important shifts in the way the different tenets of the media have been described. It questions the notion that publications served singular narratives while scrutinising existing literature.

### The origins of print media in South Africa

Media influences society and has done so in South Africa since Jan Van Riebeeck, arrived at Table Bay in 1652.<sup>28</sup> While Van Riebeeck's diary may not have been a newspaper, it is one of the earliest and most detailed accounts historians have to look back on. To understand the influence media has on society, in past and present, it is helpful to explore a brief history of the press in South Africa. Free press was strongly discouraged in these early years and the lack of adequate printing equipment and technology added yet another obstacle.<sup>29</sup> Attempts to acquire a printing press were met with pushback and it was only in 1794, when government needed to print proclamations and other colonial administration, that the first machinery was reluctantly

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<sup>28</sup> G. Botma: *Race Talk in The South African Media*, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> H. R. Kolbe: *The South African print media: from apartheid to transformation*, PhD Thesis, pp. 23-24.

delivered at the Cape.<sup>30</sup> In many aspects, early settlement in an area was made legitimate via the printing press. This was also the case in Australia when government officials brought a small wooden hand press to the country for the first time.<sup>31</sup> It was later used to print government decrees and to publish their first newspaper, the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* in 1803.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, in South Africa the process of obtaining a printing press was to further establish the rule of the government. The earliest publications solely distributed official government proclamations and was closely controlled and monitored by the white minority.<sup>33</sup> The Cape Colony saw the creation of the first state-controlled paper, the *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*, on 16 August 1800.<sup>34</sup> This period of news distribution was known as an era of “romantic journalism” in South Africa.<sup>35</sup> The *South African Commercial Advertiser* came next, and was distributed in 1824. It was the first privately owned publication, led by editors Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn. The cornerstones of free press were not granted overnight. After various petitions, Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape, finally allowed the establishment of a non-government paper.<sup>36</sup> This was followed by the primary Dutch paper, *De Zuid-Afrikaan*, which was first distributed in 1830, the first black newspaper, *Umshumayeli Wendaba*, in 1837 and the earliest Afrikaans language paper, *Die Afrikaanse Patriot*, which made its debut in 1876.<sup>37</sup>

The Colonial Office in Cape Town saw a drastic increase in the number of journal and newspaper registrations, and by 1881 an excess of 125 were listed.<sup>38</sup> The discovery of gold in the Transvaal led to even more newspapers sprouting up to report on this.<sup>39</sup> Some of the notable titles established between 1850 and 1990 were the *Friend* (1850), *Cape Argus* (1857), *The Star* (1871), *De Volksstem* (1873) and the *Cape Times* (1876).<sup>40</sup> The 1900s saw more publications enter the media arena including landmark publications such as the *Rand Daily Mail* (1902),

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<sup>30</sup> H. R. Kolbe: *The South African print media: from apartheid to transformation*, PhD Thesis, pp. 23-24.

<sup>31</sup> H.W. H. Huntington: *Early History of Printing in Australia*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> G. Botma: *Race Talk In The South African Media*, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> T. A. Cutten: *A History of the Press in South Africa*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 18-19.

<sup>38</sup> M. Tsedu: *Journalism in transition in South Africa*, p. 76.

<sup>39</sup> T. A. Cutten: *A History of the Press in South Africa*, p. 9-11.

<sup>40</sup> H. R. Kolbe: *The South African print media: from apartheid to transformation*, PhD Thesis, p. 28.

*Sunday Times* (1906), and *Die Burger* (1915).<sup>41</sup> Over time, the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* would evolve and become two very popular publications, catering to starkly different audiences.<sup>42</sup>

The traditions and ideological underpinnings that informed the formation of the English, Afrikaans, black and alternative press are important to consider. The English-language press can be traced all the way back to the 1820s, when the British Settlers arrived. The ideas they brought along with them were deeply rooted in colonial heritage as they strived to keep up with Western models and ideals around the world.<sup>43</sup> One feature of this was the desire for a free press. Alternatively, the Afrikaans-language press was linked to a strong political and religious cause. Nationalism drove Afrikaans publications and display their attempts for power and control.<sup>44</sup> This became more and more apparent as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century progressed and the Afrikaans mission continually centred around a focus on Afrikaans culture.<sup>45</sup> Eric Rosenthal studied “Bantu journalism”<sup>46</sup> and observed that its origins are found in missionary journals dating back to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. From church leaflets to sermons, the first strides towards a black press were often hand-written or oral.<sup>47</sup> As it developed, more formalised publications were established such as *Imvo Zabantsundu* (1884) and *Koranta ea Becoana* (1901), the work of Solomon Plaatjie.<sup>48</sup>

The “alternative press” emerged in the 1970s from an increased need to rally against apartheid. National distress within the country reached boiling point after the 1976 Soweto Uprising and led to the banning of various newspapers. This in turn spurred on the creation of the alternative press which was predominantly focused on government resistance and protest journalism. Publications such as *Speak*, *Weekly Mail*, *South*, *Indicator*, *Saamstaan*, *Grassroots*, the *Sowetan*, *Vrye Weekblad* and *New Nation* were included in the resistance newspaper category during the eighties.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> H. R. Kolbe: *The South African print media: from apartheid to transformation*, PhD Thesis, p. 28.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> E. Rosenthal: *Bantu Journalism in South Africa*, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> L. Switzer & M. Adhikari: *South Africa's Resistance Press: Alternative Voices in the Last Generation under Apartheid*, p. 46.

This background section has presented a brief overview of the complex development of press in South Africa. It shows that from inception, each strand of the press including English, Afrikaans, black and alternative had its own agenda. The role of the press is always connected to a greater cause, be it political, religious, or linked to heritage. The next section will evaluate how the different sectors of the press operated under the extremely restrictive apartheid regime.

### The press during apartheid

In 1948, at the dawn of apartheid, progressive print media and racial divides were advancing in every province as the country became subjected to many new strict racial laws. The Afrikaans press, which was closely associated with the state, controlled the country's news production. In contrast, the English, black and alternative press added a much-needed nuance to public debates, albeit strictly monitored.<sup>50</sup> The alternative presses by definition set out to offer the public another, more brutal version of the events taking place in South Africa. Many new publications sprang up in the eighties to contest commercial white-controlled media and they had a radical antiapartheid agenda.<sup>51</sup> The papers were supportive of the goal for democracy and were often linked to community-based groups that united to oppose apartheid oppression.<sup>52</sup> The *Weekly Mail* was the flagship of the alternative press during the 1980s and 1990s and it came into being during a dark period of the country's history.<sup>53</sup> Christopher Merret and Christopher Saunders suggest the newspaper contributed to the birth of the new South Africa, but not without pushback. Similar to other resistance presses producing newspapers in this decade, the battle against harassment and censorship was constant.<sup>54</sup>

During a time of great media repression, the alternative presses aimed to tell citizens the painful truth of what was happening in their nation. They kept the mainstream media on their toes and gave South Africans an idea of what a new and democratic nation could look like.<sup>55</sup> Many of the alternative newspapers, such as *New Nation*, *South* and *Grassroots*, failed to see the dawn of a democracy they fought hard to obtain. Publications like *South* struggled to shift from an antiapartheid organ to a press that was commercially viable without the support of donors.

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<sup>50</sup> L. Switzer: *South Africa's alternative press: Voices of protest and resistance, 1880s-1960s*, pp. 19 & 34.

<sup>51</sup> L. Switzer & M. Adhikari: *South Africa's Resistance Press: Alternative Voices in the Last Generation under Apartheid*, p. 327.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 378-379.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 458.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. 461.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p. 481.

Despite their best efforts the newspaper continued to lose money and eventually closed its doors at the end of 1994.<sup>56</sup> Similar constraints plagued other alternative presses but does not diminish their importance in ushering in democracy. These publications reported against apartheid aggressively unlike the more subtle and mainstream *Cape Times*. An analysis of how this newspaper and *Die Burger* reported on the issue of reclassification, while adhering to the state's media regulations, is of interest in this thesis. Locating antiapartheid sentiments in these publications, who were not part of the alternative and resistant press, provide a glimpse into how the mainstream media also attempted to disrupt apartheid norms.

The press was a clear political tool utilised by groups on all sides of the South African racial landscape, however, attempting to publish anti-apartheid news was a risky and volatile venture. The mainstream English press played a role that is often contested.<sup>57</sup> While it cannot be denied that factions within the English press were opposed to the state's discriminatory policies, their efforts were called insufficient.<sup>58</sup> They faced various banning orders and police brutality as they attempted to publish their stories, and this regularly led to the closure of their newsrooms and publications.<sup>59</sup> The black and alternative press were placed under an even larger magnifying glass and many publications such as *The World*, which was known for its vigorous anti-apartheid campaigns, did not survive the government's tight grip.<sup>60</sup> Steve Biko's tragic murder led to more banning orders as newspapers attempted to print his full story. Known as "Crack down day," on 19 October 1977, the apartheid government announced its official banning of 18 organisations and the detaining of *The World's* editor, Percy Qoboza, amongst others.<sup>61</sup>

In the midst of this, the general public was aware of the violence and tension surrounding them. They were informed about the state of the nation and the government's life-altering laws through the stories that made it onto the pages of their favourite newspapers. Two major outlets were the Afrikaans publication, *Die Burger*, and the more liberal English *Cape Times*.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> L. Switzer & M. Adhikari: *South Africa's Resistance Press: Alternative Voices in the Last Generation under Apartheid*, p. 364.

<sup>57</sup> G. Botma: *Race Talk In The South African Media*, p. 99.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 64 & 106.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* p. 73.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> H. R. Kolbe: *The South African print media: from apartheid to transformation*, PhD Thesis, p. 28.

Information about the various legislative rulings did not always make front page news and racial reclassification was one such perplexing process that remained largely unreported.

Reclassification became necessary after the passing of the Population Registration Act of 1950, whereby the government outlined strict and limiting racial categories.<sup>63</sup> The act put forward three main racial classifications; black, white and coloured. Indians were later included as a separate category. Classifications were made on the basis of various factors including a person's physical appearance, occupation and community acceptance.<sup>64</sup> People used the vague racial definitions and flawed system of classification to their advantage.<sup>65</sup> The identity photograph, intended to easily recognize and classify persons, proved to be an unreliable racial identifier because South Africa was, as Ciraj Rassool argues, "an uncertain and ambiguous visual economy."<sup>66</sup> There were many ways to side-step categories because race was a site of inconsistency.<sup>67</sup> Appearance was indeed one way people could move between categories but not everyone could use it to their benefit and attempt to be reclassified through formal applications and appeals. Citizens also changed their race by changing their location. They moved cities or provinces, displayed language skills and used various inventive measures to keep their jobs, homes or loved ones across racial lines.<sup>68</sup>

In the early years of apartheid, traversing the racial line to another apartheid-imposed category was uncommon. Newspaper reporting on reclassification was scattered and infrequent. As the "first rough draft of history,"<sup>69</sup> journalism provides clues that readers can use to construct different versions of truth in specific historical contexts. Researchers Catherine Happer and Greg Philo explain that the media's role in communicating with the public was central. They indicate that cases in which audiences have little experience or information, they become "particularly reliant upon the media to inform them."<sup>70</sup> To explore how journalists portrayed,

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<sup>63</sup> D. Posel: "What's in a name? Racial categorisations under apartheid and their afterlife," *Transformation*, (47), (1), 2001, p. 53.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* p. 56.

<sup>65</sup> C. Rassool: "The Politics of Nonracialism in South Africa," *Public culture* (31), (2), 2019, p. 357.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* p. 358.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p. 357.

<sup>69</sup> P. Graham: "Public Administration and the Press," *Public Administration Review*, (13), (2), 1953, p. 88.

<sup>70</sup> C. Happer & G. Philo: "The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Social Change," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, (1), (1), 2013, p. 321.



and informed the public about reclassification, the next section will provide an overview of the processes and legislation informing race change in South Africa.

### Racial reclassification in South Africa

Race is an evolving issue around the world and takes on various meanings in different contexts. A study on racial reclassification requires an understanding of the practices that reinforced these classifications. Ideas and laws governing race were already in place before the dawn of apartheid. The twentieth century featured exclusionary measures such as the 1925 Wage Act, which favoured white South Africans in the workplace.<sup>71</sup> Race legislation was applied loosely during this period and many people lived and interacted in racially diverse areas.<sup>72</sup> Arthur Suzman's description of the pre-1948 conditions further explains that the most significant characteristic of the race laws was their vagueness. He put forward that for the majority of cases, racial categories were not determined based on any specifications or definitions.<sup>73</sup> Race existed and carried weight, but it was not yet the deciding factor of every sphere of life in South Africa. The apartheid era ushered in an overwhelming determination for separate development and classificatory systems that would enable this reality. Legislation including the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, Immorality Amendment Act of 1950, Group Areas Act of 1950 and the 1953 Separate Amenities Act respectively outlawed any interaction across the colour line.<sup>74</sup> It was, however, the rigid Population Registration Act of 1950 that posed a unique challenge to groups of racially ambiguous South Africans.

A diverse population was forced into limiting categories that underpinned the newly racialised hierarchy.<sup>75</sup> For the people on the racial borderline who did not fit into the NP government's designated classifications, this presented a problem. They were often wrongfully classified or forced to alter their lifestyles to fit into a new category.<sup>76</sup> There were also groups of racially

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<sup>71</sup> W. H. Hutt: *The Economics of the Colour Bar*, p. 75.

<sup>72</sup> A. Suzman: *Race Classification and Definition in the Legislation of the Union of South Africa, 1910-1960*, p. 341.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p. 342.

<sup>74</sup> V. Bickford-Smith, E. Van Heyningen and N. Worden: *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated Social History*, pp. 157-158 & J. Fourie and K. Inwood: "Interracial marriages in twentieth-century Cape Town: evidence from Anglican marriage records," *The History of the Family*, (24), (3), 2019, pp. 629-630.

<sup>75</sup> M. Adhikari: "Hope, Fear, Shame, Frustration: Continuity and Change in the Expression of Coloured Identity in White Supremacist South Africa, 1910-1994," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, (32), (3), 2006, p. 477.

<sup>76</sup> D. Posel: "Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth-Century South Africa," *African Studies Review*, (44), (2), 2001, pp. 96-97.

ambiguous people who were presented with a unique option to assimilate into a different sphere of society. This option, however, came at the cost of their identity and often distanced them from their former lives and families. The definition of “coloured,” which scholars have argued is the most ambiguous racial category, was a catch all group for anyone who did not obviously fit into the white or black categories. This created issues throughout the classification process where people were often clumped into one general designation.

Shamil Jeppie highlights the confusion faced by members of the Malay and Muslim communities in the Western Cape as they were sometimes included in the coloured category and on other occasions not.<sup>77</sup> Thiven Reddy looks at the Population Registration Act of 1950 and argues that the act intended to politicize citizen’s personal identity and is a significant reason why racial categories have persisted long into the new South Africa.<sup>78</sup> In a review of this analysis, Mohamed Adhikari argues that there is no evidence to prove that the act set out to politicize personal identity nor that this allowed the state to control citizens. Adhikari suggests that the legislation instead played a part in increasing apartheid resistance.<sup>79</sup>

Deborah Posel has written extensively on the Population Registration Act which was the main tool intended to secure racial separation and remove any confusion regarding race.<sup>80</sup> It is this Act that made apartheid’s method of classification unique.<sup>81</sup> Research on classification pieced together some of South Africa’s race story but the chapters on reclassification remain incomplete. The South African Institute of Race Relations released an announcement in 1969 which displays the phenomenon in question in this thesis. It highlights the small group of South Africans who did not fit into the States specific racial boxes. The broadside stated:

While the Population Registration Act of 1950 did not affect the circumstances of the vast majority of the South African population, it created the utmost confusion as to the destiny of the small minority of people whose appearance, associations, and descent do not happen to coincide. The South African Institute of Race Relations pleads with all the power at its command that this small number of persons should be

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<sup>77</sup> S. Jeppie: “Re-classifications: Coloured, Malay, Muslim,” in *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*, ed. Z. Erasmus (Cape Town, Kwela), p. 80.

<sup>78</sup> T. Reddy: “The politics of naming: The constitution of coloured subjects in South Africa,” in *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*, ed. Z. Erasmus (Cape Town, Kwela), p. 77.

<sup>79</sup> M. Adhikari: “Book Review: *Coloured Identity and Creolization in Cape Town*,” *Social Dynamics*, 2003, p. 163.

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/racial-classification-under-apartheid-43430> (18 June 2020).

<sup>81</sup> D. Posel: “Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth-Century South Africa,” *African Studies Review*, (44), (2), 2001, p. 88.

allowed to remain in the racial category in which they feel most at ease.<sup>82</sup>

Yet, it was not possible for those on the racial borderline to remain in the category of their choice. The National Party government's strict guidelines for identity and race documentation prevented the enjoyment of racial flexibility and ambiguity that Muriel Horrell, a research officer at the South African Institute of Race Relations, indicates was given to people before the introduction of new race laws.<sup>83</sup> By 1956 an adjusted Population Registration Amendment Act came into being which further reflected the State's continued fixation with separate development in the country. Developing separately, however, was not always possible for the people who traversed the racial borderline. Their appearance, descent and community acceptance made them live in racial limbo, but it also gave them the leeway to pass between classifications for a complex array of reasons.<sup>84</sup> These individuals are neglected in South African history.

While conventional primary sources seldom mention this small group of otherwise ordinary people, newspapers offer a glimpse into the stories of these individuals. The press captured the tragic anecdotes of those individuals who had their lives turned upside down because they were wrongfully reclassified or longed to pass for another classification on their own accord. Formal reclassification was performed in a specialized manner during apartheid under the Population Registration Act. Government officials were trained to assess cases of race change and an review classification appeals. This system is unique to South Africa. Countries around the world display similar occurrences, albeit less regulated and precise. In the following section, literature surrounding racial fluidity and mixed populations will be assessed.

### Racial fluidity: Passing, covering, and reclassifying

There is a wide interdisciplinary literature on racial fluidity and much of it is focused on the United States.<sup>85</sup> Scholars identify four strands of fluidity, "temporal fluidity, defined as changes in how individuals identify or are classified over time; contextual fluidity, racial

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<sup>82</sup> M. Horrell: *A Survey of Race Relations*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations. 1969, p. 42.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p. 23.

<sup>84</sup> G. C. Bowker & S. L. Star: *Sorting things out: classification and its consequences*, p. 206.

<sup>85</sup> L. Davenport: "The fluidity of racial classifications," *Annual Review of Political Science*, (23), (1), 2019, p. 222 & E. E. Telles and T. Paschel: "Who is black, white, or mixed race? How skin color, status, and nation shape racial classification in Latin America," *American Journal of Sociology*, (120), (1), 2014, pp. 869-872.

change across contexts or conditions; referential fluidity, inconsistency with respect to who belongs in particular racial categories; and categorical fluidity, uncertainty regarding the location of the boundaries of racial categories.”<sup>86</sup> The types of racial fluidity are often interwoven and can thus operate alongside each other. For the many racially ambiguous groups around the world, any of the four types of fluidity can correlate and resonate with them.

The United States and South Africa shared similar racial laws at different stages in their history. Both countries enforced racial segregation and prohibited various interracial ways of life such as mixed marriage.<sup>87</sup> Social science literature documents the evolution of racial classifications and assess the concepts of racial fluidity and ambiguity.<sup>88</sup> Research shows that for specific groups in South Africa and America, race could change across both context and time. For many years race was seen as unchangeable and solely determined by descent. Over time these ridged parameters have given way to a more subjective understanding based on appearance and social acceptance.<sup>89</sup> In the United States, black citizens faced a long history of a legally enforced divided society. The strict “one drop rule” classified any person with black heritage as singularly black.<sup>90</sup> In America, no process for formal race reclassification existed as stringently as it did in South Africa. These individuals, instead, utilised their own methods such as passing. White passing is a topic which has gained interest in different parts of the world. It surfaced in the United States during the 18th century antebellum period when slaves passed for white to escape slavery.<sup>91</sup> The relations between black slaves and their white masters led to lighter-skinned children who could pass for white. This offered them the chance for improved living conditions and better treatment.<sup>92</sup> In rarer cases, white people were also able to pass as black.<sup>93</sup> Scholarship observes that notions of racial fluidity were more commonly known in the later

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<sup>86</sup> E. E. Telles & T. Paschel: “Who is black, white, or mixed race? How skin color, status, and nation shape racial classification in Latin America,” *American Journal of Sociology*, (120), (1), 2014, p. 869.

<sup>87</sup> L. Davenport: “The fluidity of racial classifications,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, (23), (1), 2019, p. 230 & J. Fourie and K. Inwood: “Interracial marriages in twentieth-century Cape Town: evidence from Anglican marriage records,” *The History of the Family*, (24), (3), 2019, pp. 629-630.

<sup>88</sup> S. Cornell and D. Hartmann: *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, p. 76 & L. Davenport: “The fluidity of racial classifications,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, (23), (1), 2019, p. 221.

<sup>89</sup> S. Cornell & D. Hartmann: *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, p. 76

<sup>90</sup> F. J. Davis: *Who Is Black? One Nation's Definition*, pp. 45 & 168.

<sup>91</sup> A. Hobbs: *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life*, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> V. M. Keith & C. Herring: “Skin Tone and Stratification in the Black Community,” *The American journal of sociology*, (97), (3), 1991, pp. 762-763.

<sup>93</sup> M. A. Sandweiss: *Passing Strange: A Gilded Age Tale of Love and Deception Across the Color Line*, pp. 5 & 304.

part of the nineteenth century.<sup>94</sup> The idea of “playing white” has also been considered in the South African context when individuals could not or did not want to reclassify formally.<sup>95</sup> This practice of passing was often successfully undertaken by altering social circles, jobs and appearances.

Social sciences scholarship provides cases that show proof of race change in other countries. In Asia, Japan’s population presents its own cases of racial fluidity.<sup>96</sup> Here, categorisation officially occurs based on an individual’s ancestry. They are seen as either *gaikokujin/gaijin* (foreigner) or Japanese.<sup>97</sup> However, the racially ambiguous are often categorised incorrectly. The aspects that influence how they are perceived range from ethnic name, skin colour, language and behaviour.<sup>98</sup> To fit into the category of their choice, individuals could utilise two methods: passing or “covering.” These acts can be seen as unofficial forms of reclassifying necessitated by the vast racial fluidity within a population.

Covering is different to passing because instead of enhancing certain features to identify with a group, individuals cover and tone down the traits which cause them to be stigmatised in society.<sup>99</sup> Beyond the African continent various studies on racial fluidity have been undertaken but the racial ambiguity within South Africa has seen limited research. It is essential to utilise opportunities which allow for a broader conceptualisation of South Africa’s diverse race story. The nature of racial reclassification is one facet of the story that requires attention.

Generally, categorical racial fluidity was not uncommon throughout the course of history around the world and the lines between races appear to have been shifting for a long time.<sup>100</sup> Haney López offers an example of European immigrants and their racial fluidity. These inhabitants, many Italian or Irish, were categorised as non-white but “became” white or “whiter” over time as they explicitly moved away from the black category.<sup>101</sup> Another factor

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<sup>94</sup> A. Saperstein & A. Gullickson: “A Mulatto Escape Hatch? Examining Evidence of U.S. Racial and Social Mobility in the Jim Crow Era,” *Demography*, (50), (5), 2013, p. 1922.

<sup>95</sup> U. Dentlinger: *Where Are You From?: ‘playing White’ under Apartheid*, p. 8

<sup>96</sup> S. Osanami Törngren & Y. Sato: “Beyond being either-or: identification of multiracial and multiethnic Japanese,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, (41), (4), 2019, pp. 804-806.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>100</sup> A. Wimmer: “The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory,” *American Journal of Sociology*, (113), (4), 2008, p. 979.

<sup>101</sup> I. H. López: *White by Law 10th Anniversary Edition: The Legal Construction of Race*, p. 84.

affecting racial fluidity was geography. Race was often dependent on location and many groups faced changes in their racial positioning as they moved into a new location.<sup>102</sup> These examples indicate the different racial flexibilities present over time and space. Rigidly constructed racial categories became more contradictory as ideologies evolved surrounding concepts of race, ethnicity and identity.

The Race Self Complexity theoretical framework supports this view of racial fluidity and the ability to alter one's race. This theory underpins work within this thesis and is relevant to the story of reclassification in South Africa. It will be outlined in the next section.

### Theoretical Frameworks: Race Self Complexity

Race Self Complexity is a relatively new narrative theory that first aimed to make sense of race in American culture and how it brings unique complexities to the creation of an individual's identity and development.<sup>103</sup> Tenets of Race Self Complexity are incorporated in the primary theoretical framework of this thesis. By integrating research undertaken by psychologist Cynthia Winston, this theoretical lens conceptualises the differing racial fluidity experienced by groups around the world. Prior research has seen the Race Self Complexity framework integrate race theories with narrative theories to make sense of how race is processed by members of society. This is especially helpful in the lives of multiracial and racially ambiguous individuals. It also addresses the unique impact that racial fluidity has on the storied self-system and how these individuals react and think about themselves.<sup>104</sup> Distinctly, Race Self Complexity theory outlines and identifies the form and functionality of race and its various meanings for how people internalize their personal narrative. It also addresses the motivational processes and themes within identity formation, specifically looking at the relationship between characteristic adaptations and the lived experiences of race.

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<sup>102</sup> A. Wimmer: "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, (113), (4), 2008, p. 979.

<sup>103</sup> J. O. Burrell, K. E. Freeman & C. E. Winston: "Race-acting: The varied and complex affirmative meaning of "acting Black" for African-American adolescents," *Culture & Psychology*, (19), (1), 2013, p. 96 & C. E. Winston (ed.): *Human personality: Race Self Complexity and symbolic meaning of persons living race in American society and culture*, pp. 163-165 & C. E. Winston & M. R. Winston (ed.): *Cultural psychology and racial ideology: An analytic approach to understanding racialized societies and their psychological effects on lives*, pp. 559-561.

<sup>104</sup> C.E. Winston (ed.): *Human personality: Race Self Complexity and symbolic meaning of persons living race in American society and culture*, pp. 163-165.

Within the theory individuals engage in a two part psychological negotiation. Firstly, they consider both internal and external stimuli linked to the different meanings of race within racialized cultures and societies. Secondly, the individuals use narrative reasoning and autobiographical processing to merge and make sense of their own understandings of what race means in their lives.<sup>105</sup> The theory also makes room to assess the essentialism of human categorisation, a process which is particularly complex in the self-categorization of racially ambiguous persons.<sup>106</sup> The Race Self Complexity theoretical framework addresses the concept of fluidity, specifically looking at the various issues and challenges multiracial groups may face in their lifetime. The forced racial reclassification of racially ambiguous persons in South Africa is a prime example of one such external challenge. The mere option to reclassify is another example of an internal challenge such persons may encounter. The various tenets of the theory highlight the complexities of racial identity, even at the level of classifying self in terms of racial group membership.<sup>107</sup> Using a Race Self Complexity theoretical framework, this thesis examines racial fluidity. This framework is unique in its focus on racial complexity. In the vast sea of ideological concepts discussing race, this work contributes to and extends previous race research by offering a look into the topic of racial reclassification. To facilitate the evaluation of the media's portrayal of reclassification, a secondary theoretical framework was utilised and will be outlined next.

### Agenda-Setting theory

A secondary theoretical framework that has supported the analysis of reclassification in print media is founded in the Agenda-setting theory. In choosing and displaying news, editors and newsroom staff play an important part in shaping events.<sup>108</sup> Their placement techniques and level of detail provides readers with topical issues while also hinting at the amount of importance they should be giving to the various stories of the day. In reflecting what the state

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<sup>105</sup> R. L. Terry & C. E. Winston, C. E: "Race self complexity and patterns of self identification change: What is the meaning of being a Black and White adolescent in American society and culture in the 21st century?" *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, (81), (1), 2010, p. 434.

<sup>106</sup> D. A. Prentice & D. T. Miller: "Psychological Essentialism of Human Categories," *Current directions in psychological science: a journal of the American Psychological Society*, (16), (4), 2007, p. 204.

<sup>107</sup> C. E. Winston (ed.): *Human personality: Race Self Complexity and symbolic meaning of persons living race in American society and culture*, pp. 163-165.

<sup>108</sup> M. E. McCombs & D. L. Shaw: "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, (36), (2), 1972, pp. 176-177.

is saying about racial reclassification, the media may well determine the important issues, that is, the media may set the “agenda” on reclassification. Evaluating the influence of the media in a specific historical context can reveal new insights about often neglected topics like racial reclassification. The way newspapers and their staff choose to showcase stories play an important role in forming public perception.<sup>109</sup> Readers discover new subject matters and are also subtly shown how much attention to focus on certain topics. Factors such as photographs and the story’s placement all determine what ends up at the top of our agenda. This process is similar to Framing. The media draws our attention to issues but beyond this, they influence the attention we give to specific aspects of these issues. This combined effect is referred to as the agenda-setting role of the media.

The Agenda-setting theory was founded by Walter Lippmann in 1922. His writings in, *Public Opinion*, “The world outside and the pictures in our heads,” outlined the influence news media has on our opinions and behaviour.<sup>110</sup> Lippmann’s basic idea evolved and almost 50 years later, for the 1968 U.S. presidential election, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw used his observations to explain the seminal Chapel Hill study that formally introduced the theory of agenda setting.<sup>111</sup> The main ideas underpinning this theory are a media agenda, a public agenda, and the transfer of salience of the items on the media agenda to the public agenda.<sup>112</sup> In Agenda-setting theory, salience equates to the prominence and given importance of items in the news. The media cannot cover all of the events occurring on a given day so their focus on a limited number of issues influences the public in many different ways. Agenda-setting effects are often an accompanying result of how individuals use news media. Agenda-setting theory focuses mainly on studying public issues and political figures but can be used for many topics of interest. When the media presents an issue, some facts are emphasized while others are noted in passing or neglected entirely.<sup>113</sup> In a decade of severely strict media restrictions, South African newspapers had to think outside of the box. When censored, they published blank spaces and empty speech bubbles to alert readers that they were not getting the full picture.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> M. E. McCombs & D. L. Shaw: “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, (36), (2), 1972, pp. 176-177.

<sup>110</sup> W. Lippmann: *Public Opinion*, p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> M. McCombs: “A Look at Agenda-setting: past, present and future,” *Journalism studies*, (6), (4), 2005, pp. 543-544.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 543-545.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* p. 546.

<sup>114</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, pp. 264-265.



This technique will be explored in more detail in the next section, offering a clear example of agenda setting. There are various levels of agenda-setting but for the purpose of this thesis, it is important to understand the theory as a whole.

Newspapers provide a small glimpse of our environment and create what Lippmann coined a “pseudo-environment” to which the public reacts. For example, from 1970 to 1990, the public reacted to the heightened coverage of environmental issues despite the truth that both air and water pollution was on the decline at the time.<sup>115</sup> In the 1970s, public concern was influenced by news reports connected to petroleum in Germany. Yet, it was later proven that no real evidence existed of any shortage.<sup>116</sup> These agenda-setting effects of the media occur worldwide in societies that feature stable media systems. The public frequently looks to the media for direction and this is especially true for news issues that go beyond the reader’s personal experience. The Agenda-setting theory explains this behaviour as a need for orientation. People dislike being in unfamiliar situations and often look to the media to give them some sense of direction.<sup>117</sup> Scholars have often asked “Who sets the media agenda?” The media agenda is influenced by outside factors and the internal dynamics of the media system.<sup>118</sup> In America, newspaper giant, the *New York Times* is viewed as one of the biggest agenda-setters in news media.<sup>119</sup> In South Africa, newspapers such as *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* carried a similar status during apartheid.

The agenda-setting role of the media has consequences that reach beyond what readers focus on. It influences attitudes, opinions, and observable behaviour. To the extent that the news media show independence in defining the public’s news interests, they are in themselves a powerful social force. We conduct a study of the agenda setting process for a single issue, racial reclassification. By assessing the discourse styles present in two newspaper publications over a decade, trends come to the fore that show what the press placed on the public’s agenda. The

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<sup>115</sup> C. R. Ader: “A longitudinal study of agenda setting for the issue of environmental pollution,” *Journalism & mass communication quarterly*, (72), (2), 1995, p. 309.

<sup>116</sup> H. M. Kepplinger & H. Roth: “Creating a Crisis: German Mass Media and Oil Supply in 1973-74,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, (43), (3), 1979, pp. 295-296.

<sup>117</sup> L. Camaj: “Need for Orientation, Selective Exposure, and Attribute Agenda-Setting Effects,” *Mass Communication and Society*, (17), (5), 2014, pp. 696-698.

<sup>118</sup> M. McCombs: “A Look at Agenda-setting: past, present and future,” *Journalism studies*, (6), (4), 2005, pp. 548-549.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

study takes into consideration the various media bans, laws and historical events that may also have influenced the topics covered by the press.

### The *Cape Times* and *Die Burger*: A decade of media muzzling and misconceptions

My basic thesis was that the South African press, controlled exclusively by powerful white bosses, had by and large been pandering to white interests at a time when they should have been opening the eyes of the white public to the dangers to which our country was exposed by the iniquitous system apartheid and its draconian state of emergency measures. They were lulling whites into a false security, usually telling them those things they wanted to hear. The South African press was on the whole at that time giving the impression that our country was passing through a time of calm and stability when in fact it was facing traumatic times. They were far more concerned that their balance sheets should reflect large profits and they dared not upset their apple cart by annoying the white public by telling it the often-unpalatable truth of the injustices of apartheid.

–Archbishop Desmond Tutu, International Press Institute’s annual conference, 1986.<sup>120</sup>

The media landscape has been an instrument for good and evil throughout the course of history. For generations people have looked to the media in times of trouble and uncertainty and they continuously seek insight on the pages of their favourite publications. Because of this, the media will always carry influence and set the public agenda to varying degrees. The techniques implored to portray stories and enlighten readers from placement to terminology remain pivotal in the quest to understanding more about how the public views society. This is especially true in South Africa, a country that has seen a press completely under the control of a racist government. The evolution of a free press in the country took decades to attain. Much of a country’s history can be traced via newspapers and in many cases, this material may be the only available primary source. The sensitive and illogical issue of racial reclassification was a topic that appeared on the pages of South African newspapers, often against the desires of the government. The way these stories were portrayed reveal much about the foundations of two influential publications in the country. The *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* went to extreme lengths to share their respective truths.

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<sup>120</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, pp. xiii-xvii.



Figure 1.2: Media censorship illustration. Featured in *Editors Under Fire* by Harvey Tyson, p. 262.

### The English media watchdogs

Both *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* have rich histories outlining how they operated and disseminated news in South Africa's politically heated arena. A brief background of these newspapers, their editors, and the harsh restrictions from 1980 to 1990, will attempt to uncover the role key individuals and state control played in South Africa's journalistic reporting. Prior to the decade in question, there were already clear signs of the state's dirty dealings when it came to media control. In 1973 South African Prime Minister B. J. Vorster and the Minister of Information, Dr Connie Mulder were implicated in an Information Scandal. They, along with General Hendrik van den Bergh, Head of the Bureau of State Security and Dr Eschel Rhoodie, Secretary of the Department of Information, used taxpayer's money to enable a flashy propaganda campaign in favour of the apartheid government.<sup>121</sup> Also called "The Muldergate scandal", it was one of the biggest stories surrounding the South African media in the seventies. The parties involved funded numerous projects such as *The Citizen* newspaper, which was

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<sup>121</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, pp. 235-236.

created to be an English-language publication that supported the National Party.<sup>122</sup> State President Vorster left his position with a tarnished name and was replaced by P.W. Botha. The eighties saw a harsh clampdown on general press freedoms in the country with journalists facing jail time, death threats and physical assault on a regular basis. It was a decade that also bared witness to a growing alternative press, a press that was tired of the commercial press' failure to reflect and report on the true atrocities of the day<sup>123</sup>

The *Cape Times* newspaper was founded because of the economic boom of 1872. This was because of the Cape's achievement of local democracy and "Responsible Government." It eventually led to the first inklings of what would be known as the *Cape Times*.<sup>124</sup> It was southern Africa's first daily newspaper and quickly earned a reputation as one of the Cape's essential publications. Influenced by *The Times of London*, its main objective was to reach the poor working class as it endeavoured to uncover various public concerns.<sup>125</sup> The *Cape Times* worked towards diversifying their staff over its many years in circulation and by the eighties a quarter of the newsroom staff featured coloured workers, many in senior roles.<sup>126</sup> Due to the strict job reservation laws, it was more challenging to appoint black employees. While attitudes in the office were positive, there was an underlying flaw highlighted by Editor, Tony Heard. He expressed that "those running the paper, including [himself], had a 'white' outlook—indeed, were captives of history, of generations of lingering prejudice."<sup>127</sup> In 1980, Parliament passed six new Acts adding more high walls around freedom of speech and journalistic autonomy. By 1987, newspapers were facing more than 100 threats of prosecution as journalists were forced to tread lightly even more when covering stories and events that could disrupt the state's ideals.<sup>128</sup> It was easy to be reprimanded, fined or fired for quoting political figures or covering stories that questioned the state. After reporting on the Cape Town riots, *Cape Times* journalist, Zubeida Jaffer was arrested in 1980 under the General Law Amendment and the Internal Security Act and she was one of many.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, pp. 244-245.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 295-306.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* p. 132.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 327.

<sup>129</sup> G. Stewart: "Intimidation and prosecution of journalists," *Index on Censorship*, (15), (7), 1986, p. 27.

A turning point in press history came in September 1980 with the Steyn Commission of Enquiry. This was the second commission enquiry of the mass media, and their job was to, “enquire into and report on the question whether the conduct of, and handling of matters by, the mass media meet the needs and interests of the South African community and the demands of the time and, if not, how they can be improved.”<sup>130</sup> The almost 1,400-page document was not met with approving reactions.

In fact, the English language press was not the only side calling for an ease on restrictions. There were groups of leading Afrikaans representatives that also pleaded for this.<sup>131</sup> “The white press of South Africa enjoyed a rare, if brief, moment of consensus when all segments informed the Steyn Commission during 1980-81 that further legislation to restrict news production was unneeded.”<sup>132</sup>

By 1982 a two-card system was in action and all journalists were expected to abide by it. The system required reporters to carry two cards, one for their press identity and another which was accessible to specific higher ranking staff members. The second card enabled these members to gain “confidential” or “sensitive” information from the police. This was how the world of South African media operated, and the press, significantly unprotected, had to tip toe around the state’s “total onslaught” propaganda.<sup>133</sup> Former professor at the University of the Western Cape and later to be ANC minister of Cabinet, Kader Asmal succinctly describes the confusing predicament journalists found themselves in:

We are told the press is a “watchdog.” But just what does that mean? To whom does the watchdog belong? Whom is watching and for what reasons? If the press is a watchdog, presumably it is protecting something. Just what is that? Is it the people’s watchdog, watching the government, and keeping the government from doing harm to the people?...Who gave the watchdog this task? Did the “people” buy this dog for this purpose?<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> K. Asmal, L. Asmal & R. S. Roberts: *Reconciliation Through Truth: A Reckoning of Apartheid’s Criminal Governance*, p. 93.

<sup>131</sup> W. A. Hachten & C. A. Giffard: *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, p. 82.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> K. Asmal, L. Asmal & R. S. Roberts: *Reconciliation Through Truth: A Reckoning of Apartheid’s Criminal Governance*, p. 92.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

Ultimately the press was confused about their role—were they the watchdogs or was the state watching them? This confusion was intensified by the never-ending media regulations.<sup>135</sup> They were so severe that *The Star* Editor, Harvey Tyson stated the English press was not the only side leading the charge against these clampdown measures, the Afrikaans press also lent their voice. The Nasionale Pers, who always had a close relationship with the National Party condemned the restrictions.<sup>136</sup> Their managing director for this period, “Lang Dawid” de Villiers, was one of the key players in lobbying for fewer press restrictions.<sup>137</sup> Despite this, a further blow was dealt in 1982 when parliament passed yet another act stripping the media of additional freedoms. The Registration of Newspapers Amendment Act, No. 84 of 1982 allowed ministers to revoke newspaper registrations and shut down newsrooms.<sup>138</sup> One instance records Prime Minister PW Botha objecting to an article in the *Cape Times* from 4 February 1982. The reason for his objection was a claim that it was embarrassing him.<sup>139</sup> For these and other small grievances, journalist arrests and summons were a commonality by the mid-eighties. In a two-week period during 1984, nine journalists and three editors were summoned to court under the Criminal Procedures Act.<sup>140</sup> Jail time and police brutality became increasingly difficult to avoid—the banning lists made sure of this.

#### “Don’t watch this space”

Heard, who faced charges for quoting banned activist Zollie Malindi, explained why this process was flawed and impossible to circumvent as the banning lists changed daily. In addition, “it was easy to lose or miss a card, to misfile on, or even misspell a name ...”<sup>141</sup> As the leader of the *Cape Times*, he was radical in his anti-apartheid stance, but he also had to tread lightly around the various restrictions. Through means of clever editing and small changes, they were able to publish snippets of bigger stories that would otherwise have been banned. In December 1984 he explained, “in a rather prudent and tactical move, we edited out

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<sup>135</sup> See: A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 252 for a list of the regulations.

<sup>136</sup> A. Mouton: ‘Reform from within’: Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid, p. 150.

<sup>137</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 404.

<sup>138</sup> W. A. Hachten & C. A. Giffard: *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>139</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 151.

<sup>140</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 283.

<sup>141</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, pp. 187-188.

some of [Donald] Woods's remarks which could have run us foul of the Defence Act; we preferred to break one Act at a time."<sup>142</sup>

There were big moments that showcased the constant fight between the *Cape Times* and the state. One such moment involved Heard and former ANC President, Oliver Tambo. After receiving clear orders not to publish their interview, Heard disobeyed, published the tell-all interview, and was arrested under the Internal Security Act.<sup>143</sup>



*Arrest: Heard being taken to court by Lieutenant Frans Mostert November 1985 after publishing Tambo interview. Also present (left) Marianne Thamm holding placard.*

*Figure 1.3: Photograph of Cape Times Editor, Tony Heard on his way to court. Featured in *The Cape of Storms* by Tony Heard, p. 78.*

Despite this punishment, the interview was live and debunked much of what the apartheid state preached about Tambo, whom they called “the Devil Himself.” Future president Nelson Mandela was bedridden in the hospital when this article went public. After seeing it he

<sup>142</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 191-192.

exclaimed that he thought he had died and woken up in heaven.<sup>144</sup> On the same day, *Die Burger* alternately quoted the Minister of Law-and-Order Louis le Grange who reprimanded the *Cape Times* for publishing the article. They reiterated that the newspaper's actions were highly unlawful and would not be dealt with lightly.<sup>145</sup> While they occasionally tip-toed around the apartheid Acts and rules, this moment was cemented in *Cape Times* history.

Praise for Heard's bold move rushed in, with many readers all across the country—and the world, thanking him. Along with the praise, there was of course the constant threats directed at the newspaper publication and even harsher messages sent to him. Heard received intimidating phone calls and letters. One included the following sentiment, “This is your death warrant, you ... pig. Kiss your family bye. They're going too, sincerely with haste. WASP.”<sup>146</sup> These threats and the above-mentioned restrictions played a role in what was reported on the pages of newspapers around the country. The tense media landscape influenced how stories were portrayed and which issues were neglected by reporters all together. Once the 1986 media regulations were in place, much of the South African journalism world was up in arms. In a letter written in response to these new regulations the Chairman of the Media Council called it a grave concern for South Africa's future.<sup>147</sup> He also warned the public about the regulations and labelled it the “most far-reaching constraints” placed on the press.<sup>148</sup> While they attempted to fight it, daily publications still had papers to print. The editors of many South African newspapers risked heavy penalties as they attempted, and succeeded, in alerting their readers about the regulations using one clever tactic.

Tyson explained that “empty space makes people nervous” and he was right.<sup>149</sup> Groups of newspapers, such as the *Cape Times*, *The Star* and the *Sowetan*, left sections completely empty, attached blank speech bubbles and managed to notify the public that they were not getting the full agenda of what was happening in the country.<sup>150</sup> Once the state caught wind of this technique, it was also banned. What came next was another pushback from editors. This time

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<sup>144</sup> K. Asmal, L. Asmal & R. S. Roberts: *Reconciliation Through Truth: A Reckoning of Apartheid's Criminal Governance*, p. 89.

<sup>145</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 209.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* p. 157.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* p. 249.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 263.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*



they included sections that would state, “Don’t watch this space.”<sup>151</sup> Calculated moves were being made by the lead journalists and editorial staff. Placement, headlines, and empty spaces served a specific purpose. When conducting the close reading of articles centred around racial reclassification in Chapter 3, the use of these techniques will be highlighted to determine how the press was setting the agenda on reclassification.

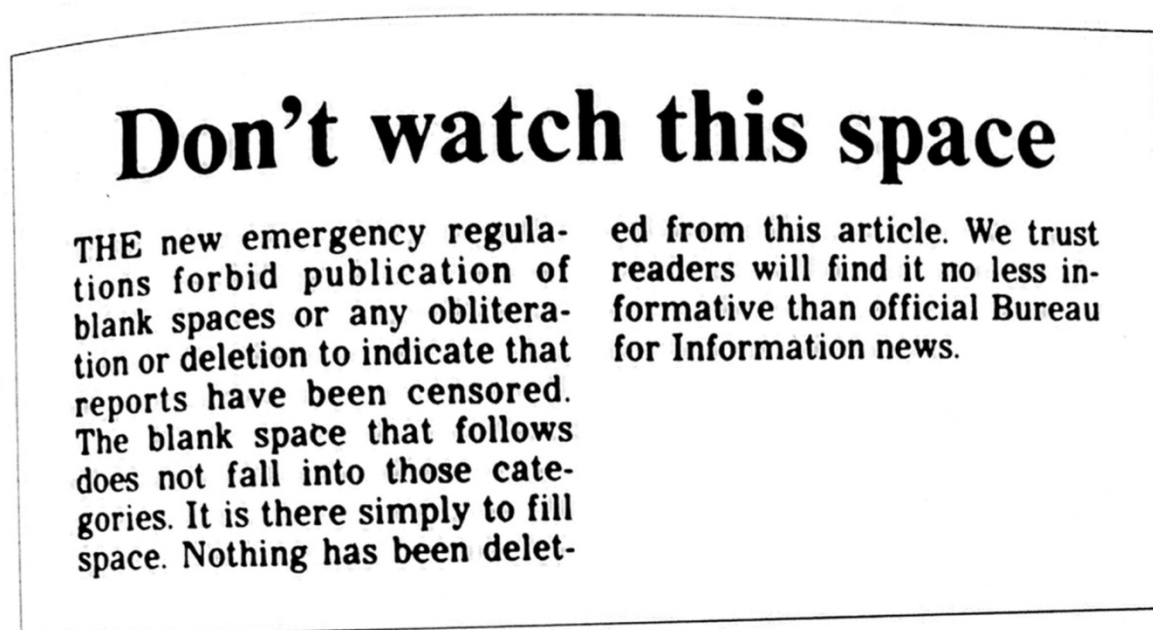


Figure 1.4: Example of a technique used by journalists to avoid media regulations and bans. Featured in *Editors Under Fire* by Harvey Tyson, p. 265.

The 1986 media regulations and the increased state of emergency trumped any progress made toward press freedom over the previous years. One of the new additions was a blanket ban on coverage that mentioned any form of government resistance or questioning government legislations. The issue of reclassification raised eyebrows and questioned the salience of the state’s Population Registration Act. Reporters arguably had to tip-toe around this topic even more after 1986. Heard finally ran out of luck in August 1987 when he was fired from his position as editor of the *Cape Times*.<sup>152</sup> It was in fact not the state that caused his demise but rather white business leaders who had had enough of him and his mission. His mission of course was simply “daring to want to tell the truth.”<sup>153</sup> Tyson shed light on the media landscape

<sup>151</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 265.

<sup>152</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 221.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* p. xvii.

in South Africa at the end of the eighties. He explained that journalists were still being arrested and media staff faced constant opposition in what they attempted to publish. While abroad he made the following statement, “One way or another we are breaking the law perhaps five times a day. It is impossible not to if you are to run any kind of meaningful paper ... It hardly matters what you publish, because if the authorities think it safe to get you, they will.”<sup>154</sup>

The light at the end of the tunnel came abruptly in early 1990, when newly elected State President F.W de Klerk announced plans for reform, and with it came the Repeal of the Media Emergency Regulations.<sup>155</sup> A new dawn arrived in South Africa and the English press, albeit battered and bruised, was ready to tell the story, completely uncensored.

### The Afrikaans press and the National Party: A heated affair

The misconception is that newspapers such as *Die Burger* ... which until a few years ago had a long historical and intimate connection with the National Party, were just callous ideologues and propagandists for the National Party—newspapers that made little or no contribution to lead the country, and conservative-minded Afrikaners, from the maze of our race problems to a hopeful and peaceful future.<sup>156</sup>

—Alf Ries, former Editor of *Die Burger*

Amid pushback from newspapers like the *Cape Times*, *The Star* and the *Argus*, there was another side to the story unfolding in tandem—the side that was portrayed by the state-aligned Afrikaans press. *Die Burger*, which was founded during 1914 by sixteen South Africans in a Victorian style house named Heemstede, always enjoyed close ties with the state. Over the past century, the newspaper has evolved and for many years it catered to a specific political agenda. The editor from 1977 to 1990 was Wiets Beukes and he would start to stir the winds of change on the pages of the paper. However, in the early years of his leadership, the paper upheld the nationalist cause and supported racial segregation. *Die Burger* was not the most conservative publication, but it did have a wide reach and influence as it acted in favour of the National Party’s interests. The significantly influential Afrikaans press house, Nasionale Pers (NasPers)

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<sup>154</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 12.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* p. 341.

<sup>156</sup> Own translation of: “Die mistasting is dat koerante soos *Die Burger* ... wat tot enkele jare gelede ’n lang historiese en intieme verbintenis met die Nasionale Party gehad het, net klakkelose naperers en propagandiste vir die Nasionale Party was—koerante wat min of geen bydrae gelewer het nie om die land, en konserwatief-gesinde Afrikaners, uit die doolhof van ons kleur probleme na ’n hopelik vreedsame toekoms te lei,” in H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van ’n Koerantman: ’n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na ’80*, p. 1.

and their three provincial flagships led the charge and captured most of the Afrikaans newspaper market. It consisted of the Free State based *Die Volksblad*, *Die Burger* operating in the Cape and *Die Beeld* that served the Transvaal area.<sup>157</sup> All three papers enjoyed a close connection with the National Party that was visible to the public.<sup>158</sup> The Afrikaans press was proud to be affiliated with the state but this overt support began to wane. There were signs that the Afrikaans press was growing more critical of their former allies. Of course, they did not abandon their relationship with the NP entirely and they honoured the fundamental tenets of the state's ideologies, but their allegiance was complex and the Afrikaans press was moving away from being the state's "lapdog."<sup>159</sup>

The 1960s marks the first signs that the state and the Afrikaans press were at odds on certain issues. Editors of major publications such as Schalk Pienaar of *Die Beeld* and Piet Cillie of *Die Burger* began to adopt poet N.P. van Wyk Louw's idea of "loyal resistance."<sup>160</sup> Paired with Louw's writings that stated journalist should question politics, these editors became troubled by many elements of apartheid.<sup>161</sup> Together, Pienaar and Cillie's leadership started their newsrooms on a path toward a press that was more questioning, critical and freethinking.<sup>162</sup> Writing in *Die Burger* under the pseudonym of "Dawie", Cillie and Pienaar used the column "Uit my politieke pen" [From my political pen], to share their grievances about the state's petty apartheid regulations which were used to control the lives of black South Africans.<sup>163</sup> Additionally, both editors were not pleased with the continued restrictions placed on the media, which would reach a climax in the eighties.

The 1980s saw the harshest media clampdown throughout all of the years of apartheid.<sup>164</sup> Instead of taking their every word as gospel, there was a growing tendency among Afrikaans journalists to publish critiques which often featured remarks that questioned the state's actions. The government was shocked by the new direction taken by reporters who had acted as their

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<sup>157</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: "See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P.W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s," *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 154.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155.

<sup>159</sup> A. Mouton: 'Reform from within': *Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid*, p. 149.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 149 & 153.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 149 & 154.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

unquestioning mouthpiece for so many years.<sup>165</sup> The affair between the Afrikaans press and the NP was certainly not as affectionate as it once was. Afrikaans newsmen active during the 1980s faced a unique challenge in that NP politicians expected special treatment and favours but turned on them the instant they brought difficult questions.<sup>166</sup> However, the blame for their struggle in news reporting was not flung at the NP. Instead, they turned their criticism toward the “unpatriotic” English press.<sup>167</sup> They called them out for their constant negativity and intentional desire to portray things as worse than they were. They pushed the narrative that the English press’ actions left the Government with no other choice but to enforce harsh and restrictive measures.<sup>168</sup>

In the eyes of the Afrikaans press not everyone with a journalist’s badge could be trusted to tell the truth. They saw themselves as the only form of respectful media and thus agreed with some of the state’s actions. This belief led them to rationalise many restrictive measures and from the outside it seemed like the bond between the government of P.W. Botha and the Afrikaans press was stronger than ever. This credence concealed the long list of deep-rooted issues that were slowly starting to tear at the seams of a once cosy partnership.

#### Journalists face the “cocoon of inaccessibility”

*Die Volksblad* editor and later chief executive of the Naspers newspapers, Hennie van Deventer, summarised the issues underpinning the mounting conflict between the Afrikaans press and the Botha government. At the heart of the Afrikaans press lay one simple desire—they wanted to receive the same preferential treatment they were giving to the NP on the pages of their newspapers.<sup>169</sup> The Afrikaans press was growing tired of having to deliver news with “respectful submissiveness,” and these feelings were ignited all the more by the state’s pompous attitude toward their press freedoms.<sup>170</sup> Van Deventer noted that many Afrikaans newsmen despised being treated like children with the constant reprimanding and pushback from the NP. The breaking point could very well have been the stand-offish behaviour of state

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<sup>165</sup> A. Mouton: ‘Reform from within’: *Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid*, p. 149.

<sup>166</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: “See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P.W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s,” *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 155.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.* p. 156.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van ’n Koerantman: ’n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na ’80*, p. 76.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

officials and of the president himself. Most government departments pushed the press away, including the Afrikaans representatives. This “cocoon of inaccessibility”, as Van Deventer called it, was one of the reasons Afrikaans journalists stopped dishing out favours for their former NP buddies.<sup>171</sup>

Van Deventer made a bold statement when he said that a growing number of Afrikaans newsmen were no longer devoted to the National Party. He stated that “some of them stand increasingly away from them,” and in 1987, *Die Burger* made its disdain for the state’s media restrictions clear.<sup>172</sup> The newspaper published one of the first articles acknowledging their concerns surrounding the escalating and continued media muzzling. They stated, “not only the positive news must reach the public ... Also, negative developments must not be muffled.”<sup>173</sup> They expressed that if the country’s events are glazed over with a false sense of positivity, they run the risk of having a misplaced sense of reality. Toward the end of the eighties the Afrikaans press could no longer rationalise the state’s abrasive media curbs. As the Botha Government increased the web of constraints, so the Afrikaans press felt the need to speak out—albeit in faint voices and with much trepidation.

In the latter part of the decade, with tensions at an all-time high, the state became extremely sensitive to any form of pushback and criticism. Their “either-for-or-against-us stance” placed the Afrikaans press into the same general category of “opposition” and the alliance that once was, was crumbling at a rapid pace. Regardless of how subtle the Afrikaans newspapers were in their critique of the state, this behaviour was seen as full-blown defiance by the Botha Government. Arguably, one figure was to blame for the rocky relationship between the Afrikaans press and the NP—State President P.W. Botha.

#### State President P.W. Botha: “The crocodile with the thin skin”

State President P.W. Botha’s over sensitivity in public and in the press gained him the nickname “the crocodile with the thin skin.”<sup>174</sup> Many of his opponents saw his egotistical

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<sup>171</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van ’n Koerantman: ’n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na ’80*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>172</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: “See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P.W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s,” *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 159.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* p. 160.

attitude as the root cause of the media restrictions that plagued the press. During parliamentary debates his easily offended nature was often called out as the reason for the strict rubric of emergency media rules and regulations. His position allowed him to ask and get preferential treatment from the Afrikaans newsmen but when this trend started to change, Botha did not conceal his annoyance. He seemed to have the editor of every Afrikaans newspaper on speed dial and would give them an unpleasant phone call when he was not happy. Additionally, he would demand a full retraction and an apology—he usually got both.<sup>175</sup> “[T]he time for toying with each other is over, South Africa will not stand for it any longer and the State President will not stand for it any longer. There must be no misunderstanding.”<sup>176</sup> These were the threatening words spoken by State President Botha in a bid to suppress the South African press. In the final month of 1986, a private meeting was held with senior members of the state cabinet and leaders of the English and Afrikaans press. The meeting centred around the acceptance and rejection of the new stringent Emergency Media Regulations.<sup>177</sup> Despite room for discussion, one thing was clear, there would be no tolerance for any critique directed towards the president.

In the following months, Botha increasingly avoided contact with the media and journalists from both the English and Afrikaans press. Ebbe Dommissie, former editor of *Die Burger*, explained the sudden and strange changes exhibited by Botha. In fact, he highlighted that the State President’s actions and words were becoming worrisome and erratic.<sup>178</sup> Botha was no longer hiding behind official statements and was now using coarse and direct comments to air his disappointment with the Afrikaans pressmen. He was on a dangerous warpath that involved major stakeholders in the country. At first it seemed as if he may be attempting to scare the Afrikaans press into submission but soon the true motivation behind his comments became clear—he could not handle criticism and took every slanted word about him personally.<sup>179</sup> This behaviour might not have caused the Afrikaans press to abandon their NP support, but it surely led them onto a road of more independent representation of the country’s political situation.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van ’n Koerantman: ’n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na ’80*, p 87.

<sup>176</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: “See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P. W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s,” *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 161.

<sup>177</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 252.

<sup>178</sup> A. Ries & E. Dommissie: *Leierstryd*, p. 73.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: “See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P.W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s,” *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 162.

For the first time, the stories printed on the pages of Afrikaans newspapers were not completely biased in favour of the state.

Toward the end of his presidential reign, Botha made his reproach of the media crystal clear when he delivered a speech that no Afrikaans journalist would forget. At the National Party's Transvaal Congress, he referred to journalists, both English and Afrikaans, as "little jackals [klein jakkalsies]."<sup>181</sup> He expressed his condemnation of their work even further with an upsetting declaration stating that within the press world there were far too many "bad apples and dirty bounders [te veel lunsriems], too many scoundrels, who just wanted to spread mean stories about Cabinet Ministers."<sup>182</sup> These coarse words had an impact on once-loyal Afrikaner journalists, many of whom left the meeting upset.<sup>183</sup> Botha's crumbling relationship with the media caused panic amongst senior members of the NP because they knew that the press possessed something precious: widespread influence. Despite the dramatic frustration and now undeniable anger between the Afrikaans press and the NP, many parties involved saw these issues as exaggerated. There was the belief, held by many outspoken pressmen such as Max du Preez, that no matter how many blows Botha dealt, the Afrikaans side would never dispute the government on big apartheid issues.<sup>184</sup> His newspaper, the *Vrye Weekblad* was a first of its kind and offered readers a direct critique of apartheid written in Afrikaans. In this breakaway publication du Preez indicated that the *Vrye Weekblad* contributed to a new way of thinking amongst Afrikaans speaking citizens and of all the newspapers in South Africa, it had pushed most persistently for a more independent and free press.<sup>185</sup>

Despite the aggressive efforts of the short-lived *Vrye Weekblad*, which closed after six years, the political foundations of many Afrikaans journalists ran too deep for absolute defiance. Were they angered by the president's comments? Of course. But they would never blatantly oppose the apartheid status quo. The most they offered their readership was a diversified perspective on the matters of the day—while still showing loyalty to the state.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: "See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P.W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s," *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 163.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> A. Ries & E. Dommissie: *Leierstryd*, p. 73.

<sup>184</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 31.

<sup>185</sup> A. Nel: "Nonconformist Journalism: The Vrye Weekblad (Free Weekly Newspaper) as a form of Afrikaans resistance press in 1980s South Africa," *International Conference on Language, Medias and Culture, International Proceedings of Economics and Development Research*, (33), (1), 2012, pp. 144-149.

<sup>186</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 31.

Some believed the Afrikaans press was subtly pressing the state toward reform by introducing the “sensitivity of progressive political change away from a Verwoerdian-apartheid.”<sup>187</sup> Tyson believed that the behind-the-scenes conversations between Afrikaans pressmen and the NP played a key role in making the 1980s one of the final chapters of apartheid. He saw how they kept “the windows open for the media in general.”<sup>188</sup> The Afrikaans newspaper’s stance became public knowledge in 1990 when Dommisse officially informed the National Party that *Die Burger* was no longer their political mouthpiece. The state of emergency in the country continued well into the end of the decade and finally with the ushering in of President FW de Klerk, the country saw the end of a media arena controlled by the state.<sup>189</sup>

### Chapter conclusions

For many observers, the English and Afrikaans press have stayed on distinct sides of history. But what were once clearly marked lines, began to blur over time. Despite the Afrikaans press’ alliance with the state, their growing defiance in the eighties had an impact on what they published and how they published it. Newspapers such as *Die Burger* offended many of their former allies when they issued statements that questioned the salience of the apartheid laws. The Afrikaans press kept many windows open for the general media and contributed to apartheid’s demise, albeit moderately and behind closed doors. For newspaper men and women, telling the truth was an act that could cost them their freedom and their life.

Despite these realities, the tragic stories of reclassification made it onto pages of both the Afrikaans and English newspapers. These stories were monumental because they placed an unavoidable question mark next to the state’s continued fixation with racial purity, segregation, and separate development. In acknowledging the need for reclassification, the apartheid government was indirectly acknowledging the flaws of their system and rigid racial classification. The English press made big strides in the fight against apartheid and this was even more significant considering the above-mentioned media restrictions and potential consequences.

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<sup>187</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van ’n Koerantman: ’n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na ’80*, p. 31.

<sup>188</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors under Fire*, p. 404.

<sup>189</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 194.



Based on the theoretical and methodological foundations posed in Chapter 1, the following sections will provide analysis and application to evaluate the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger's* portrayal of reclassification. An evaluation of this nature was supported by a detailed understanding of the historical and ideological contexts at play. The backstories of both newspapers were outlined and aid in making sense of the findings that follow.

## **Chapter 2: Let the newspapers talk: Coding reclassification in *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times***

### Introduction

Toward the end of the twentieth century the apartheid government used many tactics to retain its power and influence the public. The press was one of its tools. On a global scale, its effort to mitigate news production about apartheid was far-reaching. Transnational propaganda campaigns and the purchasing of American publications demonstrate the lengths the apartheid government went to in an attempt to cover up the full extent of the discrimination in South Africa.<sup>190</sup> Books such as *Secret information* by Les de Villiers and *The real information scandal* by Eschel Rhoodie detail the state's intricate propaganda mission. More recently, Ron Nixon's *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War* explored the efforts to fortify international backing for the apartheid regime.

Local publications printed narratives that offered a different version of events. South African newspapers attempted to inform citizens about the daily activities of the apartheid government but doing so came with significant risk. This chapter will assess how *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* portrayed racial reclassification in an extremely restrictive media arena. Racial reclassification, which was implemented through the Population Registration Act, was a contentious issue. The act stated that individuals must be classified into specific race groups based on elements such as their appearance, community acceptance, occupation, and descent.<sup>191</sup> For a small group of people who had potentially ambiguous complexions, had missing information on a birth certificate or lived in a mixed family, it was difficult to fit into the state's race boxes. Consequently, the state created a formal process of race change and the various cases of reclassification often brought to light questions about the salience of apartheid.

Despite pushback, reclassification stories and statistics made it onto the newspaper pages. To analyse these media portrayals, 50 newspaper articles were selected and compiled in a Reclassification database. Through qualitative coding, I explore the predominant narratives present in the newspapers. By using a Holistic method of line-by-line qualitative coding, each article was read repeatedly, and sentences were assigned specific codes. I compiled the

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<sup>190</sup> R. Nixon: *Selling Apartheid: South Africa's Global Propaganda War*, pp. 57-63.

<sup>191</sup> D. Posel: "What's in a name? Racial categorisations under apartheid and their afterlife," *Transformation*, (47), (1), 2001, p. 53.

codebook as I coded the text and used Johnny Saldana’s principles for qualitative researchers to guide the process and ensure the best possible coder reliability.<sup>192</sup> Once the articles were coded, the data was exported to an excel database that allowed for further analysis. The qualitative method will be expanded in detail throughout the chapter.

Qualitative coding methods have been utilised in various fields, from law and linguistics to social and economic sciences.<sup>193</sup> In the educational sphere it assisted in an exploration of sustainable teaching methods.<sup>194</sup> In the business world, qualitative coding helped researchers measure citizens’ ideological views in relation to policy issues.<sup>195</sup> More recently, this method was used in the healthcare sector to detect the prominent narratives that inform vaccine hesitancy.<sup>196</sup> By identifying these narratives officials were able to adjust their public health communication and messaging.

I combine the Agenda-setting and Race Self Complexity theories to analyse the findings. Considering the media’s agenda-setting role, which highlights that media coverage has consequences beyond what readers focus on, we anticipate that the media has the potential to set the agenda on reclassification. The theory indicates that the media also has the power to influence attitudes and opinions, which is especially relevant when topics are unfamiliar.<sup>197</sup> The media can thus affect and inform observable behaviour, including the choices made by citizens. By assessing the discourse styles present in *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* over a decade, this chapter displays what the press chose to place on the public’s agenda in relation to race change.

While various scholars have commented on racial fluidity, we still know very little about racial reclassification in South Africa. This lacuna can be attributed to the sensitivity of the issue and is also a result of limited sources. By employing an approach such as qualitative coding, this

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<sup>192</sup> J. Saldana: *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, p. 38.

<sup>193</sup> L. L. Hadar & T. L. Ruby: “Cognitive opportunities in textbooks: the cases of grade four and eight textbooks in Israel, Mathematical Thinking and Learning,” *Mathematical Thinking and Learning*, (21), (1), 2019, pp. 54-77.

<sup>194</sup> D. Ying, & S. Hwang: “Technique, Creativity, and Sustainability of Bamboo Craft Courses: Teaching Educational Practices for Sustainable Development,” *Sustainability*, (11), (9), 2019, p. 2487.

<sup>195</sup> T. Oyedepi: “The Effects of Audiences’ Ideological Views on the Customer-Based Brand Equity of Cable News Networks,” *Electronic News*, (2), (1), 2008, pp. 31-45.

<sup>196</sup> B. Hughes, C. Miller-Idriss, R. Piltch-Loeb, K. White, M. Crezizis, C. Cain, & E. Savoia: “Development of a Codebook of Online Anti-Vaccination Rhetoric to Manage COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, (18), (14), 2021, pp. 1-3.

<sup>197</sup> M. E. McCombs & D. L. Shaw: “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, (36), (2), 1972, pp. 176-177.

chapter uses the media as a lens to examine reclassification. While it is impossible to isolate the exact motivations that led men and women to change their racial classifications, the media provides new insight into the phenomenon.

### Selection of texts

Newspaper articles were selected by optimizing the search functions domain of the SA Media database. I accessed articles by searching for keywords such as “reclassification,” “race change,” and “Population Registration.” These searches were performed using the English and Afrikaans words and presented results from several newspapers. I was able to refine the search for my selected period and chosen publications. In the “Date From” domain I chose 1 January 1980 and in the “To Date” domain, I chose 31 December 1990. For this thesis, the focus was on the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger’s* portrayals of racial reclassification. Articles about reclassification were not plentiful and under 70 results related to reclassification were located. This low number made it possible for all potentially relevant articles to be downloaded and saved. After reading through the text, the selection was refined and articles that did not focus on reclassification, or mentioned it in passing, were discarded. At the end of this process, 50 articles (25 articles from each publication) were selected. These articles were transcribed, sorted, and compiled in a Reclassification database.

A limitation of this study is that, because the SA Media database, which is hosted by Sabinet relies on manual processing, it is possible that articles may have been mis-tagged and therefore did not appear in the search results. To address this challenge, the newspapers were also explored in person. The original articles were located in the Compact storage collection of the Stellenbosch University Library to allow for further consolidation. I also recorded the article placement in the newspaper and noted whether it included a photograph because the online SA Media database provided imagery on an infrequent basis.

### Ethical considerations

This thesis used archived published newspaper articles and was deemed exempt from ethical clearance because the data is in the public domain. However, I omitted the full names of individuals mentioned in the articles to protect their identity.

## Method

In this thesis, Johnny Saldana's qualitative coding method is used to ascertain the general sentiment present in the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger*. By employing a dataset of 50 articles, containing roughly 13 000 words, I examine the discourse styles most apparent in the textual evidence. Saldana outlines the 32 coding profiles that exists within qualitative coding and describes which methods are best geared to exploring data in various contexts.<sup>198</sup> This thesis organises newspaper data by means of Holistic Coding. It is a "broad brush-stroke representation" that is ideal for capturing the essence of large segments of text.<sup>199</sup> The exploratory coding method uses labels to continually review the data. A single code is applied to units of data in the corpus and serves to identify the general theme and sentiment of the content. As coding occurs, new labels come to the fore and when a second, or third cycle of coding is applied, basic themes, issues and discourses are highlighted.<sup>200</sup> Each newspaper article was coded holistically, and the results were recorded and stored in the Reclassification database.

The Reclassification database that was created to sort the newspaper articles facilitated the qualitative coding process. After I transcribed all 50 newspaper articles, I began by manually assigning codes to lines of newspaper text. I compiled a codebook based on my prior exploration of the articles and their content. For the Holistic Coding method, it is applicable to start the process with a set of expected codes. Time spent sorting and transcribing the articles allowed for a sense of familiarity with the content and from that, I was able to put forward potential codes. Initially, I suspected the textual data to feature political, religious, offensive, and emotive discourse styles. As the coding process progressed, new discourse styles were added, and coding cycles were repeated. Ultimately, 8 codes were identified.

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<sup>198</sup> J. Saldana: *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, p. 38.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* p. 23.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.* p. 207.

| <b>Code Name</b>    | <b>Description and inclusion criteria</b>  | <b>Example from the text</b>   |
|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>Emotive</b>      | Feelings and expressions that show emotion. Can be positive or negative.                                       | <i>Two cases publicised yesterday, show clearly which laws are continuing to cause acute pain to their victims.</i>  |
| <b>Political</b>    | Reporting/comments from political figures or parliamentary correspondents. The mention of Acts or legislation. | <i>The significance of Dr Denis Worrall's decision to come out in favour of scrapping the Population Registration Act is not to be underestimated.</i>                     |
| <b>Religious</b>    | Comments made by the church or church officials.   | <i>Daar is gesê dat die betrokke Suid-Afrikaanse Kerke nou openlik sal moet bely dat apartheid sonde is.<sup>201</sup></i>   |
| <b>Story-driven</b> | Text that shares personal details, outlining stories and people's lived experiences.                           | <i>The son of Mrs Green, the woman who was recently refused permission to marry because she was reclassified Coloured, has not attended school for the past two years.</i> |
| <b>Fact-driven</b>  | Official statistics and reports. Can include the processes of reclassification.                                | <i>Total classifications jumped from 535 to 846 in the two years mentioned.</i>  |
| <b>Fluid</b>        | Identified statements which indicate that race laws are changeable, busy changing or should be changed.        | <i>It is encouraging to learn that even some officials in the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning believe race classification should be abolished.</i>   |
| <b>Static</b>       | Comments that indicate race laws cannot or should not be altered.  | <i>Mnr. Kotze het gesê die dinge is noodsaaklik as 'n grondslag vir 'n ordelike samelewing in die land.<sup>202</sup></i>  |
| <b>Offensive</b>    | Derogatory words that insult or offend people. Includes direct quotes.   | <i>"Luister, daar in Namakwaland se wêreld is daar mos 'n soort swart Boesman."<sup>203</sup></i>  |

Table 2: Code names, descriptions, and inclusion criteria for the qualitative coding analysis. Source: Reclassification database, pp. 112-113.

Each code represents a distinct discourse style that came to the fore when working through the textual data. In this thesis, a discourse style refers to the fundamental idea and theme identified in a sentence or a selection of sentences. The concept of discourse styles looks at expressive variation in language use. It is employed to observe linguistic forms and aids in making sense

<sup>201</sup> Own translation: It was said that the relevant South African Churches will now have to openly confess that apartheid is a sin.

<sup>202</sup> Own translation: Mr. Kotze said these things are essential as a basis for an orderly society in the country.

<sup>203</sup> Own translation: "Listen, there is a kind of black Bushman in Namaqualand's world."

of sentences by considering their context.<sup>204</sup> For example, sentences that evoked emotion or used expressive diction to convey feelings would be coded for the emotional discourse style. Before coding for a specific style, I consulted an inclusion and exclusion criteria. Table 2 provides the codebook and displays the code descriptions, inclusion criteria and an example from the text. Contextual aspects were considered when coding for the offensive discourse style. I assigned codes for offensiveness in relation to the context and sensibilities of the time. I used the Microsoft Word commenting function to assign the codes. After multiple cycles of reading through the text and coding accordingly, I exported the coded data to Excel. This allowed for an effective comparative analysis. Overall, the abovementioned process resulted in a coded dataset of 109 observations for the *Cape Times* and 107 observations for *Die Burger*. To ensure an appropriate level of intercoder reliability and transferability, extracts from the Reclassification database are attached in Addendum A and B.

To compare the discourse styles identified in the two newspapers, the coded data is represented in a series of graphs. One of the graphs, Figure 2.2, displays a Cleveland Dot Plot. Cleveland and McGill created their dot plot in 1984 after performing various experiments to determine which graph was preferred by readers.<sup>205</sup> They assessed the various judgements made when reading graphs and concluded which of these were made most accurately. The result of their work was the dot plot. By replacing bars with dots there was “less ink, redundancy and clutter.”<sup>206</sup> This visual display is ideal for combining information, comparing values and drawing out clear differences when working with two variables. The relationship between the two newspapers and their coded discourse styles is clear and offers a direct delineation of the level of difference and similarity.

In cases where the data corpus is small and discrete it is recommended to display the actual frequency and if needed, a percentage derivative for generalisation. The true totals avoid ambiguity and misleading results, thus providing the most accurate representation of the data. In this thesis actual frequencies were used.

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<sup>204</sup> Kern. F: “Discourse Style,” *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*, 2015, pp. 1-5.

<sup>205</sup> W. S. Cleveland & R. McGill: “Graphical Perception: Theory, Experimentation, and Application to the Development of Graphical Methods,” *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, (79), (387), 1984, p. 545.

<sup>206</sup> UC Business Analytics R Programming Guide <https://uc-r.github.io/cleveland-dot-plots> (18 March 2021).

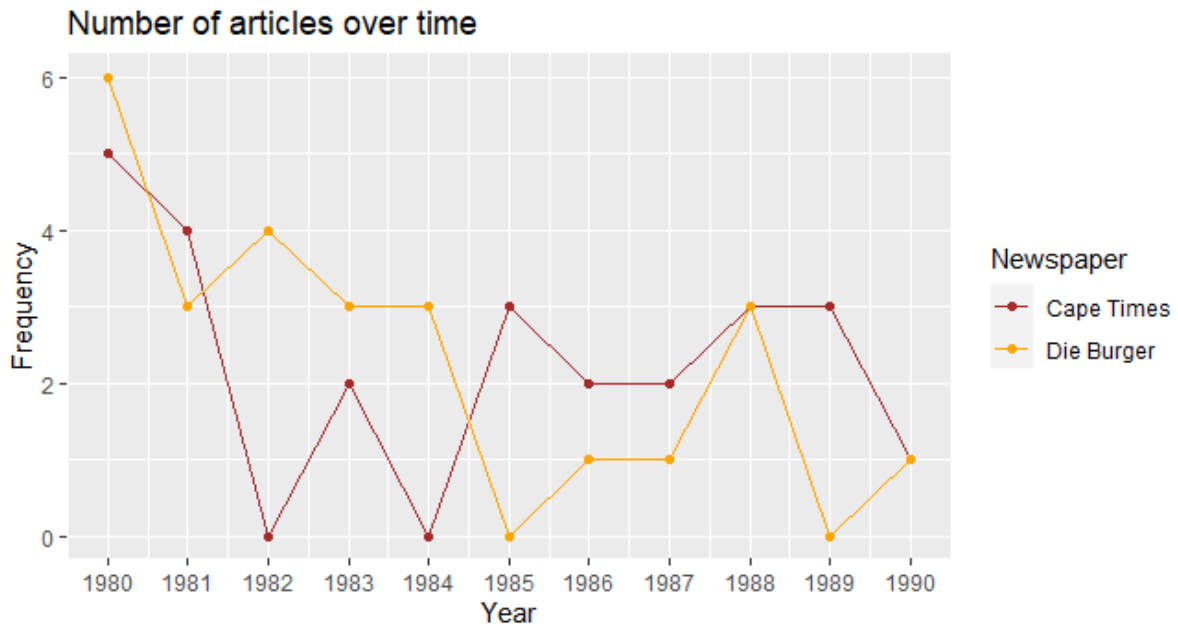


Figure 2.1: Number of newspaper articles over time. Source: *Reclassification database*, pp. 112-113.

Figure 2.1 records the number of newspaper articles analysed between 1980 and 1990. The decade starts with the highest number of articles related to reclassification and as the years progress, the article frequency declines. Many factors could have contributed to this: Discourse within every newspaper was monitored extensively, article retractions and death threats toward journalists and editors were common, and altogether the newly instituted media restrictions and legislation limited reporting abilities.<sup>207</sup> Despite decreased media coverage about reclassification at the end of the eighties, official reclassification statistics increased into the thousands by 1990.<sup>208</sup>

Instances of race change were put on the public's agenda at the start of the decade, and this had the potential to notify unaware citizens about the phenomenon and the process surrounding it. Seeing stories of reclassified individuals and regular statistics about the number of people who altered their race informed readers about the topic. While it is impossible to determine the exact reasons for increased cases of reclassification toward the end of the decade, it is worthwhile to consider the agenda-setting effect of the media. A higher frequency of newspaper articles in

<sup>207</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, pp. 295-306.

<sup>208</sup> "More than 1000 SA citizens change race," *Cape Times*, 13 May 1989, p. 3. & "Race reclassification: 1624 applications," *Cape Times*, 20 February 1987, p. 3 & "Duisende se ras verander," *Die Burger*, 9 June 1987, p. 5. & "Vrae in die Parlement: 1229 wou ander ras wees," *Die Burger*, 4 April 1990, p. 14.



the early years of the decade placed reclassification on the public's agenda and possibly influenced people to formally change their race in the consequent years.

The sharp decline in articles reflected in Figure 2.1 for the *Cape Times* during 1982 is significant. This indicates that the English newspaper refrained from reporting on reclassification for the year entirely. This only happens twice throughout the decade and suggests that external factors might have influenced reclassification coverage. Editors were extremely weary of topics linked to race. The low coverage recorded for a few years is suggestive of potential concerns editors might have had.<sup>209</sup> The severe legislation weighed heavily on newspaper staff and arguably influenced them to avoid sensitive topics at times when they felt their publication was at risk.

Ultimately, these results raise several important questions regarding the South African press and the discourse styles that influenced ordinary individuals and notified them about race change. One ought to be extremely cautious of the conclusion that newspapers were in any way a driving force behind racial reclassification. However, it is beneficial to consider their potential power in choosing to place such stories in their papers and on the public's agenda.

The inconsistent number of newspaper articles over the decade was considered. Despite this drawback, the clear trends that align with important historical events and passing of legislation provide contextual evidence to support the claims put forward in this thesis. Another limitation of the data is that it only reflects the portrayals of two newspapers within South Africa. Future research that includes additional publications over a longer period would allow for further comparisons of race in the media.

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<sup>209</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 327.

### Comparing discourse styles in *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times*

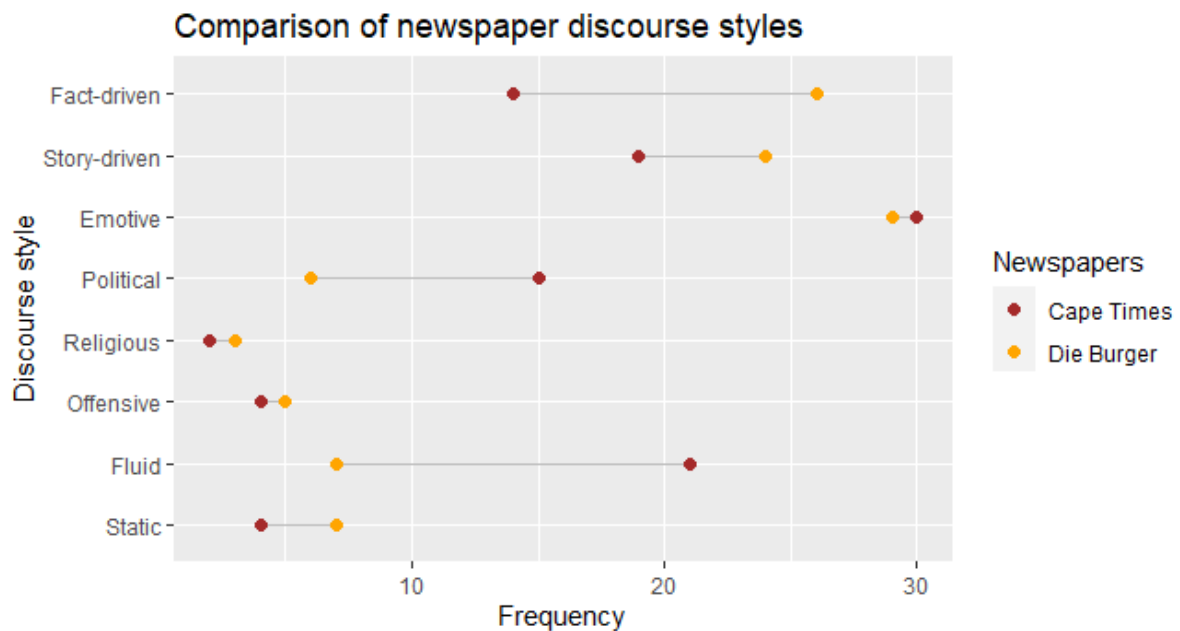


Figure 2.2: Comparison of newspaper discourse styles. Source: *Reclassification database*, pp. 112-113.

In Figure 2.2, the Cleveland Dot Plot portrays the relationship between the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger's* discourse styles. A comparison between the different language newspapers represented in the figure is an imperfect but useful way to assess whether and how they differed in their portrayals of reclassification. *Die Burger* reflected 26 instances of the fact-driven discourse style. Their coverage of reclassification statistics contributed to this as the paper regularly published official reports. Their attention to race change differed to that of the *Cape Times*. The English newspaper reflected 14 instances of the fact-driven discourse style. While they also shared official statistics and other factual records with readers, this was not their focus. Instead, with 19 counts for the story-driven discourse, the *Cape Times* shared stories that revealed personal details and had the potential to resonate with readers.

Interestingly, *Die Burger* reflected a high count for the story-driven discourse style, with 24 observations. This demonstrates that the newspaper was not neglecting stories of race change. Regardless of their motivations for doing this, the newspaper did place reclassification on the agenda of many Afrikaans South Africans. The stories they covered extensively were also discussed because of the people involved. Many reclassified individuals took their stories to the press in hopes that the state would react and address their concerns. This was the case for Mrs Green, a woman who was formerly classified as white under the apartheid classificatory

system. She was reclassified as coloured and communicated with *Die Burger* directly, giving them first-hand accounts of how the reclassification system failed her.<sup>210</sup> Her story received extensive coverage in both *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* and will serve as a case study for analysis in Chapter 3.

It is also important to consider the media restrictions that were in place when these articles were published. The eighties were a particularly threatening time for journalists and their affiliated publications.<sup>211</sup> Articles that stated the facts without added anecdotes posed a lower risk and kept the newspapers operational. The press was constantly being monitored and every sentence that seemed to question or disagree with state policies, could lead to fines, imprisonment, or the closure of the entire publication.<sup>212</sup> *Die Burger's* high level of story-driven discourse is an indication of the complex role they played in spreading news about race change. Their articles alerted readers to the pain and confusion reclassification caused amongst citizens.

The highest coding frequency for both newspapers was recorded for the emotive discourse style. With 30 observations, the *Cape Times's* articles were expressive. The paper often shared accounts that outlined the personal tragedy and “acute pain” that resulted because of racial reclassification.<sup>213</sup> As represented in Figure 2.2, *Die Burger* also recorded a high level of the emotive discourse style, with 29 instances. This indicates that neither of the newspapers veered away from the sensitivities and emotion of the issue entirely. Through their emotive discourse, the *Cape Times* attempted to convey messages that demonstrated the senselessness of the state’s racial laws. They questioned how long these laws would continue to bring “emotional anguish” and “social despair” to citizens.<sup>214</sup>

While it may appear as if *Die Burger* also used emotion to denounce reclassification laws, this assumption is not entirely correct. Albeit also emotive, the Afrikaans newspaper largely reported on cases of incorrect reclassification. They did not condemn the system directly; instead, they maintained it by discussing ways to make the reclassification process more effective and less harmful. *Die Burger* perpetuated the system of reclassification in various

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<sup>210</sup> “Eers blank toe bruin, nou mag sy nie trou,” *Die Burger*, 14 February 1980, p. 2

<sup>211</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 327.

<sup>212</sup> G. Botma: *Race Talk In The South African Media*, p. 99.

<sup>213</sup> “Not hurtful enough?” *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

ways. For example, an article exclusively made mention of the additional staff that were hired and trained at the Department of Home Affairs for the specific task of reclassification.<sup>215</sup> Multiple articles published by the Afrikaans-language newspaper reassured citizens and stated that cases of reclassification were now being handle with sympathy and sensitivity. These articles also clarified why the process took such a long time and stated that they were working on the lag.<sup>216</sup> Additionally, *Die Burger* published statements by ministers who expressed that the state's racial classification system was a necessary foundation for an orderly society in South Africa.<sup>217</sup>

The motivation behind the use of emotion is key. As outlined above and in Chapter 1, articles published during the eighties were distributed with careful consideration. Journalists and editors had to watch banning lists and keep up to date with the latest media restrictions before sending out their stories.<sup>218</sup> The Agenda-setting theory puts forward the influence media have over the public.<sup>219</sup> By choosing to use an emotive discourse style both *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* arguably drew in more public engagement because readers were not only presented with hard facts. In journalism, reporting staff are not expected to remove all anger and compassion from their pieces. While they should not use expressive writing to manipulate readers, they are not robots. Consequently, the potential to include emotiveness in their work is always there.

In a period where state propaganda was prevalent, editors and reporters were aware that their articles provided citizens with a rare look into the true events taking place in South Africa. The Agenda-setting theory indicates that readers especially rely on the media in times of uncertainty and when topics are unknown to them.<sup>220</sup> Apartheid and reclassification thus created the perfect environment in which individuals looked to the media for clarity and answers. The use of emotive discourse had the power to draw in readers and the potential to evoke reactions.

Throughout the 50 articles that focused on reclassification, there was a low frequency of offensive discourse. Figure 2.2 displays that there were 4 instances recorded in the *Cape Times* and 5 in *Die Burger*. In both publications, offensive words were often used in quotation marks.

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<sup>215</sup> "Herindelning van rasse so: Heunis," *Die Burger*, 29 April 1982, p. 11.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> "Klassifikasie met deernis toegepas," *Die Burger*, 31 May 1980, p. 5.

<sup>218</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, pp. 295-306.

<sup>219</sup> M. E. McCombs & D. L. Shaw: "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, (36), (2), 1972, pp. 176-177.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

This is not to say that the newspapers did not use offensive terminology, but it shows that in articles related to racial reclassification, it was not common.

Reclassification was governed by race laws put in place under the Population Registration Act. The details surrounding the issue were often debated in parliament and thus, it was expected that the political discourse style would reflect a high frequency. However, this expectation was not met for *Die Burger*. With only 6 observations *Die Burger*, a political mouthpiece for the National Party, remains relatively quiet politically when dealing with reclassification. The inclusion criteria for this code included all comments from political figures, parliamentary correspondence, and the mention of race legislation. Their motivation for veering away from this is arguably linked to the newspaper's close ties to many state officials whom they would not want to contradict or put into question.<sup>221</sup>

The *Cape Times* used reclassification as an opportunity to highlight the senselessness of apartheid. They capitalized on their press freedom to publish parliamentary commentary in its entirety.<sup>222</sup> The English newspaper looked for loopholes that allowed them to report the full story. One of these loopholes was the respect for comments made in parliament and in court. Reporters could quote and write about any comments made in these two settings, no matter the content. When the small group of liberal MPs were given the mic, they made their disapproval of apartheid clear. Journalists took full advantage of this and reported their every word. Vic Alhadeff, chief sub-editor of the *Cape Times* during apartheid, explains how they used this as an opportunity to inform South Africans about what was really going on in their country.<sup>223</sup> This would explain the higher observations of political discourse for the *Cape Times*. They managed to put news, that would otherwise have been banned, on the public's agenda.

Religion was another discourse style that was expected to yield high counts in *Die Burger*'s reporting. This expectation was not met. While the Afrikaans newspaper had a long history and strong ties with the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, this was not reflected in the articles.<sup>224</sup> Over the decade, only 3 instances of the religious style were observed in all the articles that were analysed. While comments made by the church were possibly not published

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<sup>221</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 31.

<sup>222</sup> V. Alhadeff: "Journalism during South Africa's apartheid regime," *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, (10), (2), 2018, p. 9.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> H. R. Kolbe: *The South African print media: from apartheid to transformation*, PhD Thesis, p. 29.

by editors, the motivations behind this must be considered. The *Cape Times* also reflects a low frequency and only has 2 instances of the religious discourse style. However, this is less surprising because the paper was not affiliated with any specific religious bodies.

The most striking difference in coding frequency occurs for the fluid discourse style. In Figure 2.2, the *Cape Times* reflected 21 instances of fluidity. Contrastingly *Die Burger* reflected only 7 instances. The inclusion criteria for this code included statements which recognised that race laws are changeable, busy changing or should be changed. Despite criticism that their journalists and editors were “sell-outs” and not doing enough, the *Cape Times* appears to have consistently reported on and pushed for the end of racial classification and discrimination.<sup>225</sup> This discourse style offered readers information that had the potential to influence their racial views.

In Race Self Complexity, both internal and external stimuli inform individuals perceptions of their racial identity.<sup>226</sup> The country’s strict classificatory system gave citizens limited racial options and racially ambiguous citizens had to think carefully about the boxes they ticked. They had to weigh up the pros and cons of each racial category. How they think about themselves and decide on their racial identity depends on their personal narratives but can also be shaped by external stimuli. For individuals who had the ability to move between races, determinants like community acceptance, belonging and internal loyalty might guide them to reclassify. However, those same factors could also convince them to remain in their racial classification. The *Cape Times* also had the potential to present readers with an external stimulus which could also affect their views on racial identity and race in general. The fluid discourse style arguably put new insights on the agenda for readers.

In Figure 2.2, *Die Burger’s* 7 observations for fluid discourse reflect that the newspaper was not focused on alerting readers about the changeable nature of race. In contrast, they record the same frequency for the static discourse style. The inclusion criteria for the static code included comments indicating that race laws cannot or should not be altered. This low frequency indicates that *Die Burger*, albeit not an outright denouncer of apartheid, was not the state’s

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<sup>225</sup> R. Davenport & C. Saunders: “The English-Language Press Under Apartheid,” *South African Historical*, (43), (1), 2000, p. 276.

<sup>226</sup> R. L. Terry & C. E. Winston, C. E: “Race self complexity and patterns of self identification change: What is the meaning of being a Black and White adolescent in American society and culture in the 21st century?” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, (81), (1), 2010, p. 434.

propaganda driving force like it was in prior decades.<sup>227</sup> The *Cape Times* reflected 4 instances of static discourse. However, these were comments made by officials and not views perpetuated by the newspaper.

In Figure 2.2, the 8 discourse styles were compared and various similarities and differences between the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* came to the fore. To provide detail on how these styles changed, or stayed the same over time, the following section presents the discourse styles throughout the decade. Considering the various media restrictions and heightened pushback from the state during the eighties, an overtime analysis effectively reflects significant shifts. The following graphs show that while the newspapers might have recorded a similar number of observations within styles, they had very different trajectories in terms of how their discourses progressed over time.

#### Newspaper discourse styles over time

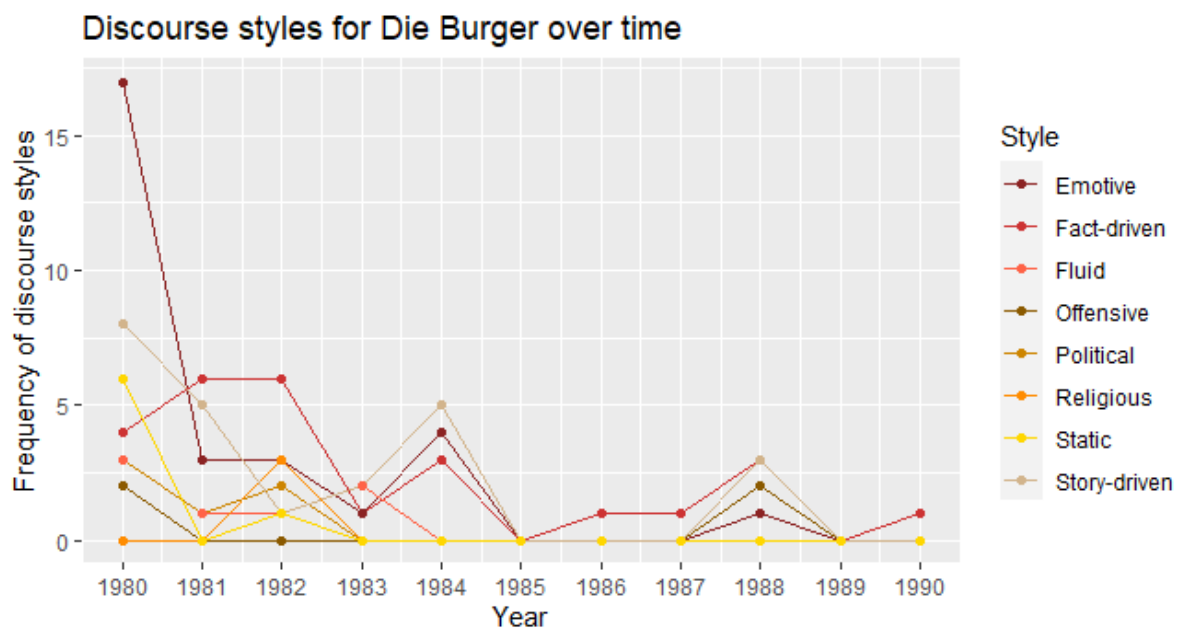


Figure 2.3: Discourse styles for Die Burger over time. Source: Reclassification database, pp. 112-113.

<sup>227</sup> A. Mouton: 'Reform from within': Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid, p. 149.

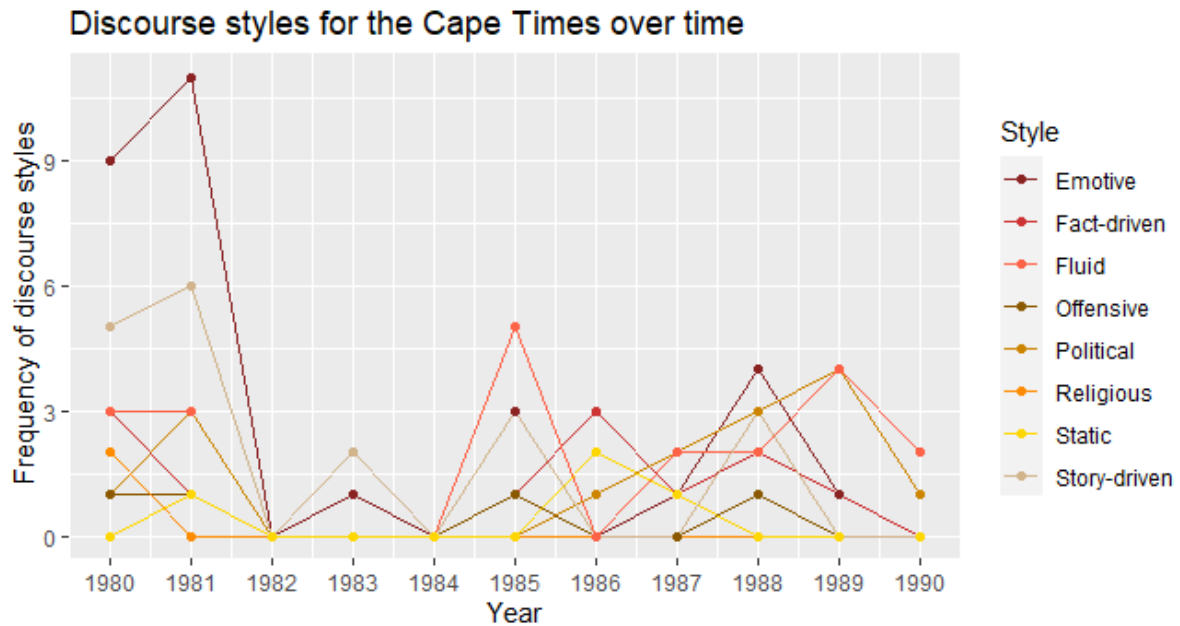


Figure 2.4: Discourse styles for the Cape Times over time. Source: Reclassification database, pp. 112-113.

In Figure 2.3 and 2.4 both newspapers start the eighties in a relatively similar manner with discourse styles reflecting high frequencies and then beginning to decrease over time. As the decade progresses, the newspapers display increasingly disparate trends. In Figure 2.3, *Die Burger's* discourse styles with the highest frequencies were recorded at the start of the decade. Over time, it appears that almost all of the discourse styles show a downward trend. This suggests that the Afrikaans newspaper became more neutral. Media restrictions and concerns about relationships with business affiliates and partnerships suggest that *Die Burger's* editors consciously employed a more neutral stance in their news production.<sup>228</sup>

In Figure 2.4, the *Cape Times* reflects high observations for a few discourse styles including the emotive, and story driven styles. This takes a sharp decline in 1982. Chapter 1 detailed what the media landscape looked like during the first 3 years of this decade. In 1982, Parliament passed six new Acts, including the Protection of Information Act which deemed certain information “protected.”<sup>229</sup> The Registration of Newspapers Amendment Act was passed in the same year, and it allowed ministers to revoke newspaper registrations and shut down newsrooms.<sup>230</sup> These pieces of legislation are what made 1982 a watershed year for the press.

<sup>228</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 31.

<sup>229</sup> W. A. Hachten & C. A. Giffard: *The Press and Apartheid: Repression and Propaganda in South Africa*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*



Their freedom of speech and journalistic autonomy were limited, and an increased number of fines and arrests, including that of *Cape Times* journalist, Zubeida Jaffer also affected their reporting.<sup>231</sup>

Another factor that muzzled the media world was the Steyn Commission of Enquiry. The main purpose of this enquiry, which was around 1,400 pages long, was to question the conduct of mass media and determine what content was fit for the public.<sup>232</sup> The enquiry left both English and Afrikaans news staff stunned. Considerable pushback from the media saw the enquiry fold but the effect it had on news distribution was evident. Figure 2.4's sharp decline in the early years of the decade supports the view that legislation initially quietened the *Cape Times*. The culmination of the abovementioned restrictions explains why there was no discourse linked to reclassification in 1982 for the English newspaper.

Additionally, Figure 2.4 shows how the *Cape Times* starts to reflect a different trajectory in discourse styles from the mid-eighties onwards, especially when compared to *Die Burger*. One cannot determine whether the media became more defiant because of the abrasive legislation hurled against them or not. However, the increase in discourse styles as the decade progresses suggests a change in their media plan and output. Where *Die Burger* seems to have become "quieter" and more neutral over the decade, the *Cape Times* became slightly more vocal from the mid 1980s onwards. The political, and fluid discourse styles are particularly striking because their upward spikes indicate the *Cape Times* pushed the boundaries at the exact time when they were under increased pressure to be less political and less fluid when reporting about race laws and reclassification.<sup>233</sup>

This active reporting on sensitive racial issues like reclassification toward the end of the decade did not go unnoticed. Journalists and editors alike were arrested and fired from their positions as a result. In 1987, the *Cape Times* editor, Tony Heard was fired because of his reporting that often pushed the state's boundaries on many issues.<sup>234</sup> Harvey Tyson, editor of *The Star*, confirmed the constant opposition media faced relating to the stories they chose to print. He commented that newspapers trying to distribute news which offered a full picture of apartheid

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<sup>231</sup> G. Stewart: "Intimidation and prosecution of journalists," *Index on Censorship*, (15), (7), 1986, p. 27.

<sup>232</sup> K. Asmal, L. Asmal & R. S. Roberts: *Reconciliation Through Truth: A Reckoning of Apartheid's Criminal Governance*, p. 93.

<sup>233</sup> R. Davenport & C. Saunders: "The English-Language Press Under Apartheid," *South African Historical*, (43), (1), 2000, p. 276.

<sup>234</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 221.

were “breaking the law perhaps five times a day.”<sup>235</sup> This statement explains why publications forged on in printing many stories that went against what was deemed acceptable by media regulations. Ultimately, editors like Tyson and Heard realized that it didn’t matter what they published because there would always be a reason for the authorities to punish them.<sup>236</sup> Figure 2.4’s reflection of active reclassification discourse including increased fluid and political discourse at the end of the decade suggest that *Cape Times* editors and journalists took their chances whenever it was possible.

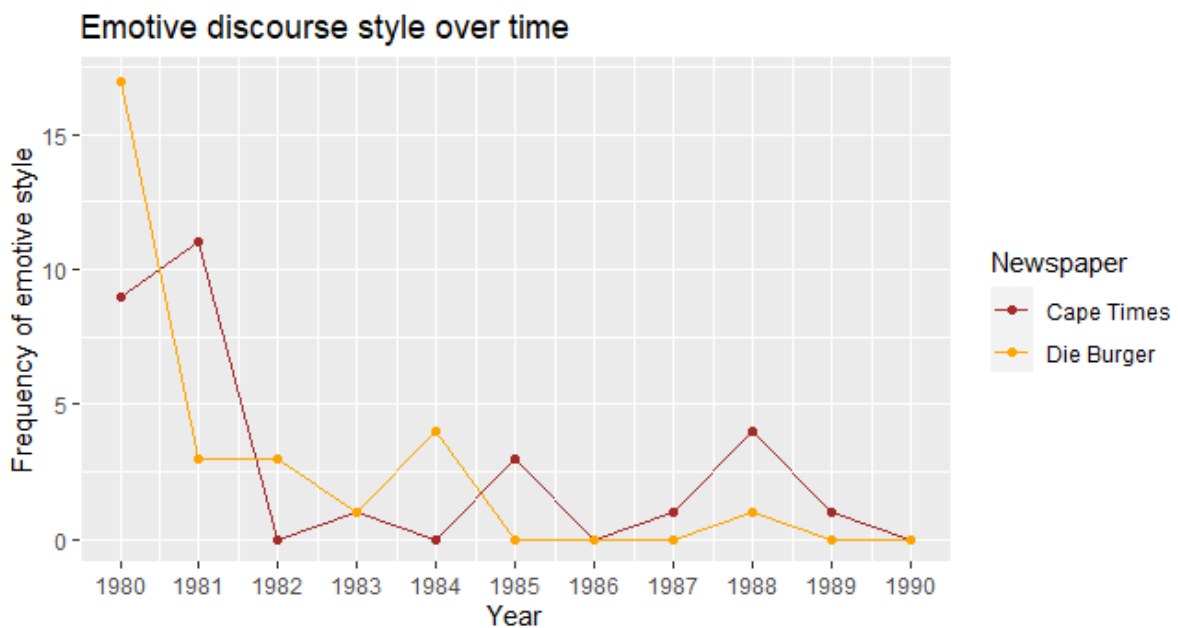


Figure 2.5: Emotive discourse style over time. Source: Reclassification database, pp. 112-113.

Figure 2.5 displays the emotive discourse styles for the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* over time. Both had a downward trend over the decade. While the *Cape Times* remained slightly more emotive, both papers were less emotive than at the start of the decade. This suggests the publications were taking a less expressive approach and refraining from including sensitive discourse in the articles. The 1982 media regulations are a potential motivation for this.<sup>237</sup>

On both sides of apartheid, newspapers aimed to safeguard their publications. By omitting words that had the potential to provoke state officials, newspapers could keep their articles in circulation and their doors open. The *Cape Times* pushed the boundaries of the state’s media

<sup>235</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 12.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.* p. 398.

regulations on many accounts. However, they saw various publications being shut down around them and consequently navigated the line between denouncing apartheid and avoiding banning carefully.<sup>238</sup> They looked for loopholes and opportunities that would alert the public to the stories of the day, while still managing to keep the newspaper active.

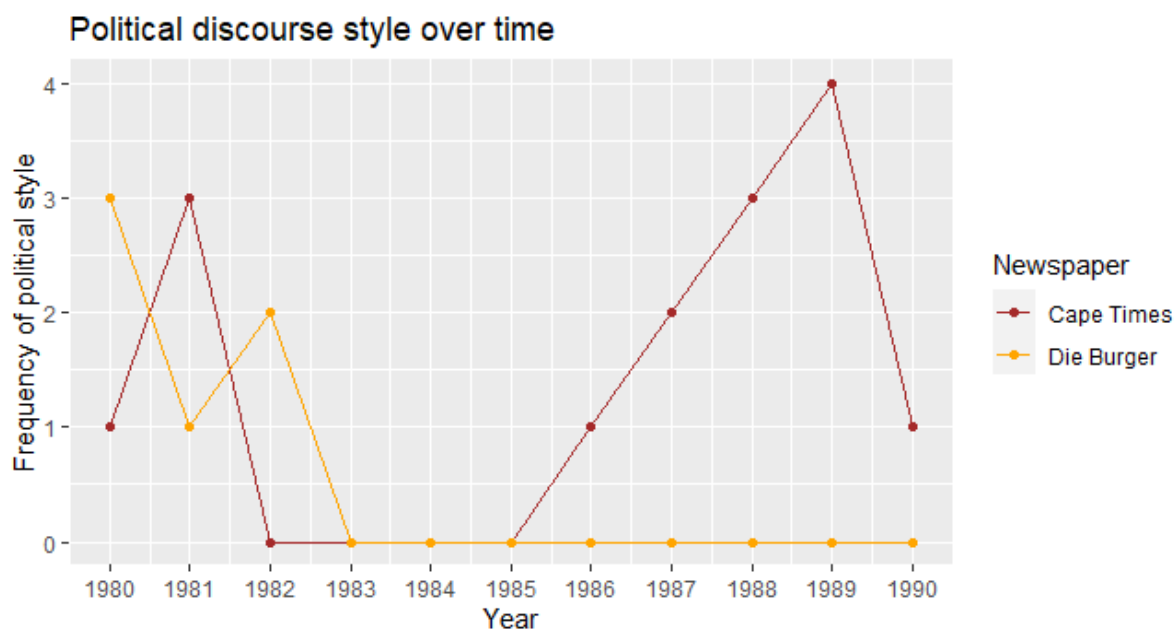


Figure 2.6: Political discourse style over time. Source: Reclassification database, pp. 112-113.

Figure 2.6 tracks political discourse within the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* and reflects that the Afrikaans newspaper became less political as the decade progressed. Both publications start the decade with relatively high political discourse, however their trajectories look strikingly different. *Die Burger* retreated and chose to avoid engaging politically over time. Considering the views from former editors of *Die Burger* like Ebbe Dommissie, President Botha's erratic behaviour caused concern amongst the Afrikaans media.<sup>239</sup> The president went from reprimanding journalists through official statements to the use of personal and attacking comments which included many displays of his disappointment in Afrikaans pressmen. In part, this behaviour was an attempt to scare the press into submission.<sup>240</sup> Figure 2.6 suggests that his attempts were relatively successful. The Afrikaans press did not appreciate his cold treatment, nor did his comments that their reporting "spread mean stories about Cabinet Ministers," sit

<sup>238</sup> G. Botma: *Race Talk In The South African Media*, p. 99.

<sup>239</sup> A. Ries & E. Dommissie: *Leierstryd*, p. 73.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

well with them.<sup>241</sup> Despite Botha's crumbling relationship with the media, many believed these issues were exaggerated. Max du Preez stated that most Afrikaans pressmen would never dispute the government on big issues.<sup>242</sup> He believed their deep-rooted political foundations prevented many of them from engaging in discourse that blatantly opposed the apartheid regime.

In Figure 2.6, the *Cape Times* reflects a steep increase in the political discourse style from 1985 to 1989. This is interesting considering the reignited media restrictions and state of emergency that were implemented in 1986.<sup>243</sup> The English media found a way to circumvent these harsher rules which included a blanket ban on any content that could be deemed resistant or questioning toward the state. As mentioned above, journalists were allowed press freedom when reporting from parliament. They used this as an opportunity to report on news without being censored.

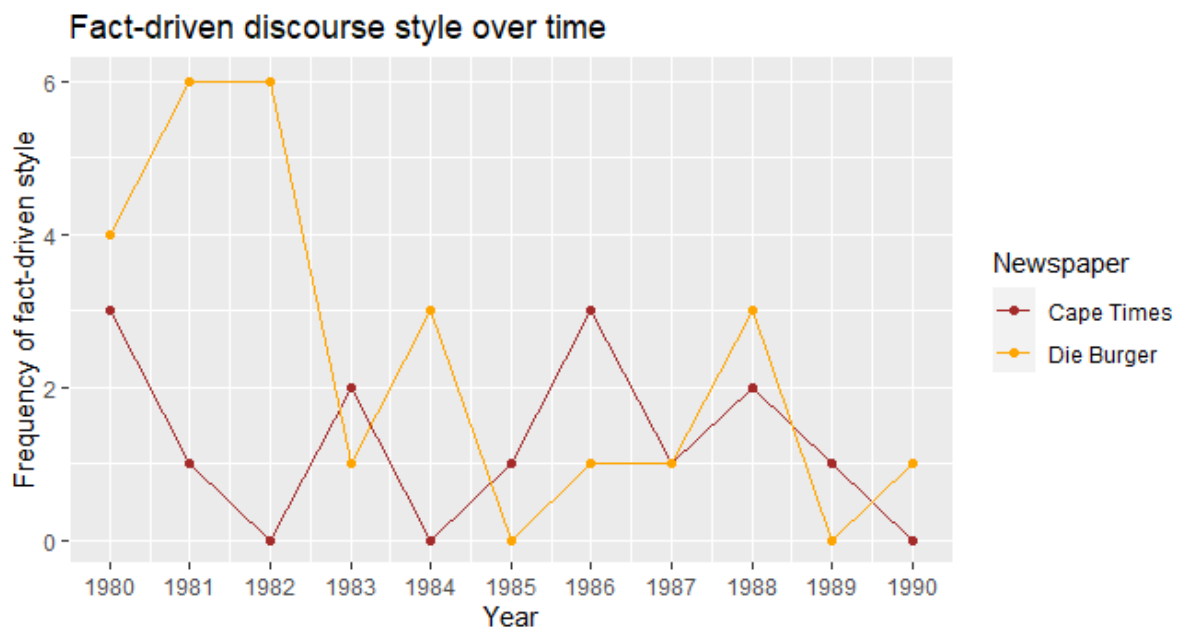


Figure 2.7: Fact-driven discourse style over time. Source: Reclassification database, pp. 112-113.

In Figure 2.7 the fact-driven discourse styles reflect diverging trajectories over time. The first 3 years of the decade show the newspapers were on opposite sides when displaying factual discourse. Where the *Cape Times* reflects a decrease, *Die Burger* reflects a sharp increase for

<sup>241</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: "See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P. W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s," *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 163.

<sup>242</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 31.

<sup>243</sup> A. Heard: *The Cape of Storms: a personal history of the crisis in South Africa*, p. 252.

the fact-driven discourse style. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *Die Burger* had a complex relationship with the state during the eighties.<sup>244</sup> Their ties began to tear in the middle of the decade because of Botha's condemnations and the mounting pressures to offer state officials favours without receiving anything in return.<sup>245</sup> However, their increased political reporting at the start of the decade show that they were still willing to report on issues in a manner that did not question the state. For example, most of the observations that account for their high fact driven discourse are linked to their reporting of official reclassification statistics. These articles were usually short and offered no critique of the racially classificatory system.

The *Cape Times*' decline in political reporting is potentially influenced by the newly tabled media legislations that were outlined above. Instead of publishing reclassification statistics without any commentary, they largely refrained from commenting on it. When they do print the number of yearly reclassifications later in the decade, they often make mention of its absurdity.<sup>246</sup> Their political discourse style increases as the decade progresses. Plausible motivations for this were detailed above and link to the loopholes journalists utilized in their uncensored coverage of parliamentary statements.

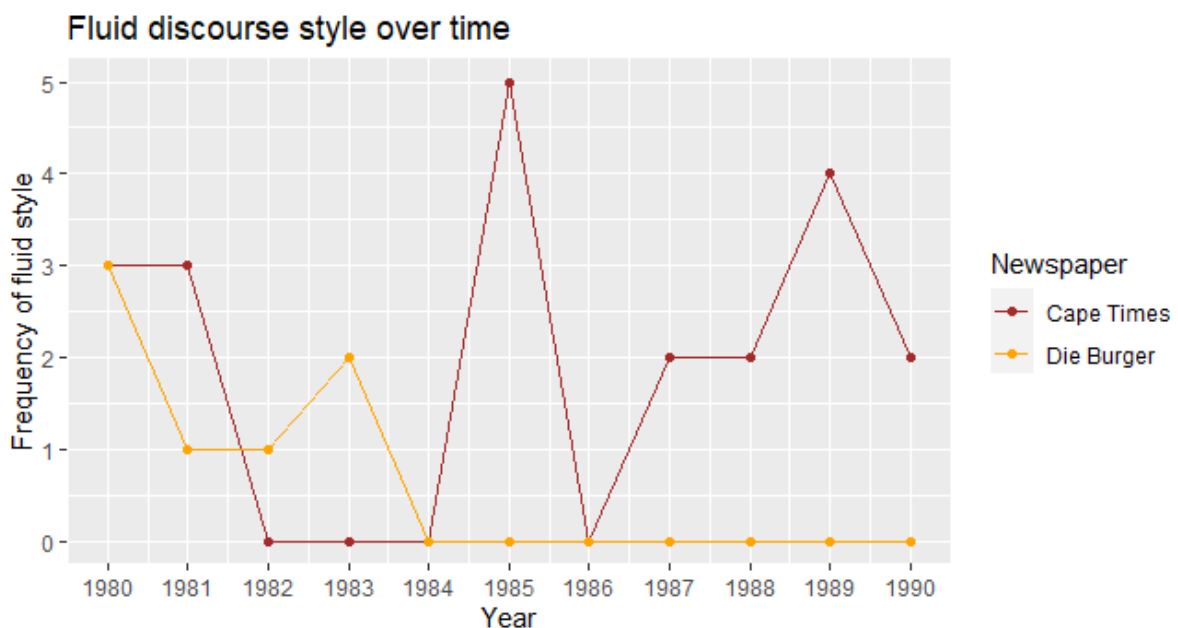


Figure 2.8: Fluid discourse style over time. Source: Reclassification database, pp. 112-113.

<sup>244</sup> A. Mouton: 'Reform from within': *Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid*, p. 149.

<sup>245</sup> J. Stemmet & L. Barnard: "See no Evil, Hear no Evil, Speak and Publish no Evil: The Relationship between P. W. Botha and the Pro-establishment Afrikaans Press during the 1980s," *Historia*, (49), (1), 2004, p. 155.

<sup>246</sup> "Alice would run a mile if she saw our 'Wonder-Land,'" *Cape Times*, 4 April 1987, p. 4.

Figure 2.8 displays the discourse code that showed the biggest difference between the newspapers—the fluid discourse style. The *Cape Times* reflects a slight increase in this discourse style as the decade progresses which suggests the publication actively included content relating to racial fluidity in their articles. Stories about reclassification presented a perfect opportunity for the *Cape Times* to comment on the essentialism of human categorisation. Race Self Complexity theory speaks about the complex process of self-categorization which racially ambiguous persons had to undertake when deciding on their race.<sup>247</sup>

Cases where reclassification was imposed by the state and not decided by individuals themselves also presented interesting content for journalists. It highlighted the flaws within the governments classificatory system and gave motivation for the disbanding of race laws like the Population Registration Act.<sup>248</sup> Citizens who discovered they were reclassified occasionally took their turmoil to the newspapers, who then had an incentive to publish personal accounts while also commenting on concepts of fluidity. Readers whose interest might initially have been piqued by the story would also be made aware of the complexities of racial identity. While one cannot determine if this altered public opinions about the apartheid government’s racial boxes, the mere mention of racial fluidity would be on their agenda—potentially for the first time.

### Chapter conclusions

The results put forward in this chapter highlight the connection between the media and portrayals of racial fluidity in South Africa. Continual line-by-line qualitative coding and analysis brought to light the disparities and striking similarities present in two South African newspapers. This confirmed the hypothesis that the press was multidimensional in their reporting and more nuanced than often portrayed in historiography. Identifying how the newspapers chose to portray reclassification reveals insight about how they use their power to affect the racial agenda of the day.

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<sup>247</sup> D. A. Prentice & D. T. Miller: “Psychological Essentialism of Human Categories,” *Current directions in psychological science: a journal of the American Psychological Society*, (16), (4), 2007, p. 204.

<sup>247</sup> C.E. Winston (ed.): *Human personality: Race Self Complexity and symbolic meaning of persons living race in American society and culture*, pp. 163-165.

<sup>248</sup> D. Posel: “What’s in a name? Racial categorisations under apartheid and their afterlife,” *Transformation*, (47), (1), 2001, p. 53.

The media history outlined in Chapter 1 provided evidence of the strict guidelines journalists had to navigate in their attempts to distribute news in South Africa. By identifying and coding the discourse styles present in the articles from 1980 to 1990, patterns and differences can be analysed and considered in-depth. Where discourse challenged apartheid regulations, publications and pressmen faced imprisonment and pushback from the state. Considering the agenda-setting power of the media, reclassification stories that made it into the newspapers served as a significant catalyst. This phenomenon questioned apartheid and when citizens were notified about the often senseless changing of classifications, their views on racial fluidity might have started to shift. As indicated, Race Self Complexity informs how ambiguous persons view themselves. People are affected by both internal and external stimuli. When they read about the successful stories of race change or tragic cases where families were separated, new ideas and beliefs about reclassification are placed on their agenda.

As a result, the similarities as well as the differences between the newspapers' portrayals are significant. This is not to say that articles focused on reclassification always affected the public and led to action or change. However, these findings do stress the important role that both the Afrikaans and English media played on an individual and community level. They encouraged readers to think about their beliefs regarding issues like racial identity and the salience of the country's race systems. A line-by-line analysis of racial reclassification in two newspapers provided new information on the topic. Additionally, it highlighted the media's complex role in navigating a restricted landscape while attempting to show an uncensored version of events in South Africa.

Chapter 2 provided a broad analysis of the discourses present in the newspapers. To avoid missing the intricacies and personal nature of the topic, the following chapter takes a microhistory look at reclassification. It highlights the complex and varied motivations for race change by performing a close reading of three case studies.

### Chapter 3: A close reading of racial reclassification stories

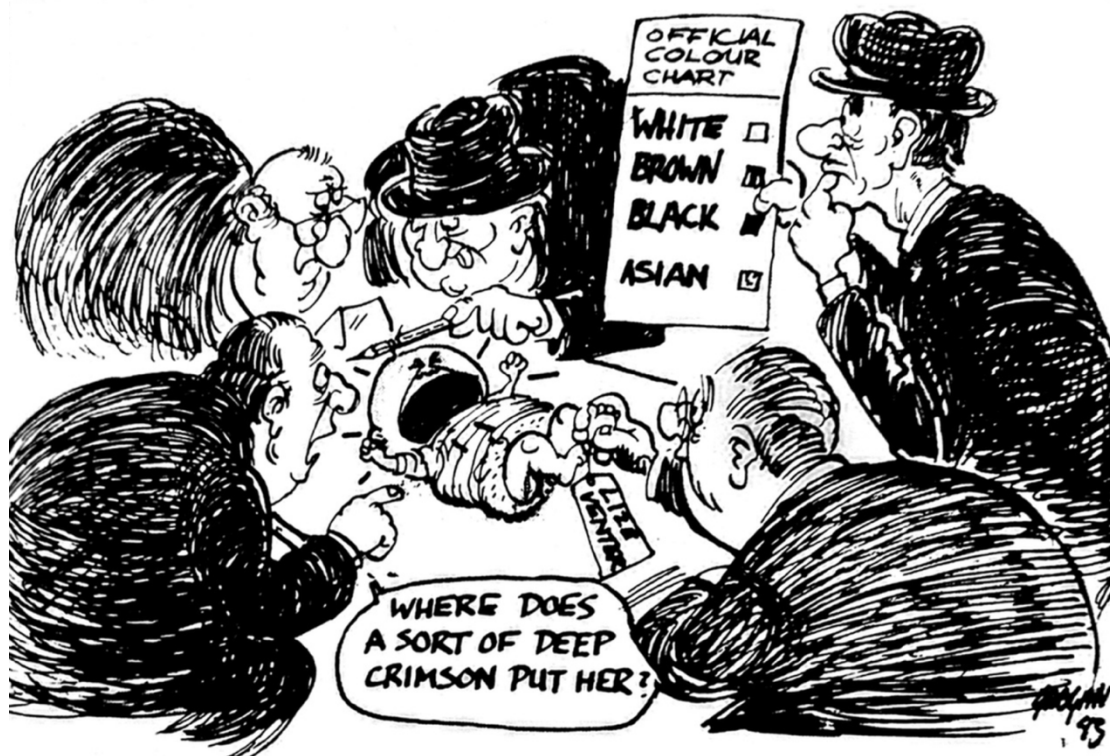


Figure 3.1: Cartoon displays state officials as they attempt to classify Lize, a foundling baby with an ambiguous racial identity. Featured in *Editors Under Fire* by Harvey Tyson, p. 42.

#### Introduction

The appalling and inhumane process of “classifying” and registering humans by the shape of their lips, the kink in their hair, the tinge on their fingernails lasted four full decades, from 1950 to 1990. Books, films, and television documentaries have circled the globe on the subject. Newspapers reported the issues constantly and almost daily for years. Nothing stopped the process until FW de Klerk finally scrapped legislation. The mad process was still destroying lives and families in the 1980s. Fury and frustration expressed in many editorials almost burnt the pages of some of our papers ... It was much worse than that, as some random cases from newspaper files in just one brief period in the 1980s show.<sup>249</sup>

The “random cases” referred to in the extract above can reveal much about the past and allow for a microhistory analysis of race in South Africa. Micro-historians highlight the experiences of everyday citizens and use it to delve deeper into the hidden areas of history.<sup>250</sup> The detailed

<sup>249</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors under Fire*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>250</sup> C. Ginzburg: “Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It,” *Critical inquiry*, (20), (1), 1993, p. 10.



stories, often compelling in nature, have the power to reconstruct lived experiences and as a result connect with readers on a personal level.<sup>251</sup> Where large-scale and general studies appear distant, the microhistory approach takes a close look at source material and offers insight on a microscopic level.

Microhistory can be traced back to the 1970s when scholars attempted to redefine their methods so they would be better suited in an increasingly ambiguous world. Historian Carlo Ginzburg believes the first person who utilized the word “microhistory,” did so in 1959.<sup>252</sup> He was the American scholar, George R. Stewart. The historical practice has evolved over the years but remains true to its original purpose - to reduce the scale of observation and allow for an in-depth analysis of source material.<sup>253</sup> The procedure employs a particular starting-point such as an individual case study and uses it to identify meaning in a specific context. This type of small-scaled history also incorporates the beliefs, values, and feelings of the subjects. By shifting the focus to everyday individuals and the intimate workings of their lives, a sense of agency can be introduced.

István Szijártó defines microhistory as “the intensive historical investigation of a small area.”<sup>254</sup> He presents arguments in favour of the historical practice and purports that it conveys personal experiences that are realistic and appealing to the public. Ultimately, he puts forward that microhistory can branch out from the individual case to the general.<sup>255</sup> By highlighting specific lived experiences, the microhistory approach offers an array of contexts linked to the knowledge of one person. By gaining insight into the details of an individual case, information about the individual’s society, community and general past come to the fore as well.<sup>256</sup>

In the following chapter, selected articles are analysed on a minute level, considering the small details that a quick reader might miss. By viewing the source material in-depth, it is possible to make meaning of their stories and glean new insights about the publications that published

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<sup>251</sup> C. Ginzburg: “Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It,” *Critical inquiry*, (20), (1), 1993, p. 10.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>253</sup> J. Brewer: “Microhistory and the histories of everyday life,” *Cultural and Social History*, (7), (1), 2010, p. 87.

<sup>254</sup> I. Szijártó: “Four arguments for microhistory,” *Rethinking History*, (6), (2), 2002, p. 209.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* p. 211.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 211-212.

the articles. The three case studies centred around the stories of Mrs Green, the Whiteley family and baby Lize, ordinary people who struggled to traverse South Africa's racial borderlines.

### Method

To gain a microhistorical view of racial reclassification, a close reading method detailed by David Schur, Professor of Classics at Brooklyn College, was utilized. According to Schur, a close reading is a scrutiny of text that considers every piece of detailed information a possible piece of evidence.<sup>257</sup> This makes it an ideal way to analyse specific stories and in this chapter, specific newspaper articles. The close reading in this chapter was informed by Schur's work and his seminal piece, *An Introduction to Close Reading*. The work provided basic and universal guidelines for the technique of text analysis.

In the humanities, close reading is a valuable method of textual analysis, and the approach has become essential in interpreting written texts. The selected text needs to be evaluated gradually, highlighting precise textual evidence that allows for the formation of broader connections and claims.<sup>258</sup> Close reading aims to reveal elements that would be missed by a quick glancing reader. Going beyond a straightforward glimpse, close readers identify implicit concepts and broad themes by recognising connections that provide new insight into the text.<sup>259</sup> In the final analysis the coherent close reading unites the text's basic form with in-depth observations.

### Close reading procedure

I use Schur's guidelines to perform a close reading on the selected texts. Schur alerts researchers to the fundamental aspects which should be considered when reflecting critically on text and includes factors such as the use of punctuation marks, imagery, tone, and various other literary devices such as irony or hyperboles. It is also important to note who the narrator/s are in the text and focus on how they are presenting an account. In the analysis, each claim is supported by a quote to offer readers an opportunity to encounter the text for themselves.

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<sup>257</sup> D. Schur: *An Introduction to Close Reading*. Harvard, 1998. <http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~lac14/texts-resources/SchurCloseReading99.pdf>, p. 2.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 5-6.

Schur's format of "claim > quotation > description > conclusion > transition ..." was utilised.<sup>260</sup>

To compare how the newspapers reported on the specific stories, each article was annotated repeatedly, highlighting key differences and similarities. This allowed me to observe the articles side by side, accounting for their noticeable features such as length and headlines. On deeper analysis, words were dissected, quoted extracts were scrutinised for inconsistencies and the articles' chronology was traced to determine if any paragraphs were emphasised or overlooked in the different publications.

Schur's close reading glossary provided a helpful foundation to proceed in analysing the text.<sup>261</sup> This offered a guide to using words like "claim," "diction," and "rhetoric." In the sample of 25 articles for *Die Burger* and 25 articles for the *Cape Times*, there were only 3 instances respectively where stories covering the same topics were published on the same date. These articles enabled me to draw a comparison between the newspapers and explore how they differed in their portrayals of the same stories. English translations of content from *Die Burger* feature in the body of text. The original Afrikaans version can be found in the footnotes.

### Selection of texts

The sample of texts chosen for close reading consisted of 6 newspaper articles, 3 from the *Cape Times* and 3 from *Die Burger*. The newspapers did not identify specific authors in the selected articles. The texts were published on the same dates in the respective publications and covered the same topics. This allowed for a comparative analysis of the newspaper's portrayal of matching subject matters. The articles portrayed 3 distinct stories, and these serve as case studies to explore racial classification under a microscope. While the articles are available in the public domain, the full names of the involved individuals are excluded to protect their identities. Before commencing with the close reading analysis of each case study, an overview of the selected families and individuals will be provided to contextualise their stories.

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<sup>260</sup> D. Schur: *An Introduction to Close Reading*. Harvard, 1998. <http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~lac14/texts-resources/SchurCloseReading99.pdf>, p. 22.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 19-20.

| Newspaper         | Title of article                           | Date              |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| <i>Die Burger</i> | Booyens swyg oor geval Green               | 15 February 1980  |
| <i>Cape Times</i> | Not hurtful enough?                        | 15 February 1980  |
| <i>Die Burger</i> | SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing | 28 September 1981 |
| <i>Cape Times</i> | 'Coloured' life for the Whiteleys          | 28 September 1981 |
| <i>Die Burger</i> | Lize se ras nog nie bepaal                 | 27 August 1983    |
| <i>Cape Times</i> | Lize 'not racially classified yet'         | 27 August 1983    |

Table 3: Details of selected texts for the close reading analysis

### Overview of selected families and individuals

The first case study looks at Mrs Green, a woman who was classified white for most of her life. She told *Die Burger* that her parents and siblings were also all classified white under the state's categorisation. She went on to marry a man classified as white and had six children with him.<sup>262</sup> They too were regarded white until 1978, when they were all reclassified coloured.<sup>263</sup> At this time, one of Mrs Green's eldest daughters was already married to a man classified white. Mrs Green indicated that her birth certificate stated she was from "mixed descent."<sup>264</sup> When her first husband passed away, she applied to be reclassified white because her "mixed descent" classification had been changed to coloured. Her requests were denied.<sup>265</sup> When she tried to marry her fiancé, Mr Jooste who was classified white, the wedding was called off at the last minute.<sup>266</sup> Their Wynberg magistrate could not marry them after he discovered a number in Mrs Green's "life book" which regarded her coloured.<sup>267</sup> Initially, the Department of Interior told Mrs Green that her classification was final, however, once the media attention surrounding her story increased, they retracted their statement. In 1980, the state allowed Mrs Green (who was still classified coloured) to marry Mr Jooste and promised them they would not be prosecuted.<sup>268</sup>

The second case study looks at the Whiteley family. Mr and Mrs Whiteley left South Africa in 1969 after Mr Whiteley, classified white, was arrested under the Immorality Act.<sup>269</sup> He was prosecuted for marrying a woman who was classified Indian. The couple lived in exile in

<sup>262</sup> "Not hurtful enough?" *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

<sup>263</sup> "Eers blank toe bruin, nou mag sy nie trou," *Die Burger*, 14 February 1980, p. 2

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> "Not hurtful enough?" *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> "NGK not against Green Couple," *Cape Times*, 9 August 1980, p. 2.

<sup>269</sup> "Coloured life for the Whiteleys," *Cape Times*, 28 September 1981, p.3.

England for 12 years and did not enjoy their stay there. Mrs Whiteley faced severe racism abroad and wanted to return to her home country. Mr Whiteley indicated that they had a pleasant experience with the coloured community in South Africa and said he would regard himself and his children as coloured when they returned.<sup>270</sup> Mr Whiteley also put in a request to be reclassified as a coloured person, but this was denied. His willingness to reclassify “down” the racial scale was not discussed in the article. State officials told the couple they were free to return to South Africa because they were valid passport holders. However, they did not promise the couple that they would be pardoned from the country’s various race laws which were still in place.<sup>271</sup> Mr Whiteley put in two separate requests asking if his family could return to South Africa together.<sup>272</sup> He begged the Prime Minister for clemency, but his requests were not met. Despite the uncertainty about what would happen to them when they landed in South Africa, Mr Whiteley indicated that they would be coming back together. He told the *Cape Times* his family would move to Bophuthatswana should they not be allowed to live together in South Africa.<sup>273</sup>

The third case study looks at Lize, a newborn baby that was discovered in a Hercules, Pretoria veld with her head in a paper bag.<sup>274</sup> A South African Police Service forensic laboratory regarded the baby as coloured after undertaking various “scientific tests.”<sup>275</sup> This test included analysing a strand of Lize’s hair and the results did not sit well with many. A hair specialist in the country deemed the test “meaningless.”<sup>276</sup> According to the specialist, tests could only be performed once the baby was six years old and had developed terminal hair. While the police claimed she should be classified coloured, the Department of Interior was hesitant to write down her classification.<sup>277</sup> Until she was racially classified, her chances at adoption remained slim because a home and parents that matched her classification could not yet be identified.<sup>278</sup> The Department of Interior highlighted that they would not make a hasty judgement because they were acting in the best interests of the baby.<sup>279</sup> They said their attempts at finding her birth parents had been unsuccessful. While officials attempted to determine her race, Lize was

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<sup>270</sup> “Coloured life for the Whiteleys,” *Cape Times*, 28 September 1981, p.3.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> “‘Exiled’ couple longing to return home to SA,” *Cape Times*, 26 June 1981, p.4.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> “Little Lize Venter, an innocent in the maze of race laws,” *The Star*, 27 July 1983, p. 11.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> “Little lost Lize is placed in care,” *The Star*, 7 September 1983, p. 1.

housed in a place of safety by the children's court. In her best interests, baby Lize's name had also been changed by the court.<sup>280</sup>

### Close reading analysis

*Booyens remains silent about case Green*<sup>281</sup>

Published on 15 February 1980, the article about Mrs Green's struggle with reclassification was a moment wherein *Die Burger* presented an unexpected portrayal of a state official. From the headline right through the entire article, *Die Burger* portrayed the Secretary of Home Affairs, T.J. Booyens, in a negative light. Whether it was intentional or not, Booyens appeared to have a higher regard for his own time and refused to comment on the issues raised by the newspaper staff. The following analysis will substantiate these claims and highlight the different ways a specific reclassification story was presented to the public.

*Die Burger* spoke directly with Booyens and attempted to retrieve information from him. However, when he would not provide them with anything substantial, their reporting reflected his avoidance of the questions posed about Mrs Green's case.

He does not speak about hypothetical cases, and it would be irresponsible of him to comment on issues of which the full details are not known, Adv. T.J. Booyens, Secretary of Home Affairs said to *Die Burger* yesterday.<sup>282</sup>

From the quoted extract, Booyens did not want to comment on the issue of Mrs Green's reclassification. He explained that he would not speak on hypothetical cases. Yet, given that the case of Mrs Green was an actual case in his department, his justification for avoiding the question was flawed. He also indicates that it would be irresponsible to speak on matters of which he does not have the full details. One can argue that it would be unlikely for him to be unaware of the mounting concerns and cases of reclassification, which were handled by his department.

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<sup>280</sup> "Little lost Lize is placed in care," *The Star*, 7 September 1983, p. 1.

<sup>281</sup> Own translation of: "Booyens swyg oor geval Green," from the article: "Booyens swyg oor geval Green," *Die Burger*, 15 February 1980, p. 4.

<sup>282</sup> Own translation of: "Hy praat nie oor hipotetiese gevalle nie en dit sou onverantwoordelik van hom wees om kommentaar te lewer op 'n aangeleentheid waarvan die volle besonderhede nie aan hom bekend is nie, het adv. T.J. Booyens, Sekretaris van Binnelandse Sake, gister aan *Die Burger* gesê," from the article: "Booyens swyg oor geval Green," *Die Burger*, 15 February 1980, p. 4.

*Die Burger* pressed Booyens for answers and accountability relating to Mrs Green's reclassification. Not only did they ask about her case, but they also inquired about her daughter who was subsequently reclassified.

On a question about the position of Mrs Green's eldest daughter, he said such a question must be put down on paper and then he would look at it.<sup>283</sup>

The quoted extract shows another example of Booyens hesitancy to comment directly about reclassification. *Die Burger* attempts to glean how his department will handle the issues posed by the Green's, yet they are met with resistance and avoidance.

From the article, Booyens appears brash and uninterested in addressing an issue that he and his department is responsible for. He does not accept any blame for the potentially faulty reclassification process and expresses that his time is of more importance. This adds to the negative perception of him.

Adv. Booyens said he did not read the article from the day before yesterday in *Die Burger* because he did not have time for it.<sup>284</sup>

If people claim that they are not being treated right through my department, they can apply again, and the application can be directed for my personal attention to the Secretary of Home Affairs—not to me, to the Secretary.<sup>285</sup>

Booyens distinguishes between himself, his position as Secretary of Home Affairs, and the entire department. He arguably does this to avoid taking all the blame for the faulty reclassification process and the turmoil it has caused a family. The article depicts him as a failing state official who cannot provide any clear answers to questions that are within his domain. Details about him not having enough time to read the newspaper or stay abreast with news linked to his department also insult his image and portray him negatively.

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<sup>283</sup> Own translation of: "Op 'n vraag oor die posisie van mev. Green se oudste dogter het hy gesê so 'n vraag moet op skrif neer gestel word en hy sal daarna kyk," from the article: "Booyens swyg oor geval Green," *Die Burger*, 15 February 1980, p. 4.

<sup>284</sup> Own translation of: "Adv. Booyens het gesê hy het nie die berig van eergister in *Die Burger* gelees nie, omdat hy nie tyd daarvoor gehad het nie," from the article: "Booyens swyg oor geval Green," *Die Burger*, 15 February 1980, p. 4.

<sup>285</sup> Own translation of: "As mense meen dat hulle nie reg deur my departement behandel word nie, kan weer aansoek gedoen word en kan die aansoek vir my persoonlike aandag gerig word aan die Sekretaris van Binnelandse Sake—nie aan my nie, aan die Sekretaris," from the article: "Booyens swyg oor geval Green," *Die Burger*, 15 February 1980, p. 4.

In the article Booyens said people must follow the correct procedures if they want to be reclassified. In response to this, *Die Burger* asked him if he knew that Mrs Green claims she had followed the procedure multiple times. He repeated that they must apply for reclassification again. This encounter did not bode well for Booyens' image because he could not provide a concrete justification for Mrs. Green's unpleasant experience.

On the question of whether he knew that Mrs. Green and her fiancé, Mr Jooste, said that they have already tried to get satisfaction through the provided channels several times, he just repeated that they must apply through the channels again.<sup>286</sup>

*Die Burger's* insistent questioning garnered responses that placed the Secretary and his department in a negative light. This is a point of interest considering the newspapers ties with the state at this time.<sup>287</sup> At the start of the eighties, this relationship was, however, beginning to sour and such depictions would not have been welcomed by officials who presumably expected preferential treatment from *Die Burger*.<sup>288</sup>

*Die Burger* reported on Mrs Green's case in a manner which showed their recognition of the state's race constructs. While they were concerned about the flawed administrative system of reclassification, they did not directly condemn the race laws. This aligns with Max du Preez who stated that pressmen would attempt to get out a nuanced and critical version of the country's events but would never entirely denounce the state because their political ties ran to deep.<sup>289</sup>

While the article exists within apartheid's racial constructs, it does show how complex and damaging reclassification was. Through probing questions, it exposes that the process had many shortcomings, such as flawed administration, even when the correct channel was followed. State officials wanted people to think they had the country's racial tensions under control and this article subtly contradicted that.

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<sup>286</sup> Own translation of: "Op die vraag of hy weet dat mev. Green en haar verloofde, mnr. Jooste, sê dat hulle etlike kere reeds deur die gebruiklike kanale bevrediging probeer kry het, het hy net herhaal dat daar weer deur die kanale aansoek gedoen moet word," from the article: "Booyens swyg oor geval Green," *Die Burger*, 15 February 1980, p. 4.

<sup>287</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 76.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* p. 87.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.



The article presents a relatively emotionless piece about an issue that had a lot of emotion linked to it. When compared to a *Cape Times* article about Mrs Green in the following section, it becomes apparent that *Die Burger* did not include information that could have enlivened the piece as their English counterparts did. While they did speak with Mrs Green, they did not present her case in an emotionally charged manner. They also did not question the race laws that were causing her and her family such upheaval in the first place. Despite this, *Die Burger* did not merely report the hard facts of Mrs Green's story. Their article reflects that *Die Burger* questioned Booyens, a state official, beyond the surface level and even included information that presented him in a negative light. These findings become even more insightful when compared to an article published in the *Cape Times* on the same day.

### *Not hurtful enough?*

Published on 15 February 1980, the *Cape Times* questioned apartheid laws from the headline to the final sentence of this article. The piece commences with a rhetorical question in the headline, "Not hurtful enough?" Rhetorical questions are often used to engage audiences and subtly draw their attention to certain points. In this article, the headline immediately questions a statement made by the country's then Prime Minister, P.W. Botha. It uses Mrs Green and Mr Silwana's personal cases to comment on the state of the nation. This analysis will be enriched by considering *Die Burger's* above portrayal of Mrs Green's case.

The *Cape Times* calls the Prime Minister a hypocrite by using a well-known phrase, "practise what he preached," to criticise him for suggesting that there are varying degrees of discrimination. They put forward that the current laws under Botha's administration were causing pain to people in the country and indicate that he holds the power to move the country away from discriminatory race relations. It also demonstrates that he has contradicted himself with his comments on discrimination.

The Prime Minister is not opposed to all discrimination, only that which is hurtful or unnecessary. Were he only to practise what he preached and abolish those laws which cause hurt, South Africa would take a giant stride forward in human relations.<sup>290</sup>

The article presents two cases where race laws have been painful and unnecessary, which directly contradicts the Prime Minister's stance that he is opposed to these forms of

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<sup>290</sup> "Not hurtful enough?" *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

discrimination. In doing so, the article highlights the flaws of the race laws and the officials who implemented them. In 1980, the media restrictions were not as severe as they would become later in the decade.<sup>291</sup> Consequently, the *Cape Times* had more freedom to criticise the Prime Minister and the country's laws in this outright manner.

The *Cape Times* states that two cases linked to South Africa's race laws were made public on 14 February, the day before this article was published. One of the cases was about Mrs Green and was also covered in *Die Burger*. The other case centred around Mr Silwana, a black man facing family struggles because of apartheid. The absence of his story suggests that while *Die Burger* published news on the flawed race laws, their focus was on how it affected white South Africans.

Two cases publicised yesterday, show clearly which laws are continuing to cause acute pain to their victims.<sup>292</sup>

The absence of Mr Silwana from the pages of *Die Burger* must be noted. Their focus was on Mrs Green, a formerly white woman under apartheid's parameters. The article neglects to comment on the plight of a black man who was also a victim of South Africa's laws. Language is another possible reason why *Die Burger* covered the story of Mrs Green and her fiancé, Mr Jooste. The couple was Afrikaans speaking while Mr Silwana was not.

*The Cape Times'* article reflects the power of the press to incite change. They explain that an increase in newspaper interest on the topic of reclassification affected the government's response.

The next day, after a newspaper report had given the incident prominence, the department of interior said her classification was "by no means final."<sup>293</sup>

The department responsible for reclassification saw an increase in applications for race change from the 1970s till the end of the 1980s. In their classification process, there were instances when they reclassified citizens formerly classified white to other racial groups as set out by the Population Registration Act. The justification for this could be linked to appearance, family history and community interactions. The process was complex and eventually a Classification

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<sup>291</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 398.

<sup>292</sup> "Not hurtful enough?" *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

Appeal Board was set up to deal with issues linked to race change. After Mrs Green was prohibited from marrying her second husband, who was classified white, she attempted to resolve the issue.

When Mrs Green's efforts to resolve the issue with the Department of Home Affairs failed, she took her story to the press. She was told that her new coloured classification was final, however, the department retracted their words after newspapers began reporting on the incident. Her case received frequent coverage and placed the department in a negative light. To avoid further pushback, they indicated that her classification was in fact not final. This is an example of the way newspapers influenced the state's decisions.

The article comments on the concept of reclassification and places doubt on the way race categories were altered. It raises concern about the process and use Mrs Green's case to highlight just how senseless the reclassifications were.

Final or not final, the farcical tragedy would not have occurred in the first place had it not been for the race reclassification laws which made it possible for her, after bearing six children, to be arbitrarily changed from white to coloured.<sup>294</sup>

In this article the *Cape Times* asks questions about state procedures and puts forward critical views relating to reclassification and other race laws. Chapter 1's historical overview indicates that the state was extremely sensitive to anyone who opposed them. This article's candour would arguably have aggravated the ministers and officials.

In their article, the *Cape Times* mentions and condemns various apartheid acts. They used the popularity of Mrs Green's reclassification case to highlight other laws that were also causing pain to the people of South Africa. In this they also indicated that the laws were not being applied consistently, placing doubt on the country's legislation.

In both Mr Silwana's case and Mrs Green's, the laws have scuppered and undermined the institution of marriage flow.<sup>295</sup>

But the Mixed Marriage Act effectively put the kibosh on that.<sup>296</sup>

The second case involves a resident of Guguletu who has lived in Cape Town since 1939; is qualified to be here in terms of Section 10 (1) (b)

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<sup>294</sup> "Not hurtful enough?" *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

of the Urban Areas Consolidation Act, but who may not have his wife live with him because she is a Transkeian citizen without any local rights.<sup>297</sup>

He knows the law is being applied inconsistently because in other cases unqualified wives have been allowed to live with husbands who have a legal right to stay.<sup>298</sup>

The *Cape Times* used their coverage of these cases to deliver a strong message of apartheid opposition. The cases of Mrs Green and Mr Silwana revealed various ways in which the country's laws were disrupting lives. The continued interest in Mrs Green's case would have initially caught the attention of many readers. As they continued reading the article their focus would have shifted to the plight of Mr Silwana.

A striking feature of the article is the use of emotive language. Where *Die Burger* reported on Mrs Green's tragic case with relatively little emotion, the *Cape Times* utilized this tool to move and connect with their audience. Below a list of quoted extracts are listed in the order they appear in the article:

“hurtful,” “hurt,” “acute pain,” “victims,” “farcical tragedy,”  
“emotional anguish” and “social despair.”<sup>299</sup>

Employing emotive wording is a technique often used to engage audiences and the *Cape Times* capitalized on this. The article repeatedly spoke of the hurt the race laws were causing families and despite debates that the *Cape Times* was not doing enough in the face of apartheid, this piece demonstrates the sympathetic approach they took when reporting on these issues as well as their explicit condemnation of the state's laws. The use of emotion had the potential to show readers the indisputable suffering caused by apartheid.

The *Cape Times* boldly questions the Prime Minister repeatedly throughout the article. While some of their criticisms are subtle, the final line of the article candidly questions and comments on the discrimination in the country. The last sentence directs an open-ended question toward the Prime Minister, a technique which arguably puts the same question of the minds of readers. It also brings the emphasis back to Botha's views on discrimination.

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<sup>297</sup> “Not hurtful enough?” *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

How much more hurtful must a law be, Mr Botha, before it constitutes hurtful discrimination?<sup>300</sup>

The newspaper uses Botha's own words against him. The Prime Minister was quoted saying that he was not opposed to all discrimination, only that which is hurtful. The *Cape Times* used the stories of Mrs Green and Mr Silwana as an opportunity to display the hurtful nature of reclassification and apartheid. This makes Botha's comments on discrimination seem disingenuous since his state was administering laws that were indisputably hurting people.

By humanising the article and focusing on the tragic events unfolding in Mrs Green and Mr Silwana's lives the *Cape Times* made their views on apartheid clear. They were against it and wanted people to get the full picture of the upsetting effect the country's laws were having on citizens.



Figure 3.2: Photograph of Mrs Green with her fiancé and daughter in *Die Burger*, 14 February 1980, p. 2. Photo located in the Compact Storage unit of the Stellenbosch University Library.

*SA law still applicable to mixed couple*<sup>301</sup>

*Die Burger* published an article about the Whiteley family on 28 September 1981. The piece provided many details about their attempts to move back to South Africa after they relocated

<sup>300</sup> "Not hurtful enough?" *Cape Times*, 15 February 1980, p. 8.

<sup>301</sup> Own translation of: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," from the article: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

to London in 1969. The article focuses on the validity of the couple's marriage and makes it clear that their union is not accepted under apartheid laws, this is repeated at the start and end of the article. Their marriage was not viewed as legitimate because Mr Whiteley was classified as white and his wife was classified as Indian.

From the article's headline two of their viewpoints are clear. Firstly, *Die Burger* recognises the South African race laws and puts forward that they are still valid. Secondly, the newspaper views the couple as mixed, something which was not allowed under apartheid law. This description of the couple immediately shows readers that the article will focus on persons who are in contravention of the country's goal of separate development based on race. The first few lines of the article also make it clear that the couple's marriage and lifestyle is not condoned.

SA law still applicable to mixed couple.<sup>302</sup>

Mr Whiteley, a South African that emigrated overseas twelve years ago after his marriage to an Indian woman, is permitted to return to South Africa but this does not mean his marriage is recognised or that he will be pardoned from South African laws that still apply.<sup>303</sup>

The Prime Minister did not lean back to accommodate their requests.<sup>304</sup>

The article begins by removing any premise that the couple will be pardoned from the country's laws and indicates that the state has not made special allowances for them. While the *Cape Times* called the couple "Coloured," *Die Burger* opted to label them "mixed." The pair had been speaking to the South African press and in their version of events, they indicated that the Prime Minister told them they were free to return to South Africa. *Die Burger's* article was arguably an effort to prevent anyone from thinking that this meant the Prime Minister was accepting a "mixed" couple or recognising their marriage.

*Die Burger* does not offer any direct quotes from the couple, nor do they provide readers with the reason the Whiteley's chose to leave the country. The *Cape Times* article offers part of their background story and indicates that the couple only left South Africa because Mr Whiteley was

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<sup>302</sup> Own translation of: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," from the article: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>303</sup> Own translation of: "Mnr. Whiteley, 'n Suid-Afrikaner wat twaalf jaar gelede na die buiteland uitgewyk het na sy huwelik met 'n Indiërvrou, mag na Suid-Afrika terugkeer, maar dit beteken nie dat sy huwelik erken word of dat hy kwyt skelding kry van Suid-Afrikaanse wette wat nog geld nie," from the article: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>304</sup> Own translation of: "Die Eerste Minister het nie teruggeleun om al hul versoek te voldoen nie," from the article: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

arrested. *Die Burger* avoids this fact. The Afrikaans newspaper spent time asking “informed observers” what the couple’s chances of success were once they arrived back in their home country. *Die Burger* also presents the couple’s intentions of returning to South Africa in a doubtful manner. The article uses words like “if” whereas the *Cape Times* reports on their story as if it is certain that they will be coming back.

Yesterday it was pointed out to *Die Burger* that certain South African laws such as the Immorality Act and Group Areas Act were still in the law book.<sup>305</sup>

Yesterday informed observers did not want to comment on what the couple’s chances at success would be if one of them applied for a permit to live in a different suburb.<sup>306</sup>

If the couple want to live in an Indian suburb in South Africa, Mr Whiteley will have to apply for a permit ...<sup>307</sup>

It can be argued that the article published by *Die Burger* highlights all the reasons why the Whiteley family should not return to South Africa. The newspaper focuses on the illegitimacy of the couple’s marriage and outlines all the legislative tape they will have to work around to keep their family together. This included their emphasis on the Immorality Act and the Group Areas Act. While “informed observers” would not comment on the matter and the newspaper got no new information from them, it chose to include this piece of information in the article. Arguably this was an indication that the chances were high they would struggle once they were back on South African soil.

*Die Burger’s* article explained that Mr Whiteley was willing to be reclassified from white to coloured if this would ease their transition back into South Africa. However, their request was rejected. According to the article, Mr Whiteley also indicated that he was willing to live in an Indian suburb and send his children to an Indian school.

According to articles in the Sunday newspapers, Mr Whiteley asked to be reclassified coloured, but the request was refused. He allegedly also

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<sup>305</sup> Own translation of: “*Die Burger* is gister daarop gewys dat bepaalde Suid-Afrikaanse wette soos die Ontugwet en die Groepsgebied steeds in die wetboek is,” from the article: “SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing,” *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>306</sup> Own translation of: “Ingeligte waarnemers wou gister nie sê wat die egpaar se kanse op sukses sal wees as een van hulle aansoek doen om om permit om in ’n ander woonbuurt te woon nie,” from the article: “SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing,” *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>307</sup> Own translation of: “As die egpaar in Suid-Afrika in ’n Indiërbuurt wil bly, sal mnr. Whiteley om ’n permit moet aansoek doen ...” from the article: “SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing,” *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

said that he was willing to live in Pietersburg's Indian suburb and to send his children to an Indian school<sup>308</sup>

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Mr Whiteley's request display the lengths he was willing to go to so that he could return to South Africa with his family. As a man recognised as white citizen of the country, his willingness to engage in a lifestyle that was opposite to the pillars of apartheid had the potential to shock readers. Mr Whiteley's request to be reclassified as coloured shows how little he thinks of the racial boxes. His request reflects his viewpoint on racial categories—that they were flexible and not static as depicted by the apartheid government.

The article repeatedly outlines that Mr and Mrs Whiteley are only allowed back into the country because they hold valid passports. *Die Burger* also indicates that the couple's children will have to apply for visas.

A passport is valid for five years and therefore they are free to come to South Africa, *Die Burger* was told reliably yesterday.<sup>309</sup>

The children are not recognised as South African citizens and for them, they will need to apply for visas.<sup>310</sup>

The article's attitude toward the family's return to South Africa can be drawn from these quoted extracts. The couple is only welcome in the country because they meet the official requirements, and their return is not encouraged. Instead, the various obstacles they will face are emphasised. The children are also not recognised as South Africans, despite both of their parents holding such citizenship.

In the following analysis of an article about the Whiteley's published by the *Cape Times*, the couple's desire to return to South Africa is made clear and the reason they want to come back is also included. These details would have been easily accessible but are not reflected in *Die Burger*. The Whiteley family shared their story with the South African press and included many personal aspects, much of which was neglected from the article published in *Die Burger*. The

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<sup>308</sup> Own translation of: "Volgens berugte in die Sondagkoerante het mnr. Whiteley gevra dat hy as gekleurde geherklassifiseer word, maar die versoek is geweier. Hy het na bewering ook gesê dat hy bereid is om in Pietersburg se Indiërbuurt te gaan woon en sy kinders na 'n Indiër skool te stuur," from the article: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>309</sup> Own translation of: "n Paspoort is vir vyf jaar geldig en daarom staan dit hulle vry om na Suid-Afrika te kom, is gister betroubaar aan Die Burger gesê," from the article: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>310</sup> Own translation of: "Die kinders word nie as Suid-Afrikaanse burgers beskou nie en vir hulle moet om visums aansoek gedoen word," from the article: "SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing," *Die Burger*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.



Afrikaans newspaper outlined that the couple would not be allotted any lenience when, or rather, if, they returned. Ultimately, *Die Burger's* article made it clear that Mr and Mrs Whiteley's marriage was not recognised in their home country, this being a key difference in the *Cape Times'* version of the same events.

*'Coloured' life for the Whiteley's*

The *Cape Times* published an article on 28 September 1981 that tells the story of the Whiteley family. They were actively planning their trip from London back to South Africa. The article explains the couple's motivations for initially leaving the country as well as why they now wanted to return. The article includes many details that were neglected in *Die Burger*, and even more striking, excludes some of what the Afrikaans newspaper chose to include. The headline of the article presents the couple as "Coloured." This word is placed in inverted commas to indicate that it was not their diction. They do not refer to the couple as "mixed" as is done in *Die Burger*. The *Cape Times* decided to label them "Coloured" because in the article, Mr Whiteley is quoted saying he would regard himself part of a Coloured family and he openly viewed his children as coloured and not mixed. Much of the article includes direct quotes from Mr Whiteley himself and this gives it a personal impression.

The article begins by detailing that the couple left South Africa in 1969, similarly to the version published in *Die Burger*. The key difference is that the *Cape Times* puts forward the motivation for their exit. They couple left after Mr Whitley was arrested for being in contravention of the Immorality Act. These opening sentences also show no "ifs" or doubts about the couple's decision to return to South Africa. It is indicated that they "will" be coming back.

The Whiteley's will be returning to Pietersburg, their hometown for the first time since they left South Africa in 1969 following the arrest of Mr Whiteley, 43, under the Immorality Act for marrying his Indian wife.<sup>311</sup>

By acknowledging that a piece of legislation was the reason Mr and Mrs Whiteley left their home country, the *Cape Times* demonstrates the extreme lengths people went to in an attempt to live freely, with the person they love. The article is also relatively certain that the couple and

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<sup>311</sup> "'Coloured' life for the Whiteley's," *Cape Times*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

their children will be making the journey back to South Africa, regardless of the country's race laws which were still in place.

The article goes into detail about the couple's story and the struggles they faced while abroad. This personalises their lived experiences and allows readers an opportunity to connect and engage. Notably, Mr Whiteley refers to their time in Liverpool as an exile, not a move they made of their own volition. In their justification for returning to their home country, Mr Whiteley frequently points out that they were treated better in South Africa than abroad.

He said his wife would be glad to return to her home community in Pietersburg because of some embarrassing incidents during the family's exile in Liverpool.<sup>312</sup>

Never in 19 years she was in South Africa was she once insulted or treated badly by whites but here in Liverpool she has been spat on and called a "Paki" (Pakistani) and told to go home to where she came from.<sup>313</sup>

These statements about the painful experiences the couple faced while abroad lessened the weight of the suffering they faced while they lived in South Africa. Mr Whiteley arguably presented their story in this manner in hopes that it would gain his family favour with the Prime Minister. By commenting that life was less discriminatory in South Africa when compared to Liverpool, the family's chances of gaining allowances to return would have been higher because their loyalty to South Africa was certain.

Mr Whiteley repeatedly displays his loyalty toward South Africa and indicates that he has protected the integrity of the country. Firstly, he explains that he was offered money to share his family's story overseas. He allegedly declined the offer because he knew it would make the country look bad. Additionally, Mr Whiteley explained that the apartheid laws "at least" provide citizens with the knowledge of "where they stand." He also outlined a plan for how his family will circumvent the laws without any "trouble" once they arrived. These statements were all arguably shared with the press in a desperate attempt to maintain their approval from the state so they could come home. Mr Whiteley's explanation that his "country came first" again showed his loyalty and could have been an attempt to impress state officials.

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<sup>312</sup> "'Coloured' life for the Whiteley's," *Cape Times*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

We don't want to park ourselves where we are not wanted.<sup>314</sup>

There are no apartheid laws here, but you can immediately tell when you walk somewhere whether you are wanted there or not. At least in South Africa the laws let you know where you stand. He said he had been offered money to tell his story to a British publisher. I was not interested and turned them down flat. It would only have been a story of how bad we are in South Africa from a political angle, and I did not want that. There was money in it, but I said that money wasn't everything and my country came first.<sup>315</sup>

Mr Whiteley said he expected no problems in meeting up again with the friends he had made in Pietersburg before he left South Africa. "During the time I lived with my wife in the coloured community all my personal friends and the people I went to school with said it was my affair and I should get on with it. I am sure I won't have any trouble now either."<sup>316</sup>

In the quoted extracts it is evident that Mr Whiteley is certain he will be able to assimilate into the coloured community without any issues. His statements must be considered in the context of Mr Whiteley's current situation. He earnestly wanted to get his family back to his home country, but his children still needed visas and the state held all the power. They were at the state's liberty and arguably, Mr Whiteley said what he thought was necessary to improve his family's chances at a successful relocation.

Notably, the *Cape Times* neglected to include anything related to the legislative struggles the family would face once they were back in South Africa. The newspaper did not indicate that the couple would need to apply for permits nor did they express that the state would not make any allowances for them. The *Cape Times* also neglected to comment on the fact that the state did not recognise the couple's marriage. Contrastingly, these themes were repeated numerous times in the article published by *Die Burger*.

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<sup>314</sup> "'Coloured' life for the Whiteley's," *Cape Times*, 28 September 1981, p. 3.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*



Figure 3.3: Photograph of the Whiteley family in the *Cape Times*, 26 June 1981, p. 4. Photo located in the Compact Storage unit of the Stellenbosch University Library.

### *Lize's race is still not determined*<sup>317</sup>

*Die Burger* published an article on 27 August 1983 about a racially ambiguous baby whose classification was undecided. The article was very similar to a piece published in the *Cape Times* on the same day. Both articles addressed Internal Affairs Minister Mr FW de Klerk's remarks on baby Lize and her racial classification. He commented on the issue because a member of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) asked about her case. The articles addressing her story were the most similar of all the selected texts analysed in this chapter. The parallels between the two are significant and for this reason, the subtle changes made all the difference. The mounting tensions and restrictions the media faced, such as the Newspapers Amendment Act of 1982, are important to consider because it would have affected the reporting of both newspapers.

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<sup>317</sup> Own translation of: "Lize se ras nog nie bepaal," from the article: "Lize se ras nog nie bepaal," *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

*Die Burger's* account was brief and predominantly included quotes by the Minister of Internal Affairs. De Klerk stated that standard procedures require babies to be classified at birth. The article explains this in more detail and includes information about the Population Registration Act and what it requires of South African citizens.

In a short statement on the matter, Mr de Klerk said section 5 of the Population Registration Act stipulates that, when a person's name is entered in the population register, that person must be classified.<sup>318</sup>

This brief statement acknowledges the laws in place in the country and clarifies how the process of population registration works. This law was the main tool used by the state to classify people on the basis of race. Notably, the *Cape Times* version of events, which also briefly outlines De Klerk's response to a question about baby Lize, does not mention these details nor does it stipulate how the classification process works. By neglecting to include information about the Population Registration Act, the English newspaper arguably showcased that they did not acknowledge it.

The Minister of Internal Affairs indicates that there is no specific age when a baby's race must be decided. However, his statement suggests that there is in fact a need for race to be determined, albeit not right away.

“There is no prescribed age when the baby's race should be determined, and no steps are currently being taken to determine her race,” Mr. de Klerk said.<sup>319</sup>

The underlying implication of de Klerk's words are arguably the reason they were neglected from the *Cape Times's* version of the same story. His words implied that people must be racially classified at one time or another. As will be analysed in the following section, the way the *Cape Times* framed their article did not reinforce apartheid legislation. While they also covered Lize's story, their version differed in subtle but significant ways. By excluding the statement about determining the baby's race, the English newspaper did not encourage the state's narrative about racial classifications.

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<sup>318</sup> Own translation of: “In 'n kort verklaring oor die aangeleentheid het mnr. De Klerk gesê artikel 5 van die Wet op Bevolkingsregistrasie bepaal dat, wanneer 'n mense se naam in die bevolkingsregister opgeneem word, daardie persoon geklassifiseer moet word,” from the article: “Lize se ras nog nie bepaal,” *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

<sup>319</sup> Own translation of: “Daar is geen voorgeskrewe ouderdom wanneer die baba se ras bepaal moet word nie, en geen stappe word tans gedoen om haar ras te bepaal nie, het mnr. de Klerk gesê,” from the article: “Lize se ras nog nie bepaal,” *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

The state used the question posed about baby Lize as an opportunity to berate reporters who were using her story for “sensationalism.” The minister pointed out that it was a sensitive issue and encouraged people to stop pressing for more information. He urged people to leave it to the powers that be to decide on the baby’s fate, without providing any details about who these people were.

We must allow those who must make decisions about the case to do so without hunting them down for reasons other than the interest of the baby.<sup>320</sup>

In the meantime, it is crucial for the baby that this sensitive matter is accompanied by as little sensation as possible.<sup>321</sup>

The unique story of baby Lize gained a lot of traction in the media. It also led many to question the racial classificatory systems in the country. The minister’s plea that it was important to avoid sensationalism for the sake of the baby may have been sincere. However, it is also possible that he saw news outlets using baby Lize’s story as support to question the state’s race laws. Content that questioned his administration and the ways they were planning to determine the baby’s race were potentially what he was referring to when he urged people to avoid “sensationalism.”

The article included the opinion of the Director-General of Home Affairs. It gives attention to him as a key individual whose viewpoint and expertise on the issue is of importance. His comment does not indicate she will not be racially classified, only that it is not currently possible.

The Director-General of Home Affairs believes that it is still impossible and undesirable in the baby’s interest to try to classify her now.<sup>322</sup>

By including the opinion of the Director-General of Home Affairs, the article attempts to offer readers reliable confirmation that baby Lize’s case was being handle with care. What he

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<sup>320</sup> Own translation of “Ons moet diegene wat besluite oor die geval moet neem, toelaat om dit te doen sonder dat op hulle jag gemaak word om redes anders as die belang van die baba,” from the article: “Lize se ras nog nie bepaal,” *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

<sup>321</sup> Own translation of: “In tussen is dit van kardinale belang vir die baba dat hierdie sensitiewe saak met so min sensasie moontlik gepaard gaan,” from the article: “Lize se ras nog nie bepaal,” *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

<sup>322</sup> Own translation of: “Die Direkteur-generaal van Binnelandse Aangeleenthede meen dat dit nog onmoontlik en in die baba se belang ook nie wenslik sal wees om nou te probeer om haar te klassifiseer nie,” from the article: “Lize se ras nog nie bepaal,” *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

“believes” is deemed an opinion of importance, arguably because his department handled all of the racial classifications and reclassifications. Significantly, this comment made by the Director-General does not feature in the *Cape Times*’ article posted on the same day. The English newspaper opts to neglect his comment, potentially because it wanted to avoid giving his beliefs on race any credibility or acknowledgment.

De Klerk attempted to make the issue about the wellbeing of the baby and not about what her story could potentially point toward or reveal about the country’s race system. The complexity surrounding baby Lize’s racial classification offered people a clear example of the problems created by racial categorization. It also highlighted that the classifications were senseless and impossible to box into neat categories.

The circumstances of a foundling, whose parents can still appear and about whom no details are available, are complicated. In addition to classification, decisions about adoptive parents or about the religious milieu in which a foundling must be placed also present problems.<sup>323</sup>

“My department will do everything possible in the best interests of the baby,” said Mr de Klerk.<sup>324</sup>

Baby Lize’s story posed a rare challenge to the state who often put forward that they were able to classify people without issue.<sup>325</sup> The Minister of Internal Affairs pointed out the baby could potentially face a few challenges if she was classified prematurely. These challenges were linked to her religious upbringing, her adoptive parents, and the possibility that her birth parents resurfaced. What De Klerk failed to include was that none of these challenges would matter or exist if the apartheid laws were abolished.

### *Lize ‘not racially classified yet’*

The *Cape Times* published an article about baby Lize on 27 August 1983. In 1983, reporting on race was challenging. With newly drafted media regulations and state officials who were watching publications closely, newspapers needed to act quickly and innovatively to avoid

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<sup>323</sup> Own translation of: “Die omstandighede van ’n vondeling, wie se ouers nog te voorskyn kan kom en oor wie geen besonderhede beskikbaar is nie, is ingewikkeld. Benewens klassifikasie, lewer besluite oor aannemende ouers of oor die godsdiens-milieu waarin ’n vondeling geplaas moet word, ook probleme,” from the article: “Lize se ras nog nie bepaal,” *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

<sup>324</sup> Own translation of: “My departement sal al die moontlike in die beste belang van die baba doen, het mnr. De Klerk gesê,” from the article: “Lize se ras nog nie bepaal,” *Die Burger*, 27 August 1983, p. 11.

<sup>325</sup> Y. Erasmus & G. T. H. Ellison: “What can we learn about the meaning of race from the classification of population groups during apartheid?,” *South African Journal of Science*, (104), (11-12), 2008, pp. 450-452.

pushback. One of the techniques used by the press was publishing blank space to alert readers that they were not getting the full picture. Often, the press said more by saying less. As reflected in the above analysis of an article published in *Die Burger*, the Afrikaans newspaper included specific comments that were not present in the *Cape Times* version. In a comparison of both articles, it is apparent that they are almost identical, save for a few key differences. By neglecting to include certain statements, the *Cape Times* was arguably refusing to acknowledge certain apartheid truths while remaining within the media guidelines.

From the article's headline, the newspaper makes it clear that they are not using their own words when speaking about baby Lize's classification. They place 'not racially classified yet' in single inverted commas. The article also includes a few details that were not present in the version published by *Die Burger*, and these points will be highlighted in the following analysis.

In the opening sentences of the article, the English newspaper adds some personal information about the circumstances surrounding the discovery of baby Lize. This adds a humanising element to the article and has the potential to evoke emotion within readers.

Lize was found in tall grass in a Pretoria suburb nearly two months ago.<sup>326</sup>

He added: "My sympathies go out to the baby, and my department will do everything possible in the manner it considers best in the interest of the baby."<sup>327</sup>

Some of the details from the quoted extracts above are missing in *Die Burger's* article. The Afrikaans newspaper focused on the legislation surrounding baby Lize and neglected to add information that could have evoked sympathy for the infant. The exclusion of the minister's statement that offers sympathies for baby Lize is also neglected in *Die Burger*. This suggests that the Afrikaans newspaper did not portray the Minister of Internal Affairs in a compassionate and considerate manner. Arguably, *Die Burger* did this to avoid any inkling that he was softening on the issue.

Baby Lize's story was an issue put forward because of a question asked by PFP (Progressive Federal Party) member, Dr Marius Barnard. As part of the progressive political party that was

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<sup>326</sup> "Lize 'not racially classified yet,'" *Cape Times*, 27 August 1983, p. 4.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*



strongly opposed to apartheid, Barnard presumably presented the question to pressure the minister on the debated issue of racial classification in South Africa.

Replying to a question by Dr Marius Barnard (PFP), Mr de Klerk said it was not in the baby's best interests to classify her at this stage.<sup>328</sup>

It is uncertain whether the Minister of Internal Affairs would have commented on the case of baby Lize had the PFP member not tabled it. However, from De Klerk's insistence that people allow the officials to do their jobs without continuous questions, it is unlikely that he would have prompted the conversation. Barnard's question thus opened the issue for debate and forced the minister to comment. These encounters gave the press and their political correspondents insight into where the state officials stood on the topic. It also allowed for various quotable moments that could either be used for or against their own agendas.

The *Cape Times* article neglects to mention what the population registration usually requires from South Africans (that they must be racially classified at birth). These statements were present in *Die Burger's* article and gave salience to the apartheid laws. The *Cape Times* avoids this but do not use the article as an opportunity to highlight the senselessness of the country's classificatory laws. They potentially missed a chance to point out the confusion and complications the classification system was causing in the life of an innocent baby. Their avoidance of directly questioning the state (like they did in the 1980 article about Mrs Green and Mr Silwana) must be considered in a 1983 context. The media industry was facing increased pressure and regulations. Despite this, they found ways to avoid acknowledging certain apartheid truths without overstepping the restrictions that were in place.

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<sup>328</sup> "Lize 'not racially classified yet,'" *Cape Times*, 27 August 1983, p. 4.



Figure 3.4: Photograph of baby Lize in *The Star*, 27 July 1983, p. 11. Photo sourced from the electronic database, SA Media, which is hosted by Sabinet.

### Chapter conclusions

By reducing the scale of observation and analysing three articles published by the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* respectively, this chapter allowed for an in-depth analysis of the source material. The close reading presented the individual and family stories of South Africans who endured pain and suffering because of the country's race laws. Classifications determined every aspect of life and for many citizens, this led to an array of challenges. By taking a microhistory look at the above case studies, claims were put forward and insights that could have been missed by a cursory reader were highlighted. The close reading also included a comparative analysis of the articles published by the two newspapers. This was possible because the selected stories were published on the same dates and covered the same issues. The results reflect the nuanced ways the press portrayed similar stories, choosing to neglect and include significant information.

Placing emphasis on the specific lived experiences of individuals, the microhistory approach provided insight into the particulars of an individual case, and additionally revealed details about the general context they were living in. On multiple occasions, the *Cape Times* included

emotive details that were not always present in *Die Burger*. For all 3 stories they published there were elements that had the potential to evoke emotion among readers. This correlates with the analysis in Chapter 2 which showed that while both publications reflected a high count for the emotive discourse style, the *Cape Times* was more focused on including these aspects in their articles.

On occasion, the *Cape Times*' reporting directly questioned apartheid laws and called out ministers. However, by 1983, when they report on baby Lize, they refrain from pointing out that the racial classificatory system has placed her in a problematic position. While this could be seen as a missed opportunity by parties who desired an active and vocal opposition to the state, there were various factors at play. The *Cape Times*' "subtle" reporting on the issue is arguably because of the tightened restrictions placed on the media in 1982.<sup>329</sup>

*Die Burger* did not condemn apartheid laws, but they did engage in critical reporting and questioned state officials. A close reading of their article about Mrs Green, the Afrikaans newspaper's determination to get answers from the minister is apparent. *Die Burger* pressed beyond the surface level facts of the issue and places the minister in a negative light, a portrayal that was unexpected from the state-aligned newspaper.

In 1980, when the *Cape Times* covered Mrs Green's story, they report in a critical manner and expose the pain citizens have faced under apartheid. From the selected articles, it is possible to see that as the years progressed, the newspaper's boldness to directly question the state and the Prime Minister begins to wane. Again, the media regulations and harsh treatment of journalists and editors was the potential cause. Despite this, the English newspaper often managed to oppose apartheid by what they chose to exclude from their articles.

*Die Burger* repeatedly focused on the legislative details within the stories they published. They outlined how reclassification processes worked and told readers what the state expected of them in terms of racial categorisation. When the Afrikaans newspaper covered the story of the Whiteley family, an in-depth analysis revealed its focus. It pointed out the various laws the couple was contravening. In contrast, the *Cape Times* version of the same story did not mention

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<sup>329</sup> H. Tyson: *Editors Under Fire*, p. 398.

that their marriage was not acknowledged by the state. Instead, the newspaper emphasised the emotional motivation behind the couple's longing to return home.

The findings offer a look into how two newspapers reported on the same issue on the same day. This is important for a fairer comparison because the variables such as time, context and circumstances in which the articles were written and published remained the same. A drawback of the analysis is that all of the selected articles were pulled from the same time frame (the start of the decade). This was unavoidable because these 3 stories were the only instances where similar articles were published on the same day. For example, selecting an article from 1989 and another from 1983 would have reduced the ability to accurately compare the reporting. Despite this drawback, the findings still reveal much about the newspaper's portrayals of race in South Africa.

How newspaper staff chose to frame and present their articles is important. Chapter 1 revealed that journalists and editors thought carefully about what they published and how they could best deliver a story to suit their agenda. Every word was carefully selected, and they rarely published content without a specific motivation. For the *Cape Times*, that agenda was to oppose apartheid, while still attempting to keep the doors of their media house open. While the newspaper has been berated by fellow liberals for being too moderate in their fight against apartheid, the manner in which they reported was often calculated and served a clear purpose. The close reading analysis of three distinct cases identified the different ways in which the English newspaper neglected to support apartheid laws and thinking. By subtly excluding statements, and offering a nuanced portrayal of stories, they allowed readers an opportunity to see the state's laws in a different way. Their reporting utilized emotion and showcased the many ways in which apartheid was hurtful to individuals who did not fit into the state's neat racial boxes.

*Die Burger* was not always the state's unwavering mouthpiece of support and affection. On occasion, their writing was conflicting and correlated with what was happening internally between the press and state officials.<sup>330</sup> Relationships were souring, and the newspaper was no longer a submissive tool that only showed support for apartheid and its laws.<sup>331</sup> While the articles did not directly oppose apartheid, the reporting sometimes questioned ministers. This

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<sup>330</sup> H. Van Deventer: *Kroniek van 'n Koerantman: 'n persoonlike perspektief op die jare na '80*, p. 76.

<sup>331</sup> A. Mouton: 'Reform from within': *Schalk Pienaar, the Afrikaans press and apartheid*, p. 149.

aligned with the fact that the press was moving toward offering their readers a more nuanced version of events. This meant that they were not only going to perpetuate how good things were going the country, but also set out to inform their theirs about the complex problem apartheid was responsible for.

The articles published by the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* were relatively similar in length. It may have been suspected that the two newspapers would portray stories in a manner that was more contrasting. However, while the close reading highlighted the key differences it was also helpful to consider the similarities. To a large degree, the articles presented the same quotes and identifying information about the people. Therefore, a close reading analysis is significant because it draws out the small details which would normally be missed. When placed alongside the historiography, these small details allow for new understandings of South Africa's race story.

## **General Conclusion**

South African history places the English and Afrikaans press on opposing sides during the apartheid era. However, the advent of an increasingly free and vocal press slowly began to blur the lines. By the 1980s, newspapers had a common enemy—the state and its increased desire to control the media. The souring of relationships between Afrikaans pressmen and government officials meant that publications like *Die Burger* were no longer the National Party's unwavering mouthpiece. Instead, they were moving toward presenting stories that informed their readers about the full extent of events in South Africa. *Die Burger's* ties with important businessmen and government officials gave them the power to lobby for lesser restrictions on the press and effectively, they kept doors open, not only for themselves but for the general media as well.

The *Cape Times* benefited from these open doors. Despite the risks that came with being a journalist during apartheid, journalists and editors found ways to publish the uncensored version of events. As outlined in Chapter 1, the repercussions for such actions could be jailtime or even death threats. Regardless, stories that questioned the salience of apartheid made it into the pages repeatedly. Some of these stories focused on the senseless acts classifying and dividing people based on race. On occasion the *Cape Times* directly questioned ministers and pointed out the hurt and damage various race laws were causing in the country. By publishing the lived experiences of reclassified individuals and their families, the newspaper informed readers about the reality of what apartheid was responsible for. When the state put measures in place to curb articles of this nature, the English newspaper used innovative techniques, such as publishing blank space, to alert their audience that they were not getting the full picture of what was happening in South Africa.

Chapter 1 provided a detailed chronology of the history surrounding race and the media for the relevant context. It put forward two theoretical foundations, namely the Agenda-Setting Theory and Race Self Complexity which have assisted the analysis in this thesis. Both served as a framework to study race and the media collectively. The first chapter also outlined the methodological approaches which served as the tools to analyse the primary sources. Qualitative coding and close reading were utilized. In conjunction, both methods revealed the nuanced nature of the media in South Africa. The English and Afrikaans press were not telling the same stories and did not serve the same goal but on occasion, their content was alike in significant ways.

In Chapter 2, qualitative coding was used to provide a general analysis of the newspaper data. The findings reflect the relationship between the media and concepts of racial fluidity. Newspapers had the potential to set the public agenda and their differing portrayals of race and reclassification were identified through qualitative coding. The method of line-by-line coding highlighted how the publications differed in their discourse styles. In connection with the historical background from Chapter 1, various claims were put forward. Ultimately, the comparison of the newspaper's portrayals for eight different discourse styles, emphasised the complexity of both. This supported the hypothesis that the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger* were multidimensional in their reporting and more nuanced than often portrayed in historiography. By highlighting how the newspapers chose to portray reclassification, this thesis reveals how they use their power to affect the racial agenda of the day.

The Agenda-Setting theory considers the various ways in which the media provide citizens with information. The varying ways in which they reported on reclassification served as a significant catalyst. People who read about race change stories were exposed to changing concepts of race and because the act of reclassification questioned apartheid's propositions, so could they. In the first chapter the Race Self Complexity theory states that racially ambiguous people rely on internal and external stimuli to make sense of their identities. By taking the agenda-setting power of the media in account alongside race self complexity, the thesis demonstrates how newspapers served a potential form of "external stimuli" informing readers opinions on reclassification and race in general. This is not to say that all articles published about race change affected individuals' sense of self or their racial ideologies, but it does highlight the importance of the English and Afrikaans media. *Die Burger* and the *Cape Times* allowed readers an opportunity to think about apartheid and the country's race laws whenever they mentioned racial reclassification. Whether individuals and communities were affected by these articles remains unknown, but the massive media onslaught and restrictions outlined in Chapter 1 suggest the state felt threatened by the press. The newspaper analysis performed in the second chapter also reflect the changes in the *Cape Times* and *Die Burger's* discourse styles over time. The chapter allows for the general sentiments of each article to be highlighted and analysed alongside the historical background of the decade.

To avoid missing the details of the reclassification stories, a close reading analysis was performed in Chapter 3. This served to assess case specific instances of race change. Additionally, it provided a microhistory reflection of the lived experiences individuals suffered

because of the country's racial classificatory system. Three articles were selected from each publication and assessed individually and comparatively. The selected articles were published on the same dates respectively and allowed even the subtlest detail to be highlighted. The scale of observation was reduced to the minute level and each case study was investigated in-depth based on content and typographical elements. Based on the close analysis, the thesis revealed significant differences and similarities. Additionally, the stories of families who suffered because of South Africa's race laws are reflected. Their lived experiences are the focus of the final chapter and shed light on the general consequences of reclassification under apartheid.

The close reading revealed that the articles published by both newspapers were not as different as perhaps suspected. While there were striking differences, the various subtle similarities are not to be missed. When considering a dataset of 50 articles, results may appear microscopic in comparison to the many other stories and studies of race in the media. However, it is precisely this microhistory approach which reveals important and often neglected details of South African race history.

Zimitri Erasmus presents a new approach in the conceptualisation of race and identity, with specific focus on the coloured identity which she argues has been viewed as ambiguous, "lacking" and "inferior" since inception.<sup>332</sup> She suggest that it be re-imagined so society can move away from a racialized manner of thinking about identity. Erasmus adds that coloured people have created their own identities over time in relation to the different communities around them. She states that these subjective experiences be respected.<sup>333</sup>

Told through the view of pressmen and women, the stories of the racially ambiguous place a question mark next to apartheid's assertions about race. It denies claims that race was boxable and easy to define. The neglected phenomenon of racial reclassification might have only affected a small proportion of South Africans, but their stories had the potential to affect the racial narrative of the entire country and forced the public to face the true circumstances of racial injustice. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques, this thesis presents South African history from below, and in doing so charts the stories that have remained hidden in conventional archives.

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<sup>332</sup> Z. Erasmus: *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*, p. 16

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.* p. 23.



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**Addenda****Addendum A**

| Newspaper  | Page No. | Date       | Article Headline                                 | Author                        | Photo | No. of Words | Article Transcription                   |
|------------|----------|------------|--|-------------------------------|-------|--------------|---|
| Cape Times | 4        | 1980/02/23 | Race: 152 were reclassified                      | Political Staff               | no    | 114          | A total of 152 people were successful   |
| Cape Times | 4        | 1980/02/22 | 152 wanted to change race                        | Political Staff               | no    | 181          | House of Assembly -- Attempts to cha    |
| Cape Times | 2        | 1980/08/09 | NGK not against Green couple                     | Staff Reporter                | no    | 225          | THE former moderator of the Nederc      |
| Cape Times | 8        | 1980/02/15 | Not hurtful enough?                              |                               | no    | 380          | The Prime Minister is not opposed to    |
| Cape Times | 3        | 1980/03/06 | Shane was not asked to leave                     | Staff Reporter                | no    | 123          | THE son of Mrs Susan Green the worr     |
| Cape Times | 10       | 1981/10/09 | What a homecoming!                               |                               | no    | 305          | The FACT that a white a South Africar   |
| Cape Times | 4        | 1981/06/26 | Exiled' couple longing to return home to SA      | Own Correspondent             | yes   | 678          | LONDON. -We want to go home. We         |
| Cape Times | 3        | 1981/09/28 | Coloured' life for the Whiteleys                 | Own Correspondent             | no    | 517          | fugitive From apartheid, the Whiteley   |
| Cape Times | 12       | 1981/08/29 | Reclassification: An invitation                  | Mr B R Bamford (house of      | no    | 439          | One can only be dismayed at the east    |
| Cape Times | 6        | 1983/03/30 | 722 'coloured' become 'whites'                   | Sapa                          | yes   | 130          | Between July 1981 and June 1982, a t    |
| Cape Times | 4        | 1983/08/27 | Lize 'not racially classified yet'               |                               | no    | 218          | Lize Venter, the abandoned baby, hac    |
| Cape Times | 6        | 1985/02/11 | Passport to privilege                            |                               | no    | 303          | Figures released in Parliament last w   |
| Cape Times | 7        | 1985/03/04 | Let's see your old blue genes. Dr Treurnicht     | Chris Barnard                 | no    | 753          | I believe Andries Treurnicht when he s  |
| Cape Times | 10       | 1985/03/12 | When will the myth of a 'pure African' die?      | Dr Cyril A HROMNIK            | no    | 387          | Dr A Treurnicht is challenged to brav   |
| Cape Times | 9        | 1986/12/09 | More make play for white classification          | Staff Reporter                | no    | 185          | More and more "non-whites" are bec      |
| Cape Times | 4        | 1986/06/24 | Groups still to be classified by race            | Sapa                          | no    | 167          | House of Assembly -- The identificat    |
| Cape Times | 3        | 1987/02/20 | Race reclassification: 1624 applications         | Political Staff               | no    | 110          | House of Assembly -- More than 160C     |
| Cape Times | 8        | 1987/03/11 | The way to end apartheid                         |                               | no    | 125          | The significance of Dr Denis Worrall':  |
| Cape Times | 4        | 1988/02/25 | 918 apply for race 'changes'                     | Political Correspondent       | no    | 173          | Some 313 people applied to be reclas    |
| Cape Times | 1        | 1988/02/23 | Treurnicht should be 'reclassified'              | Sapa and Political staff      | no    | 162          | House of Representatives -- The lead    |
| Cape Times | 4        | 1988/02/23 | LP MP: Apartheid boards 'worse than Berlin Wall' | Political Staff and Sapa      | yes   | 415          | House of Assembly -- Mr Peter Hendr     |
| Cape Times | 10       | 1989/02/14 | Opening up the debate                            |                               | no    | 265          | It is encouraging to learn that even sc |
| Cape Times | 3        | 1989/05/13 | More than 1000 SA citizens change race           | Political Staff               | no    | 150          | Applications by 1142 South Africans t   |
| Cape Times | 2        | 1989/05/06 | Hints at change to race laws                     | Political Staff, Barry Streek | yes   | 209          | The government yesterday gave its st    |
| Cape Times | 7        | 1990/05/30 | Child adoption: Govt to scrap race?              | Political Staff               | no    | 182          | The government was considering the      |

Qual. Coded Data Cape Times

Qual. Coded Data Die Burger

Graphs

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Figure 4.1: The Reclassification database in which the primary source material was stored and sorted. This is an extract from the database reflecting the details of 25 newspaper articles collected from the Cape Times

## Addendum B

| Newspaper                 | Page No. | Date                        | Article Headline                               | Author                    | Photo  | No. of Words | Article Transcription                  |
|---------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------|--------------|--|
| Die Burger                | 2        | 1980/02/14                  | Eers blank, toe bruin - nou mag sy nie trou    |                           | yes    | 657          | n Vrou wat 28 jaar gelede in die Wyn   |
| Die Burger                | 4        | 1980/02/15                  | Boosens swyg oor geval Green                   |                           | no     | 275          | HY praat nie oor hipotetiese gevalle r |
| Die Burger                | 3        | 1980/04/01                  | Geval Green Sloer Steeds                       |                           | no     | 416          | Na meer as n maand het mev. Susan      |
| Die Burger                | 3        | 1980/04/02                  | Dokumente is ontvang, Green wag nou            |                           | no     | 206          | Die Departement van Binnelandse Sa     |
| Die Burger                | 5        | 1980/05/31                  | Klassifikasie met deernis toegepas             |                           | no     | 221          | VOORKOMS word weer in aanmerk          |
| Die Burger                | 13       | 1980/12/22                  | Pa wil eis oor 'bruin' seun                    |                           | no     | 325          | PORT ELIZABETH. Dit is geen grap as    |
| Die Burger                | 2        | 1981/06/25                  | Blanke met bruin vrou terug na SA              | Sapa                      | no     | 222          | Londen - Die uitgeweke Suid-Afrikane   |
| Die Burger                | 3        | 1981/09/28                  | SA reg nog op gemengde paar van toepassing     | Political Correspondent   | no     | 436          | Mnr Ian Whiteley, n Suid-Afrikaner w   |
| Die Burger                | 21       | 1981/06/24                  | Staat weet nie van blanke wat wil bruin word   | Political Correspondent   | no     | 292          | PRETORIA. Die Departement van Binnt    |
| Die Burger                | 13       | 1982/03/10                  | Kleurlinge word blank                          |                           | no     | 53           | Altesame 58 Kaapse Kleurlinge is in    |
| Die Burger                | 9        | 1982/04/24                  | 162 mense in SA herklassifiseer                | Political Correspondent   | no     | 103          | ALTESAME 162 mense se aansoek o        |
| Die Burger                | 11       | 1982/04/29                  | Herindeling van rasse so: Heunis               | Parlementêre Redaksie     | no     | 315          | HERKLASSIFIKASIE van een rasgroep r    |
| Die Burger                | 8        | 1982/09/04                  | Al 'n Rooie Genoem?                            | Frans Moller, Paarl.      | no     | 256          | Ek reaheer op "Tygerberger" se brief   |
| Die Burger                | 11       | 1983/03/16                  | RASSE  |                           | no     | 131          | Altesame 997 mense is van Julie 1981   |
| Die Burger                | 5        | 1983/08/18                  | Vondeling-baba se hare getoets                 |                           | Yes    | 102          | Die Polisie het haartoetse op die vont |
| Die Burger                | 11       | 1983/08/27                  | Lize se ras nog nie bepaal                     |                           | no     | 273          | Die geboorte van die omstrede vond     |
| Die Burger                | 10       | 1984/02/15                  | HERKLASIFISERING                               |                           | no     | 74           | Altesame 690 herklasifiserings van et  |
| Die Burger                | 8        | 1984/02/25                  | Die verhaal van 'n seun nog swart nog bruin    |                           | no     | 623          | Behulpsaam, Durbanville, skryf: Hierc  |
| Die Burger                | 10       | 1984/08/30                  | Indiër-gesin jare reeds in OVS                 |                           | no     | 345          | BETHLEHEM. Indiers in die Vrystaat?    |
| Die Burger                | 2        | 1986/04/08                  | Vyfhonderd bruines nou blank                   | Spesiale verteenwoordiger | no     | 62           | ALTESAME 495 bruinmense is van 1 J     |
| Die Burger                | 5        | 1987/06/09                  | Duisende se ras verander                       |                           | no     | 95           | ALTESAME 1050 aansoek om herkla        |
| Die Burger                | 6        | 1988/04/20                  | 459 Bruines in SA word blankes                 |                           | no     | 99           | ALTESAME 438 "Kaapse Kleurlinge" is    |
| Die Burger                | 2        | 1988/07/26                  | Dan word blanke as bruin beskou                |                           | no     | 233          | VIR die doeleindes van die Groepsget   |
| Die Burger                | 6        | 1988/08/22                  | Toe 'swart Boesman' n K geword het             |                           | no     | 367          | DIE goeie Afrikaans wat hy gepraat h   |
| Die Burger                | 14       | 1990/04/04                  | Vrae in die Parlement. 1229 wou ander ras wees |                           | no     | 80           | ALTESAME 1229 mense het verlede j      |
| Reclas. Database Articles |          | Qual. Coded Data Cape Times |  |                           |        |              |  |
|                           |          | Qual. Coded Data Die Burger |  |                           | Graphs | +            |  |

Figure 4.2: The Reclassification database in which the primary source material was stored and sorted. This is an extract from the database reflecting the details of 25 newspaper articles collected from Die Burger