

Headlines and discourses in newspaper reports on traffic accidents

Victoria MacRitchie

Institute for Social and Health Sciences, University of South Africa

Mohamed Seedat

Institute for Social and Health Sciences, University of South Africa, P O Box 1087, Lenasia, 1820
seedama@unisa.ac.za

Building on the existing social and health sciences knowledge base, we explore the ways in which traffic accidents on South African roads are constructed by the media and how these constructions are related to the media's role in supporting hegemonic interests, producing public consensus and promoting public agency. Discourse analysis was used to analyse 52 South African newspaper articles that reported on traffic accidents during the Easter weekend and the festive season in 2005/6. The analysis suggests that well-crafted headline messages and multiple discourses, predicated by a range of news-values and specific framing modalities, are interwoven to project the dominant view that over the holiday season South African roads are war-zones. Irresponsible and reckless drivers, in particular taxi drivers, are typecast as 'unworthy' citizens and habitual perpetrators of the 'carnage' on the roads. Motorists and occupants of public transport vehicles feature prominently as the primary victims of traffic deaths. Pedestrians and motorcyclists are among the less frequently mentioned victims. In contrast to the villains of the road, traffic safety officers are presented as the protectors of law-abiding citizens and emergency care workers, characterised as altruistic and angelic, are described as the rescuers who heal the wounded. Whereas the non-dominant discourse alerts the reader to pedestrian vulnerability, certain contextual determinants of traffic deaths, some successes in traffic safety promotion, and the dominant discourses suggest that the panacea for traffic safety is primarily rooted in proper road behaviour and law-enforcement. The analysis points to silences related to societal, institutional, and corporate responsibility in road safety and highlights the need to engage the print media toward assuring evidence-led reporting of traffic accidents.

Keywords: consensus; discourse analysis; evidence-led reporting; hegemony; news values; traffic accidents; traffic psychology; war

Each year about 50 million people worldwide are injured and 1.2 million people are killed as a result of motor-vehicle accidents (World Health Organization, WHO, 2004). Annually South Africa records an estimated 500 000 traffic accidents that result in deaths and severe injuries at a total cost of R38 billion (Road Traffic Management Corporation, RTMC, 2005). These accidents have been attributed mainly to driver behaviour such as aggression and poor judgement, followed by vehicle conditions (e.g., failed brakes), and environmental factors (e.g., poor weather conditions and road surfaces). In the case of driver-related traffic injuries alcohol intoxication and high speeds are cited as significant risk factors (RTMC, 2005, 2007; Sukhai, Noah, & Prinsloo, 2004). Overall traffic accidents impose significant economic, health, and psychological burdens on the country (Ameratunga, Hija, & Norton, 2006; RTMC, 2005; Sukhai, Noah, *et al.*, 2004; Sukhai, Seedat, Jordaan, & Noah, 2004). As a result motor vehicle-related deaths and injuries, which are now a growing public concern, have been accorded significant emphasis in the public health (e.g., Sukhai, Noah *et al.*, 2004), economic, engineering (e.g., Retting, Ferguson, & McCartt, 2003), and social science (e.g., Peltzer & Renner, 2004) fields. Following the increased psychosocial impact of traffic-related incidents, traffic psychology — a young yet growing field within psychology — has emerged to specifically focus on the behaviour of road users and the psychological processes determining road behaviour. Traffic psychology, also

referred to as transportation psychology and assuming an interdisciplinary approach, has produced studies on drivers' personality, physical state, perception and cognition, road-user mobility, transport economy and engineering, and vehicle construction and design (James, 2004; Rothengatter, 1997; Rothengatter & Huguenin, 2004; Wikipedia, 2006). Traffic psychology encourages accident prevention by utilising data arising from such studies in its calls for legal, educational, enforcement, vehicle-, and other road-specific safety promotion measures (Rothengatter, 1997).

Thus within the 'public good' related mission of traffic psychology the audio-visual and print media are likely to feature as sources of information, opinion-making, and general knowledge about traffic accidents in society (MacDonald, 2003). Different forms of communication technologies including radio, television, print journalism, and the internet all fulfil vital functions in distributing knowledge in society (Goldman, 2001). However, there appears to be a lack of South African studies, within various branches of psychology, which examine media presentations and discourses of traffic-related incidents and traffic safety. Studies in psychology and the social sciences have focused on media constructions of health issues such as HIV/AIDS and violence (Connelly & Macleod, 2003; Meintjes & Bray, 2005; Seedat, 1999). These and other studies have highlighted the utility of discourse analysis that seeks to expose silences and the influence, or lack thereof, of certain voices within the social responses to health phenomena such as HIV/AIDS.

For instance, Connelly and Macleod (2003) identified discourses of war in South African news articles on HIV/AIDS. These discourses positioned different groups of subjects, namely, the diseased body, the leaders, the experts, and the ordinary citizens, according to relations of power. The diseased body tended to be cast as a threatening force, and HIV/AIDS was constructed mainly as a poor 'black' problem, hence fostering a sense of denial among people other than black African. The news articles placed the government in the role of leader that directed the war through policy and intervention strategies. Medical and scientific understandings dominated the investigative practices and expert analysis of the disease, offering scientific solutions, but also reinforcing possible feelings of powerlessness in the individual. Alternative voices such as those of people living with HIV/AIDS were silenced, or rarely featured in the selected news articles, thereby perpetuating the belief that HIV-positive individuals ought to keep silent about their condition or face consequences such as public isolation and social stigmatisation. Although the news articles occasionally encouraged citizens to adopt preventive measures, implicit gendered discourses conveyed the message that it was primarily women's responsibility to ensure condom usage and overall safety from sexually transmitted infections (Connelly & Macleod, 2003).

Following the preceding illustrative utility of discourse analysis the present article analysed 52 selected newspaper reports as text to understand how specific South Africa print media constructed traffic accidents during peak holiday periods. Public and media focus on traffic accidents and road deaths tend to peak during the holiday period (Harris, Sukhai, & Matzopoulos, 2004), when migrant workers travel home to spend time with their families and there is increased pedestrian, private vehicle, and taxi-related traffic on certain national roads carrying people to their holiday destinations. During the Easter and festive season between 20 000 to 40 000 people visit the different beachfronts (Maluleke, SAPA-AFP, & BBC, 2005). Peak season accidents are attributed mainly to driver fatigue, speeding, poor vehicle conditions, and callous driver behaviours (Ministry of Transport, 2002). It may be instructive to note that South Africa is uncommon among emerging economies in that it has a fairly good urban road infrastructure, but an under-developed public transport system. South Africa's transport system is associated with a poor supply of public transport, inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, an increased use of private vehicles, and a mix of public transport vehicles such as taxis and buses (Road Accident Fund Commission, 2002).

News reporting and discourse analysis

In this study we used discourse analysis as a method and interpretive framework to examine the dominant and non-dominant ways in which traffic accidents are portrayed in print media reports. Since discourses in newspapers work by creating a relationship between the writer and reader, we also seek to explore the insinuations and implications evoked by newspaper headlines and texts on traffic-related incidents. We consider the underlying messages contained in headlines and articles as newspapers may draw on different ideological perspectives and emotive technologies to influence the readership to be responsive in particular ways (see Parker, 1992). In so doing we aim to highlight silenced and marginal views on traffic accidents.

We understand discourses to be a set of regulated statements which construct an object of inquiry (e.g. traffic accidents). According to Parker (1992), discourses are realised in texts; are about objects and subjects; are a coherent system of meanings; refer to other discourses; reflect their own way of speaking; are historically located; support institutions; reproduce power relations; and have ideological effects. According to Burr (1995), discourses — as a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, and statements — produce a particular version of events.

Such definitions suggest that discourses offer truth claims, ways to interpret the world, versions of reality, and opinions to adopt. Discourses, which are about the production of knowledge through language, make it possible to limit or enable the construction of a topic in a certain way.

News production: values and headlines

News production involves a very complex set of social and discursive interactions through which news agencies and their journalists acquire a wide variety of information from diverse sources. It can be argued that news reports are inherently influenced by the news agencies' social schemata and underlying social representations, journalists' own ideas, sources, and personal idiosyncrasies, and a range of news values (Morrison, 2006; Picard & Brody, 2000).

News values related to impact, proximity, prominence, relevance, and human interest are all important in determining how much significance a news story is accorded by particular media (Morrison, 2006). In the case of traffic the **impact** value is determined by the perceived magnitude and consequences of the accident, namely, the number of cars wrecked and the number of 'innocent' people injured, killed or maimed. The more people affected, the bigger the impact of the story. The **proximity** value is realised through reader association, namely, the closer the target reading audience is to the event, the greater its news value. The proximity value influences which page the story will be printed on. In terms of the **prominence** value the media assume that the public cares more about celebrities than they do about people they do not know. Similarly it is surmised that public transport commuters are more likely to be concerned about taxi-related accidents. So, for example, when celebrities die in a car accident their death is likely to be reported on the front page, just as taxi-related accidents are likely to be widely reported on. The **relevance** value is signified when events such as traffic accidents affect the majority of South Africans, albeit directly or indirectly. Lastly, an event is deemed to be newsworthy when it is associated with **human interest**. Even though a story itself may be weakly related to the other news values, it may be defined as news when, for instance, it gets people talking about the magnitude and serious consequences of accidents on South Africa's roads (Morrison, 2006).

The print media deploy these influential values alongside well-crafted headlines to maintain an edge in a fiercely competitive environment. Headlines are the newspapers' tools to attract prospective buyers and imprint their individuality on what is otherwise a mass-produced product. Newspapers make use of certain linguistic features such as puns and emotive vocabulary within headlines in an attempt to imprint certain key messages and perspectives on the readers' mind. Headlines, which provide an indication of how an article may portray an accident, are used to convey the first and

sometimes the most significant message to the news reading public. For those who do not purchase or read newspapers headlines on billboards may be the most important and only source of information about traffic accidents. Headlines also draw part of their influence and meaning from what is assumed to be the readers' shared cultural, political and general knowledge. So, although headlines may sometimes seem deeply ambiguous, the surface differences may be a disguise for articulating deeper meanings and associations (Develotte & Rechniewski, 2002).

Hegemony, consensus, and agency in news-making

So, in pursuing the aims of this article, we recognise that newspapers are a form of public discourse, which play a certain role in: the (re)production of hegemonic knowledge and ideologies, creating public consensus, and sometimes challenging dominant discourses by maintaining their independence and autonomous agency (Consalvo, 1998; Kellner, 1995; Louw, 2001; MacDonald, 2003; Picard & Brody, 2000; Seedat, 1999).

Hegemonic ideologies are asserted through persuasive and carefully crafted discourses that suggest that the interests of the dominant classes in society represent the interests of the entire society and that the production and preservation of specific forms of socio-political structures, economic policies, consciousness, beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices are natural and universal (Kellner, 1995; Louw, 2001). In order to remain dominant, the economic elite work to ensure that their discourses and practices are seen as primary, authoritative, and legitimate. With the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa's media were freed from apartheid-generated restrictions. The new South African Constitution upholds freedom of the media, freedom to receive and disseminate information, freedom of artistic expression, academic freedom, and freedom of scientific research (ANON, 2006). These freedoms and the introduction of black economic empowerment (BEE) have ensured that both the journalists and the content of the news reports are more representative of the population and its concerns (Picard & Brody, 2000; Verwey, 1998). However, the media, which target a large part of the population, may continue to be an important source of communication to advance and confirm the elite's interests (Louw, 2001). Given that the media are still owned by dominant economic classes, they may continue to justify and entrench specific economic, social, and political relations. Sometimes the imperatives of economic empowerment, political pressures, and vested social interests may all converge to limit the content of news articles (Verwey, 1998). For instance, the recent decision by the public broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), not to screen a documentary on Thabo Mbeki has raised questions about political pressure on the media and strengthened suspicions about the close ties between the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the SABC which is supposedly governed by editorial independence. Advocacy groups focused on press freedom argue that the SABC's decision is illustrative of dominant party political interference and hegemonic influences in sections of the media.

The media also operate to create *consensus* around the production and dissemination of specific news content that may resonate with prevailing popular and dominant discourses (Seedat, 1999). For Noam Chomsky

[T]he major media are large corporations, owned by and interlinked with even larger conglomerates. Like other corporations, they sell a product to a market. The market is advertisers — that is, other businesses. The product is audiences ... not surprisingly, the picture of the world presented reflects the narrow and biased interests and values of the sellers, the buyers and the product'. (1993, p. 25; See also Consalvo, 1998; Louw, 2001)

So, despite press freedom in South Africa, the news media may still be guilty of constructing a version of reality for their viewers or readers that is partial to dominant discourses and vested political and economic interests. Partial constructions may be achieved by the use of selective sources, the inclusion or omission of certain questions, the provision of a narrow range of actual and potential

contending views or when one view of the reported incident or phenomenon may be systematically preferred over others (Consalvo, 1998; Louw, 2001). Journalists may privilege certain information whilst limiting other information, and in so doing they may help shape what is thought about in society (Louw, 2001). As a result news reports may aim to create the agenda, consensus, and parameters for what may be discussed in society (Louw, 2001). ‘The media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but its [sic] stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about’ (Cohen, 1963, p. 13). Through *symbiotic relationships* with other professional communicators and powerful and visible institutions, news reporting may be ‘de-randomised’ when journalists use certain spokespeople regularly and consistently (e.g., SAPS, Arrive Alive)¹ as a source for locating and reporting events. These types of sources, employed as marketing communicators by their institutions, may engage in spin doctoring and image-building. They may use symbols and specific forms of language to promote a sense of a common vision and public consensus around specific issues and events (Louw, 2001; Matheson, 2005).

Given the complex nature of the media, they may also exercise *agency* in the interest of the public good and marginal voices. The media may extend resources to challenge and reconstruct the dominant discourses on public health, social, and political phenomena (see Seedat, 1999). Dominant discourses are always subject to being challenged as news audiences are active in the process of selecting, comprehending and evaluating media content. Space dedicated for ‘letters to the editor’ may affirm the print media’s commitment to public agency, challenging dominant presentations of events and giving voice to the under-represented in society. Symbiotic relationships between journalists and spokespersons for particular issues such as violence against women may help challenge dominant discourses related to patriarchy.

Depending on the specific role the media aim to privilege at a given period in society, and extrapolating from Iyengar’s (1991) research on television news, we propose that the print media frame stories in one of two ways, namely, *episodically* or *thematically*. Within *episodic framing*, which is associated with the hegemonic and consensus functions, news is routinely reported in the form of specific events or particular cases. *Episodic* framing depicts concrete events that illustrate issues in an event-oriented manner. In contrast *thematic framing*, characteristic of the media’s agency function, places the accent on political issues and events in some general context. *Thematic* framing analyses the effects, hidden causes, and roots of a particular incident (Iyengar, 1991; London, 1993).

Through a series of experiments Iyengar (1991) found that whereas people exposed to *episodic* reports tended to under-regard societal responsibility for events, those individuals accustomed to *thematic* reports under considered individual responsibility. For example, he observed that those who viewed episodically framed stories about poverty, which featured homeless or unemployed people, attributed poverty mainly to individual failings, including laziness or low education. Those who watched thematically framed news stories about high national rates of unemployment or poverty tended to explain causes and solutions primarily in terms of governmental policies and other factors beyond the victims’ control (Iyengar, 1991; London, 1993).

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

The data corpus, namely, the texts for the present study consisted of newspaper reports of traffic accidents. At the request of the first author, the University of the Free State, the only institution in South Africa to offer a Newspaper Clipping service, conducted a search using a computerised database service called SA Media to find relevant newspaper clippings. Key words such as ‘car crash’, ‘traffic accident’, ‘traffic fatalities’, ‘traffic deaths’, ‘death on roads’, ‘road accidents’, ‘Easter’, and ‘festive season’, were used to conduct the search. The search focused on articles dealing with traffic accidents and crashes that occurred during the Easter period (17 March 2005–1 April 2005) and year-

end festive season (December 2005–January 2006). Fifty-two newspaper articles (see Table 1) were accordingly identified and selected as texts from the following newspapers: The Star ($n = 17$), Sunday Times ($n = 6$), The Citizen ($n = 7$), Sunday Tribune ($n = 4$), Sowetan ($n = 8$), City Press ($n = 2$), and Pretoria News ($n = 10$). These newspapers were chosen as they are English-medium South African newspapers that enjoy wide circulation (see Table 2) throughout the country and especially in the province of Gauteng which recorded the highest number of fatal crashes for the 2004–2006 period compared to the other eight South African provinces (RTMC, 2007).

Data analysis

The first author followed five steps to analyse the data: (1) All the selected articles were read to obtain a general overview of how the print media portray traffic accidents; (2) Guided by Parker's (1992) criteria for discourse analysis (see Table 3), each article was individually analysed. So during this step the analyst identified subjects (e.g., us, them, women, taxi drivers), objects (e.g., taxis, cars, buses), and institutions that were either supported or criticised in the article (e.g., family, Arrive Alive, metro police); (3) Through an extensive and careful reading the analyst identified and recorded both dominant and non-dominant discourses; In order to identify dominant discourses the analyst noted terminologies, phrases, headline messages, and attributions that were repeatedly used in the articles. Less frequently used terms, phrases, and headline messages were noted to identify marginal discourses; (4) After delineating a picture of traffic accidents presented by the identified discourses, the analyst highlighted texts that were illustrative of the identified discourses; (5) As a final step the second author integrated the identified discourses and illustrative texts into a critically oriented interpretive framework that took cognisance of the multiple roles of the media and media values influencing news production. The second author also analysed headlines for key messages and by way of ongoing discussions with the analyst he encouraged a mindfulness of Parker's criteria.

We now present the key messages gleaned from the headlines and simultaneously show their linkages to the discourses identified through a reading of the selected 52 news articles on traffic accidents. The omissions and silences inherent in the headline messages become clear when we examine the major discourses woven into the text of the news articles themselves. The format we use to present the outcome of our analysis shows that the discourses are in fact layered onto the foundation created by the three identified headline messages themselves.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON TRAFFIC ENVIRONMENT

Traffic accidents make headlines: A war zone

Within the first and perhaps most pronounced headline message the Easter and festive road environment is portrayed as a site of fatal and ubiquitous danger through an accent on the magnitude and consequences of traffic accidents. Headlines such as, 'Transport is the main cause of non-natural death in the city' (Goldstone, 2005, p. 1); 'Deadly start to holidays: Dozens killed on road at weekend ...' (Raymond, Freuser, & SAPA, 2005, p. 1) define the consequences in alarmist and catastrophic terms such as 'hell-run' (Cox, 2005, p. 2), 'horror' (Hosken, 2005a, p. 1), and 'carnage' (Maluleke *et al.*, 2005, p. 1).

In assuming a dramatic tone, these alarmist, bold, eye-catching headlines, such as, 'Chilling figures reveal Gauteng's hell-run' (Cox, 2005, p. 2); 'Easter marred by road carnage' (Maluleke *et al.*, 2005, p. 1) produce images of perpetual torment ('hell-run'), brutality, and war ('carnage'). Such images may in turn evoke a sense of horror and shock among readers. These headlines also make use of the spoken voice, and the language and tone of tragedy, for example, 'I saw my parents die: Women watches in horror as mom and dad perish in bus crash' (Hosken, Du Plooy, Meijerhof, & Cahill, 2006, p. 1) to elicit an emotive reading and evoke feelings of profound sadness, loss, and helplessness. Alongside the emotive language the message of ubiquitous danger and pervasive horror

Table 1. Newspaper articles identified and selected as texts

- Bell, T. (2005, March 18). Truckers need a better deal to Arrive Alive. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Brummer, S., & Sole, S. (2006, September 15 to 21). M & G exposé stifled. *Mail and Guardian*, p. 2.
- Byrne, R. (2006, January 8). Behind the wheel with a Wallaby. *Sunday Times*, p. 15.
- Cahill, M. (2006, January 11). Docket opened after three die in bus crash. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Cox, A. (2005, March 18). Chilling figures reveal Gauteng's hell-run. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Du Plooy, C. (2005, December 7). Boost for road safety. *Pretoria News*, p. 2.
- Du Plooy, C., & Hosken, G. (2005, December 10). Snarl-up as truck rolls. *Pretoria News*, p. 1.
- Erasmus, M. (2005, December 8). Why does the law seem to apply to all citizens -- except for taxi drivers? *The Star*, p. 22.
- Eybers, T. (2006, January 4). Crash victims will feel the pinch. *Citizen*, p. 4.
- Gifford, G. (2005, December 7). Prisoners involved in a pile-up on highway. *The Star*, p. 5.
- Goldstone, C. (2005, March 22). Transport is the main cause of non-natural death in the city. *Pretoria News*, p. 1.
- Hagen, H. (2005a, December 12). Road safety shock: 90 000 drivers of public vehicles don't have permits. *The Citizen*, p. 1.
- Hagen, H. (2005b, March 23). Easter Angels to the rescue on busy roads. *The Citizen*, p. 15.
- Hosken, G. (2005a, March 18). Three pupils die in a car chase horror: Two others in a critical condition. *Pretoria News*, p. 1.
- Hosken, G. (2005b, March 18). Spate of truck crashes has motorists worried. *Pretoria News*, p. 3.
- Hosken, G. (2005c, April 01). Motorist killed in crash with bus. *Pretoria News*, p. 2.
- Hosken, G., Du Plooy, C., Meijerhof, S., & Cahill, M. (2006, January 10). I saw my parents die. *The Star*, p. 1.
- Ka Nzapheza, V. (2005, December 22). High price for bad driving. *The Citizen*, p. 4.
- Khan, T. (2005, March 23). Most drivers killed are over the limit. *The Star*, p. 3.
- Khangale, N. (2005, March 24). Arrive Alive hawk eyes on most dangerous routes. *The Star*, p. 3.
- Klopper, D. (2005, December 2). The South African National Roads Agency Limited putting road safety first. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Mamela, M. (2005, December 15). Inanda commuters claim to be in danger. *Sowetan*, p. 1.
- Mahlangu, I. (2006, January 8). Speed and fatigue top killers on roads. *Sunday Times*, p. 5.
- Maluleke, E.V., SAPA-AFP, & BBC. (2005, March 27). Easter marred by road carnage. *City Press*, p. 1.
- Maphumulo, S., Goldstone, C., Johannes, T., & SAPA. (2005, March 29). Fewer accidents reported countrywide. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Maponya, F., & Mooki, V. (2005, March 29). Motorists get it right: Arrive Alive campaign a success. *Sowetan*, p. 6.
- Marrian, N. (2005, December 20). Pedestrians number half the road deaths. *The Citizen*, p. 3.
- Meyer, J. (2005, March 27). Our children are dying on our streets. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 13.
- Mfihle, N. (2006, 9 January). Bus company held liable for death of passenger. *Sowetan*, p. 5.
- Ministry of Transport. (2002). *Report of the Road Accident Fund Commission* (Vol. 1).
- Moerdyk, C. (2005, March 27). It's what you think that kills you. *Sunday Times*, p. 7.
- Molosalankhwe, B. (2005, March 18). Minibus crash leaves 21 pupils hurt. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Molwedi, P. (2005, December 12). Fire-fighter acquitted after collision that killed three: Angry father says the police made a 'mess' of investigation. *The Star*, p. 3.
- Motloun, M. (2006, January 16). Birds Goalie dies in crash. *Sowetan*, p. 4.
- Otto, H., & SAPA. (2005, March, 26). Easter weekend roadblock in city nets 24. *Pretoria News*, p.1.
- Prembev, D. (2005, December 18). 24 killed in crashes on holiday rush to the sea. *Sunday Independent*, p. 2.
- Quintal, A. (2005, March 31). Volunteers to spy on road offenders. *The Star*, p. 1.
- Raymond, L. (2005, December 29). Road death toll costs SA billions. *Pretoria News*, p. 2.
- Raymond, L., Freuser, C., & SAPA. (2005, December 19). Deadly start to holidays: Dozens killed on roads at weekend and 10 drown. *The Star*, p. 1.
- Rondganger, L. (2005, March 24). Roadblocks galore aim to keep drivers alert, sober. *The Star*, p. 3.

Table 1. Continued

Ryan, M. (2005, March 27). Victims of fatal KZN bus crash left stranded. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 5.

Russouw, S., & Ajam, K. (2005, December 17). Mbeki to blame for road carnage — motorist. *Saturday Star*, p. 1.

Senior, C., & SAPA. (2005, December 19). Get-tough cops step up traffic presence: road blocks to check for drunken motorists in particular. *The Star*, p. 2.

Singh, N. (2005, March 27). Bikers crash and pile up on the N2 South. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 3.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 23). Conditions for truckers are impossible — and bad for roads. *The Star*, p. 2.

Staff reporter. (2005, December 12). Drive Safely, Arrive Alive. *The Star*, p. 8.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 24). Drive to keep death off the roads. *Sowetan*, p. 12.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 22). Finally, the will to change. *The Star*, p. 14.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 22). Let’s stop the carnage on the roads. *Pretoria News*, p. 15.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 27). Profile of fatal injuries in South Africa. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 2.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 30). Steady decline in road deaths. *Sowetan*, p. 14.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 30). He’s fast but he’s a bloody idiot. *Pretoria News*, p. 13.

Table 2. Circulation figures for South African newspapers

Daily Newspapers	Weekend Newspapers	Weeklies
Beeld (105 184)	City Press (195 663)	Mail & Guardian (17 202)
Burger (90 927)	Independent on Saturday (60 568)	
Business Day (41 858)	Sunday Times (504 072)	
Cape Argus (73 691)	Sunday Tribune (119 495)	
Cape Times (51 428)	Weekend Argus (108 024)	
The Citizen (74 037)	Weekend Post (28 446)	
Daily Dispatch (31 737)	Weekend Witness (30 554)	
The Mercury (43 129)		
Pretoria News (28 140)		
Sowetan (143 926)		
The Star (168 977)		
The Witness (23 547)		

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC)

Note: Circulation figures are indicated in brackets

is further pronounced when such headlines capitalise on the prominence value to draw attention to the fatal or non-fatal consequences of traffic accidents involving public figures related to the entertainment industry and the popular sport of soccer, for example ‘Birds goalie dies in car crash’ (Motlounge, 2006, p. 4).

The emotive readings and core alarmist constructions presented by the first headline message are clearly amplified through specific words and dramatic phrases in the texts of the news articles themselves. The repeated use of phrases such as ‘stop the carnage’ and ‘war on our roads’ (Russouw & Ajam, 2005, p. 1), and ‘killing fields’ (Moerdyk, 2005, p. 7) reiterates the dominant discourse: the holiday season road environment is a site of slaughter, horrific deaths, and brutality. The sense of horror, destruction, and loss, associated with the ‘war’ on South Africa’s roads is further amplified in articles that place the focus on ‘lives lost’, ‘costs to the economy’, and emotional trauma, for example, ‘the carnage on South African roads saw 12 000 lives lost last year at a cost of R38 billion to the economy’ (Ka Nzapheza, 2005, p. 4); ‘the cost to our country is astronomical, not only in rand terms,

Table 3. Parker's twenty steps

-
- A discourse is realised in texts:**
1. Treating our objects of study as texts which are described, put into words.
 2. Exploring connotations through some sort of free association, which is best done with other people.
- A discourse is about objects:**
3. Asking what objects are referred to, and describing them, (i.e. itemise the objects).
 4. Talking about the talk as if it were an object, a discourse.
- A discourse contains subjects:**
5. Specifying what types of person are talked about in this discourse, some of which may already have been identified as objects, (i.e. itemising the subject).
 6. Speculating about what they can say in the discourse, what you could say if you identified with them, (what rights to speak in that way of speaking). What they might say within the framework of rules presupposed by the next.
- A discourse is a coherent system of meanings:**
7. Mapping a picture of the world this discourse presents.
 8. Working out how a text using this discourse would deal with objections to the terminology.
- A discourse refers to other discourses:**
9. Setting contrasting ways of speaking, discourses, against each other and looking at the different objects they constitute.
 10. Identifying points where they overlap, where they constitute what look like the same objects in different ways.
- A discourse reflects on its own way of speaking:**
11. Referring to other texts to elaborate the discourse as it occurs, perhaps implicitly, and address different audiences. How these ways of seeing or speaking address different audiences.
 12. Reflecting on the term used to describe the discourse, a matter which involves moral/political choices on the part of the analyst. Labelling the discourse.
- A discourse is historically located:**
13. Looking at how and where the discourses emerged.
 14. Describing how they have changed, and told a story, usually about how they refer to things which were always there to be discovered.
- Discourses support institutions:**
15. Identifying institutions which are reinforced when this or that discourse is used. Institutions which are supported by the discourse.
 16. Identifying institutions that are attacked or subverted when this or that discourse appears.
- Discourses reproduce power relations:**
17. Looking at which categories of person gain and lose from the employment of the discourse. Who are the beneficiaries?
 18. Looking at who would want to promote and who would want to dissolve the discourse.
- Discourses have ideological effects:**
19. Showing how a discourse connects with other discourses which sanction oppression.
 20. Showing how the discourses allow dominant groups to tell their narratives about the past in order to justify the present, and prevent those who use subjugated discourses from making history.
-

Source: Parker, I. (1992).

but also in terms of trauma and pain it causes the victims and those closest to them' (Du Plooy & Hosken, 2005, p. 1). This discourse may, at a subliminal level, produce anxiety and panic among readers when texts juxtapose and contrast the 'horror' and 'firmament' of 'war' and 'carnage' with 'coast' and 'holiday' that are integral to the quest for 'peace', 'tranquillity' and the sublime, for example, 'the Easter weekend is almost upon us, and with it the spectre of more carnage on our roads as so many of us head lemming-like for the coast' (Staff reporter, *The Star*, 2005, p. 14); 'every year the death toll on our roads during peak holiday periods reads like a war casualty list', (Staff reporter, *Sowetan*, 2005, p. 12).

Science confers legitimacy

Integral to the message and discourse of danger and catastrophe, some headlines, such as, ‘Transport is the main cause of non-natural death in the city’ (Goldstone, 2005, p. 1); ‘Road death toll costs SA billions’ (Raymond, 2005, p. 2) tend to allude to data, empirically produced by research and tertiary educational institutions, to give legitimacy to the holiday season focus on traffic accidents and the associated alarmist messages. Texts of news articles featuring such headlines do in fact use empirical data to present the road environment as significant sites ‘... of unnatural deaths in this country’ (Staff reporter, Sowetan, 2005, p. 12).

The reference to empirically produced data including statistics may create the idea that the reports bearing certain ‘informed’ headlines are representations of the ‘true’ reality on the roads, and are wide-ranging and objective. Instead, the selected headlines and articles may tend to provide a narrow range of discourse by citing data that focus primarily on the outcome of the accident, rather than on the full range of determinants of road deaths (Shah, 2005).

However, while the reference to empirically produced data in headlines and associated news articles may serve to articulate traffic deaths as an authentic phenomenon that warrants public worry and media focus, it must be noted that research institutions may also tend to appeal to the symbiotic relationship they enjoy with the media when aiming to convey a specific public health or scientifically-informed social message.

Villains, victims, and causes

The second message, gleaned from the headlines and associated discourse, centres around delineating the victims and villains of the ‘war’ on the roads as well as the causes of the ‘carnage’, namely, traffic deaths and accidents.

Within this message the headlines repeatedly feature minibuses, for example, ‘Minibus crash leaves 21 pupils hurt’ (Molosalankhwe, 2005, p. 2), buses, for example, ‘Victims of fatal KZN bus crash left stranded’ (Ryan, 2005, p. 5), and trucks, for example, ‘Spate of truck crashes has motorists worried’ (Hosken, 2005b, p. 3), as vehicles that are regularly implicated in traffic accidents. The repetition and constant juxtaposition of drivers and occupants also subtly signify occupants of motorcars as particular victims, for example, ‘3 pupils die in a car chase horror’ (Hosken, 2005a, p. 1), and truckers, bus drivers, mini-taxi drivers as habitual villains. Only the rare headline defines bikers and pedestrians as victims even though pedestrians are most vulnerable to road accidents. The odd headline deploys the spoken voice and dramatic language to cast aspersions on police competency in order to entrench the idea of victims and villains, for example, ‘Fire-fighter acquitted after collision that killed three: Angry father says the police made a ‘mess’ of investigations’ (Molwedi, 2005).

The repeated juxtaposition also has the effect of portraying drivers and occupants of motorcars as particularly vulnerable to public transport and freight-related vehicles on the road, for example, ‘Motorist killed in crash with bus’ (Hosken, 2005c). Such headlines tend to insinuate that blame be accorded primarily to drivers of larger vehicles, driver failure to adhere to legal requirements, for example, ‘90 000 drivers of public vehicles don’t have permits’ (Hagen, 2005, p. 1), and that accidents be attributed to speeding, for example, ‘car chase horror’ (Hosken, 2005a, p. 1), driver attitude, behaviour, and fatigue, for example, ‘He’s fast but he’s a bloody idiot’ (Staff reporter, Pretoria News, 2005, p. 13); ‘Speed and fatigue top killers on roads’ (Mahlangu, 2006, p. 5). The occasional reference to working ‘conditions for truckers’ (Staff Reporter, The Star, 2005, p. 2), and corporate liability, for example, ‘Bus company held liable for death of passenger’ (Mfihle, 2006, p. 5), tends to widen the scope of this second message to draw attention to the environmental and institutional determinants of traffic accidents. However, the focus on corporate responsibility and drivers’ working conditions represents a non-dominant aspect of the second headline message conveyed to readers.

The walking victims

While taxi, truck, and bus drivers representing motorised transport are cast as significant ‘killers’ of fellow motorists on the roads, within the reviewed texts pedestrians emerge as a rarely mentioned group of vulnerable victims on the roads, for example, ‘Pedestrians have constituted almost half of the 747 fatalities caused by road accidents since December 1’ (Marrian, 2005, p. 3); ‘In only 15% of road deaths are drivers the victims — almost all victims are pedestrians’ (Staff reporter, Sunday Tribune, 2005, p. 2). Similarly, child pedestrians are also rarely portrayed as a particular unprotected and vulnerable group of pedestrians, for example, ‘Children aged 5 to 9 years were the most vulnerable (Meyer, 2005, p. 13).

When pedestrians are presented as vulnerable road users the articles imply that they may be responsible for their own deaths and injuries, for example, ‘... the perception among pedestrians that if they can see the car’s headlights at night then the driver of the car can see them’ (Moerdyk, 2005, p. 7); ‘a main problem on the roads ... unsafe crossing of roads by pedestrians’ (Du Plooy, 2005, p.2).

This non-dominant discourse, which is masked by the overwhelming focus on occupants of motorised vehicles, assumes an episodic frame and so does not reflect on the range of determinants of pedestrian fatalities. With the exception of the rare article that reports on calls for proper pedestrian infrastructure (Klopper, 2005; Meyer, 2005), this discourse tends to be silent about how the inadequate accommodation of pedestrians in the road environment, namely, the unavailability of sidewalks, pedestrian over- and under-passes, pedestrian crossings, and street lighting, influence pedestrian behaviour and contribute to pedestrian deaths. Even though all commuters who use public transport are pedestrians at some point during their daily or occasional trips, especially when changing modes of transport to or from different locales, their under-representation in news reports has the effect of equating the road environment primarily with motorised road users, and thereby privileging the interests and safety, albeit limited, of the motorised public. The message is that the road belongs primarily to the motorists (see Roberts, 2007).

Bad road behaviour makes bad citizens

Within the construction of perpetrators in the text the causes of the ‘carnage’ tend to be attributed primarily, but not exclusively, to the ‘intolerable behaviour of motorists’ (Staff reporter, Pretoria News, 2005, p. 15), ‘human-related factors such as poor levels of driver training or discipline and general careless attitude of drivers’ (Ka Nzapheza, 2005, p. 4); and drunk driving and speeding’ (Russouw & Ajam, 2005, p. 1). Other articles pronounce ‘fatigue’, ‘overloading’, ‘overtaking in the face of oncoming traffic’ and ‘disregard for traffic signs’ (Mahlangu, 2006, p. 5) as major determinants of traffic accidents.

There is rare mention of corporate responsibility, for example, ‘Bus company held liable for death of passenger’ (Mfihle, 2006, p. 5) that is coupled with a call for law enforcement measures, for example, ‘Authorities have to do something to stop these accidents by either taking the vehicles off the road or suspending the drivers and fining the companies’ (Hosken, 2005b, p. 3).

The dominant accent on enforcement strategies, drivers’ hazardous behaviours, for example, ‘both bus drivers had been driving at high speed and had lost control of their vehicle’ (Mamela, 2005, p. 1), obscures the role of working conditions including long operating hours and time pressures that truck, bus and taxi drivers face routinely. The emphasis on individual responsibility is particularly noteworthy in articles that associate road behaviour with the exercise of citizenship, especially in the case of taxi drivers:

Why do some laws apply to all citizens-except for taxi drivers? ...The most common perception among taxi drivers is that, unlike private motorists, they make a living on the roads. So not only do they believe they have the right of way but that they are exempt from the rules of the road ... Can you imagine what would happen if safety regulations were totally ignored by other transport

industries in this country as this one does? (Erasmus, 2005, p. 22)

In presenting road behaviour and road culture as an expression of citizenship, for instance, 'fundamentally transforming our road culture is a critical element in building responsible citizenship' (Cox, 2005, p. 2), the implied suggestion is that 'bad' taxi drivers make bad citizens. Within the scope of the data presented in this article we note that the spoken voice is deployed to reinforce the idea that taxi drivers are in fact unworthy citizens and agents of pervasive mayhem, for example, 'I imagine there is not one person in Gauteng who doesn't have at least one taxi horror story to share' (Erasmus, 2005, p. 22) on South African roads. However, such constructions may only offer partial understanding about the involvement of taxis in accidents during the holiday season. During 2005 and 2006 minibuses and minibus taxis accounted for about 0.10% of all vehicle-related crashes, and it is estimated that taxi-related accidents account for 10.6% of accidents during the Easter weekend each year. In contrast pedestrians constitute the largest percentage of traffic-related deaths (Ministry of Transport, 2002). However, the large numbers of people hurt or killed in a single taxi-related accident may well resonate with the proximity, relevance and human interest values that the print media deploy to perpetuate the view that taxi drivers are the primary perpetrators of deaths on the road, for example, 'Minibus crash leaves 21 pupils hurt', (Molosalankhwe, 2005, p. 2); '10 people were killed in a head-on collision between a minibus and 4x4 vehicle' (Mahlangu, 2006, p. 5).

The discourse on citizenship and driving behaviour assumes an ideological dimension especially when South African drivers are compared with their Australian and United Kingdom (UK) counterparts. The message is that South African motorists, specifically taxi drivers, should be regulated by law enforcement to emulate the Australian and UK motorists who are inherently law-abiding and compliant: 'In Australia you just don't speed, you wear a seat belt and strap the kids in. If you break the law, you get caught and there's a very similar set up in the UK' (Mahlangu, 2005, p. 5); 'South Africa should follow the example of Australia as they share similar road conditions' (Russouw & Ajam, 2005, p. 1).

At a superficial level such a comparison may be read as sound advice and at best as an ideologically benign comparison. However, when considered in the larger socio-political context wherein countries are rated as 'developed', 'emerging', or 'developing' the comparison may not be all together ideologically innocent.

The suggestion is that South Africa, an emerging economy, 'developing' nation, and an African geopolitical entity should look to well-governed, 'developed' European states and 'advanced' governments for promoting effective traffic safety enforcement among the motorised public and by implication good citizenship. The panacea lies in replicating the dominant driver-centred and traffic enforcement model that inculcates a strict adherence to the law as in Australia and the UK. There is no mention of South African and African specificities that may influence the uncritical adoption of Australian or UK approaches. For instance, scarce resources, are likely to limit the immediate adoption of wide-scale enforcement measures in South Africa. This discourse resonates with the discourse of war that offers justification for expanding law enforcement and omits addressing issues related to the development and accommodation of under-developed transportation services, taxi driver working conditions, and driver fatigue.

Who are the protectors?

The third headline message focuses on the positive aspects of traffic safety promotion initiatives and the efforts of both governmental and civil society actors working to reduce traffic accidents on South Africa's road. In contrast to the message of 'doom and gloom' embedded in the first set of headlines, this message places the accent on a decline in accidents, citing reports released by traffic officials, for example, 'Fewer accidents reported countrywide' (Maphumulo, Goldstone, Johannes, & SAPA, 2005, p. 2); 'Steady decline in road deaths' (Staff reporter, Sowetan, 2005, p. 14). In this headline

message the decline tends to be associated with the demonstration of a political will by traffic authorities, for example, 'The South African National Roads Agency Limited putting Road Safety first' (Klopper, 2005, p. 2), safety campaigns, for example, 'Arrive Alive campaign a success' (Maponya & Mooki, 2005, p. 6), and police enforcement, for example, 'Get-tough cops step up traffic presence' (Senior & SAPA, 2005, p. 2); 'Easter weekend roadblock in city nets 24' (Otto & SAPA, 2005, p.1). One rare headline, representing a non-dominant component of this message, acknowledges the safety efforts of motorists, otherwise cast as victims or bad drivers, for example, 'Motorists get it right' (Maponya & Mooki, 2005, p. 6). In contrast to the 'villains', the safety promotion actors are indicated as 'Easter Angels' (Hagen, 2005b, p. 15), 'hawk eyes' (Khangale, 2005, p. 3), and 'volunteers' (Quintal, 2005, p. 1). So, following on the second message which locates traffic accident causation primarily within driver behaviour, the third message champions enforcement and public awareness as the main drivers of traffic safety, and defines safety officers as virtuous, vigilant, and altruistic.

This headline message also resonates with the discourses embedded in the newspaper texts. In the texts emergency service workers are the rescuers and first responders in the war, for example, 'Emergency services, hospitals and mortuaries are gearing up for another, hopefully lesser, bout of carnage on the roads' (Cox, 2005, p. 2). Rescuers include volunteer health services providers, experienced paramedics, and traffic management professionals who operate during peak holiday periods in order to reduce and prevent accidents. Other volunteers include members of the public who have been recruited by the relevant transport authorities to act as volunteers and '*impimpis*' (spies). Their purpose is to make 'anonymous reports on motorists violating traffic laws' (Quintal, 2005, p. 1). All these rescuers are constructed as worthy South African citizens, who are 'heroic', 'selfless', and sometimes even divinely inspired protectors nicknamed 'Easter Angels' (Hagen, 2005b, p. 15).

Traffic officers, the benevolent force in the 'war' on the roads, protect the vulnerable and 'good' citizens, for example, 'ensure law-abiding citizens are safe and feel secure' (Senior & SAPA, 2005, p. 2); 'apprehend the 'bad' book offenders and assist motorists' (Senior & SAPA, 2005, p. 2); 'keep drivers alert, sober' (Rondganger, 2005, p. 3); and enforce safety regulations and measures, for example, 'focus on speed, alcohol, overloading, vehicle and driver fitness, and pedestrian safety' (Cox, 2005, p. 2). Whereas traffic officers are the mediating force in the war between prospective victims and villains, the emergency care workers are labelled as the healing and angelic authority serving victims.

While the emergency health care workers focus on healing the wounds of war, the traffic officials mediate in the war by centring their campaigns such as Arrive Alive (2006) on driver-related behaviours and attitudes. Their safety efforts are restricted to achieving immediate results and short-term benefits rather than finding sustainable solutions that address the multiple determinants of road accidents including the role of structural and environmental factors in road safety. The accent on traffic law enforcement as the panacea for safety is, however, used to justify and call for a greater investment in deploying law-enforcement officials, for example, 'the country needs at least 70 000 traffic officers to help stop the carnage' (Russouw & Ajam, 2005, p. 1), thereby encouraging consensus for hegemonic approaches to road safety.

CONCLUSION

Resonating with Connelly and MacLeod's (2003) study which identified discourses of war in South African news reports on HIV/AIDS, the scope of this study constructs the Easter and festive season road environment primarily as a war-zone, in which different road users are locked in 'carnage' and the torment of death ('hell-run'). Building on the key messages conveyed by the headlines, the discourses of war embedded in the newspaper texts produce victims, villains, protectors, and rescuers, so as to engender support for certain hegemonic opinions and actions. The villains are mainly drivers of public transport vehicles such as minivan taxis and buses, large vehicles such as trucks and other

non-law abiding motorists. In particular taxi drivers, whose commitment to law and order and citizenship are called into question, are cast as the regular perpetrators of the 'war' on the holiday season roads. The 'victims' are primarily motorists, vulnerable occupants of public transport vehicles, passengers in motorcars and sometimes pedestrians and bikers. The rescuers are altruistically minded and 'angelic' emergency services personnel operating to 'heal' the wounds of injury alongside traffic officers who, as state sanctioned actors, are portrayed as protectors and agents of safety. The protectors deploy enforcement modalities (e.g., fines, jail, road-blocks) designed to modify road-user behaviour and rid the traffic environment of villains and perpetrators of 'war' and 'carnage'.

Bold headlines containing a language and tone of tragedy and empirically produced data are used to reinforce an emotive and specific reading of the determinants of traffic accidents. As such the accent is on individual determinants such as driver recklessness, speeding and drunkenness.

The discourse of war, based on an episodic framing of traffic-related news and news values that: punctuate the *impact* and consequences of accidents, reveal the *prominence* of certain accident victims, and capitalise on the readers' assumed *proximate* association with accidents, in particular taxi-related accidents, seeks to produce public consensus and thereby legitimisation for the media's heightened focus on traffic accidents during the holiday season. This discourse of war, that engenders subliminal and sometimes overt levels of public panic, horror and fear, also functions to create support for hegemonic ideologies that advocate criminal-justice and educational-type solutions for accidents and for containing villains and protecting victims.

The dominant discourses, encouraging public consent in support of hegemonic interests, are silent on societal, institutional, and corporate responsibility in road safety. So, if we locate discourses within the context of economic globalisation and South Africa's macro-economic policies that de-emphasise state and corporate responsibility in development, we are able to make several pertinent observations regarding hegemonic interests in society that the selected media articles ignore. Although state actors such as traffic safety officers are projected as the protectors of the 'vulnerable' and law-abiding citizens, questions about road design and engineering (e.g., poor pedestrian facilities) and motor design are omitted (e.g., cars designed for high speeds by manufacturers). When scanning through most newspapers it becomes evident that the motor industry provides a great deal of advertisement revenue for the print media. The advertisements tend to feature the latest model motorcars and highlight the car manufacturers' commitment to providing the best quality design and adequate safety measures such as seatbelts, airbags, and high-powered brakes. Alongside a focus on safety features the car's capacity to reach high speeds is also often used as a selling point within a marketing strategy directed at prospective buyers. Yet in the accent on 'irresponsible' driver behaviour, the news articles reviewed in this study do not comment on the social responsibility of the motor industry that persists in producing cars with high-speed capabilities contradicting the message that 'speed kills'. Such a silence raises questions about the possible symbiotic relationship between sections of the print media and the motor industry which offer lucrative advertisement revenue on an ongoing basis. Here it may be instructive to note the findings of a word frequency analysis of road safety policy documents produced by the WHO and the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) established by the World Bank. Whereas the WHO's report uses evidence to stress the significance of speed reduction for assuring the safety of pedestrians in particular, the GRSP places the accent on driver training and safety education campaigns, thereby contradicting existing research evidence and obscuring the need for greater corporate responsibility among car manufacturers (Roberts, Wentz, & Edwards, 2006). Similarly, the car global lobby represented by the Commission for Global Road Safety and the FIA, the mother body of motor sport, support the development of road infrastructure in poor countries where the majority of people do not own motorcars, most victims of traffic accidents are pedestrians, and increased levels of motorisation are particularly detrimental to people's health and environments (Roberts, 2007).

In order to produce more accurate depictions of traffic accidents, traffic psychology and allied traffic safety promotion disciplines may consider developing strategies to engage the media to produce accurate and comprehensive accounts of traffic-related deaths and injuries. Traffic safety advocates could appeal to the 'public good' function of the media to secure evidence-led reporting on traffic-related incidents especially since the print media have already demonstrated receptivity towards empirically produced data even though the use of such data has tended to reinforce a partial reading of the determinants of traffic accidents.

The challenge is to secure greater coverage for that which currently features as non-hegemonic discourse in a minority of the reviewed news reports that adopt a thematic framing to examine the macro-determinants of traffic accidents and show pedestrians and cyclists as significant vulnerable road users. So, in highlighting the discourses evident in the selected news articles we seek to encourage traffic psychology to adopt data-uptake strategies that can help assure accurate representation of its science in news reporting on traffic accidents and other related psychosocial phenomena. Likewise our analysis aims to stimulate theories that can explain the social and economic processes involved in obtaining a greater 'voice' for the non-hegemonic discourse in the media wherein the hegemonic are unlikely to relinquish 'authority' and 'influence'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank James Kitching for helping source articles for this study, and Clint Van Der Walt and Brett Bowman for their invaluable commentaries. Thanks to Victor Peteke for typing the corrections of several drafts. We thank Peace Kiguwa for allowing us to use her summary of Parker's twenty steps.

NOTES

1. The Arrive Alive Road Safety Campaign was initiated to reduce traffic-related deaths on South Africa's roads. It focuses on aspects considered to be fundamental to traffic accidents such as speed, fatigue and drunken driving. The SAPS refers to the South African Police Services.

REFERENCES

- Ameratunga, S., Hajar, M., & Norton, R. (2006). Road-traffic injuries: Confronting disparities to address the global health problem. *Lancet*, 367, 1533-1540.
- ANON. (2006). The press in South Africa. Retrieved June 15, 2006, from http://www.southafrica.info/ess_info/sa_glance/constitution/971558.htm
- Arrive Alive. (2006). General statistics on road safety. South Africa's Road Safety Website. Retrieved May 24, 2006, from <http://www.arivealive.co.za/history.asp?mc=info&nc=general/>
- Bell, T. (2005, March 18). Truckers need a better deal to Arrive Alive. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Brummer, S., & Sole, S. (2006, September 15 to 21). M & G exposé stifled. *Mail and Guardian*, p. 2.
- Burr, V. (1995). *An introduction to social constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Byrne, R. (2006, January 8). Behind the wheel with a Wallaby. *Sunday Times*, p. 15.
- Cahill, M. (2006, January 11). Docket opened after three die in bus crash. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Chomsky, N. (1993). What Uncle Sam really wants. Retrieved June 14, 2006, from <http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/sam/sam.html>
- Cohen, B. (1963). *The press and foreign policy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Connelly, M., & Macleod, C. (2003). Waging war: Discourses of HIV/AIDS in South African media. *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 2, 63-73.
- Consalvo, M. (1998). Hegemony, domestic violence, and 'Cops': A critique of concordance -- The Shows of Violence. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 1-6.
- Cox, A. (2005, March 18). Chilling figures reveal Gauteng's hell-run. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Develotte, C., & Rechniewski, E. (2002). *Discourse analysis of newspaper headlines: A methodological framework for research into national representations*. Retrieved January 27, 2006, from <http://wjfms.ncl.ac.Uk/titles.html/>
- Du Plooy, C. (2005, December 7). Boost for road safety. *Pretoria News*, p. 2.

- Du Plooy, C., & Hosken, G. (2005, December 10). Snarl-up as truck rolls. *Pretoria News*, p. 1.
- Erasmus, M. (2005, December 8). Why does the law seem to apply to all citizens — except for taxi drivers? *The Star*, p. 22.
- Eybers, T. (2006, January 4). Crash victims will feel the pinch. *Citizen*, p. 4.
- Gifford, G. (2005, December 7). Prisoners involved in a pile-up on highway. *The Star*, p. 5.
- Goldman, A. (2001). Social epistemology. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved October 30, 2007, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-social>
- Goldstone, C. (2005, March 22). Transport is the main cause of non-natural death in the city. *Pretoria News*, p. 1.
- Hagen, H. (2005a, December 12). Road safety shock: 90 000 drivers of public vehicles don't have permits. *The Citizen*, p. 1.
- Hagen, H. (2005b, March 23). Easter Angels to the rescue on busy roads. *The Citizen*, p. 15.
- Harris, C., Sukhai, A., & Matzopoulos, R. (2004). National fatal injury profile. In R. Matzopoulos (Ed.), *A Profile of Fatal Injuries in South Africa: Fifth Annual Report 2003 of the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System* (pp. 5-19). Cape Town: UNISA/MRC.
- Hosken, G. (2005a, March 18). Three pupils die in a car chase horror: Two others in a critical condition. *Pretoria News*, p. 1.
- Hosken, G. (2005b, March 18). Spate of truck crashes has motorists worried. *Pretoria News*, p. 3.
- Hosken, G. (2005c, April 01). Motorist killed in crash with bus. *Pretoria News*, p. 2.
- Hosken, G., Du Plooy, C., Meijerhof, S., & Cahill, M. (2006, January 10). I saw my parents die. *The Star*, p.1.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible?: How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- James, L. (2004). Principles of traffic psychology: An overview of twenty years — 1976–1996. Retrieved July 13, 2006, from <http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/leonj/leonj/leonpsy/traffic/tpintro.html>
- Ka Nzapheza, V. (2005, December 22). High price for bad driving. *The Citizen*, p. 4.
- Kellner, D. (1995). *Media culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- Khan, T. (2005, March 23). Most drivers killed are over the limit. *The Star*, p. 3.
- Khangale, N. (2005, March 24). Arrive Alive hawk eyes on most dangerous routes. *The Star*, p. 3.
- Klopper, D. (2005, December 2). The South African National Roads Agency Limited putting road safety first. *The Star*, p. 2.
- London, S. (1993). How the media frames political issues. Prepared for the Kettering Foundation.
- Louw, E. (2001). *The media and cultural production*. London: Sage Publications.
- MacDonald, M. (2003). *Exploring media discourses*. London: Arnold.
- Mamela, M. (2005, December 15). Inanda commuters claim to be in danger. *Sowetan*, p. 1.
- Matheson, D. (2005). *Media discourses: Analysing media texts*. New York: Open University Press.
- Mahlangu, I. (2006, January 8). Speed and fatigue top killers on roads. *Sunday Times*, p. 5.
- Maluleke, E.V., SAPA-AFP, & BBC. (2005, March 27). Easter marred by road carnage. *City Press*, p. 1.
- Maphumulo, S., Goldstone, C., Johannes, T., & SAPA. (2005, March 29). Fewer accidents reported countrywide. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Maponya, F., & Mooki, V. (2005, March 29). Motorists get it right: Arrive Alive campaign a success. *Sowetan*, p. 6.
- Marrian, N. (2005, December 20). Pedestrians number half the road deaths. *The Citizen*, p. 3.
- Meintjes, H., & Bray, R. (2005). 'But where are our moral heroes?' An analysis of South African press reporting on children affected by HIV/AIDS. *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 4, 147-159.
- Meyer, J. (2005, March 27). Our children are dying on our streets. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 13.
- Mfihle, N. (2006, 9 January). Bus company held liable for death of passenger. *Sowetan*, p. 5.
- Ministry of Transport. (2002). *Report of the Road Accident Fund Commission* (Vol. 1).
- Moerdyk, C. (2005, March 27). It's what you think that kills you. *Sunday Times*, p. 7.
- Molosalankhwe, B. (2005, March 18). Minibus crash leaves 21 pupils hurt. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Molwedi, P. (2005, December 12). Fire-fighter acquitted after collision that killed three: Angry father says the police made a 'mess' of investigation. *The Star*, p. 3.
- Morrison, K. (2006). Know more media: Citizen journalism and news values. Retrieved May 7, 2007, from

- [http://www.knowmoremedia.com/2006/11/know more_media_citizen_journa.html/](http://www.knowmoremedia.com/2006/11/know_more_media_citizen_journa.html/)
- Motloung, M. (2006, January 16). Birds Goalie dies in crash. *Sowetan*, p. 4.
- Otto, H., & SAPA. (2005, March, 26). Easter weekend roadblock in city nets 24. *Pretoria News*, p.1.
- Parker, I. (1992). Discovering discourses, tackling texts. In I. Parker (ed.), *Discourse dynamics critical analysis for social and individual psychology* (pp. 3-22). London: Routledge.
- Peltzer, K., & Renner, W. (2004). Psychosocial correlates of the impact of road traffic accidents among South African drivers and passengers. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 36, 367-374.
- Picard, R., & Brody, J. H. (2000). The structure of the newspaper industry. In A. N. Greco (ed.), *The media and entertainment industries: Readings in mass communications* (pp.46-75). London: Allyn & Bacon.
- Prembev, D. (2005, December 18). 24 killed in crashes on holiday rush to the sea. *Sunday Independent*, p.2.
- Quintal, A. (2005, March 31). Volunteers to spy on road offenders. *The Star*, p. 1.
- Raymond, L. (2005, December 29). Road death toll costs SA billions. *Pretoria News*, p. 2.
- Raymond, L., Freuser, C., & SAPA. (2005, December 19). Deadly start to holidays: Dozens killed on roads at weekend and 10 drown. *The Star*, p. 1.
- Retting, R. A., Ferguson, S. A., & McCartt, A. T. (2003). A review of evidence-based traffic engineering measures designed to reduce pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes. *Journal of Public Health*, 93, 1456-1463.
- Road Accident Fund Commission. (2002). Report of the road accident fund commission. Retrieved January 16, 2006, from <http://www.raf.co.za/Content/documents/docs/Report.htm/>
- Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC). (2005). Road traffic and fatal crash statistics (2003–2004). Retrieved January 16, 2006, from <http://www.arrivealive.co.za/document/2004-Crash Book-N.pdf/>
- Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC). (2007). Interim road traffic and fatal crash report for the year 2006. Retrieved April 17, 2007, from <http://www.arrivealive.co.za/document/2007-CrashBook-N.pdf/>
- Roberts, I. (2007). Formula One and global road safety. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 100, 1-3.
- Roberts, I., Wentz, R., & Edwards, P. (2006). Car manufactures and global road safety in a word frequency analysis of road safety documents. *Injury Prevention*, 12, 320-322.
- Rondganger, L. (2005, March 24). Roadblocks galore aim to keep drivers alert, sober. *The Star*, p. 3.
- Rothengatter, T. (1997). Psychological aspects of road user behaviour. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46, 223-234.
- Rothengatter, T., & Huguenin, D. (Eds.). (2004). *Traffic and Transport Psychology. Theory and Application. Proceedings of the ICTTP 2000*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Ryan, M. (2005, March 27). Victims of fatal KZN bus crash left stranded. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 5.
- Russouw, S., & Ajam, K. (2005, December 17). Mbeki to blame for road carnage— motorist. *Saturday Star*, p. 1.
- Seedat, M. (1999). The construction of violence in South African newspapers: Implications for prevention. *Journal of Peace and Conflict*, 5, 117-135.
- Senior, C., & SAPA. (2005, December 19). Get-tough cops step up traffic presence: road blocks to check for drunken motorists in particular. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Shah, A. (2005). *War, propaganda and the media*. Retrieved February 25, 2006, from <http://www.globalissues.org/HumanRights/Media/Military.asp/>
- Singh, N. (2005, March 27). Bikers crash and pile up on the N2 South. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 3.
- Sukhai, A., Noah, M., & Prinsloo, M. (2004). Road traffic injury in South Africa: An epidemiological overview for 2001. In S. Suffla, A. van Niekerk (eds.), & N. Duncan (Cons ed.), *Crime, violence and injury prevention in South Africa: Developments and challenges* (pp.114-127). Tygerberg: MRC-UNISA Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme.
- Sukhai, A., Seedat, M., Jordaan, E., & Noah, M. (2004). *Aggressive road behaviours in South Africa*. Retrieved June 19, 2006, from http://www.mrc.ac.za/policy_briefs/roadrage.pdf/
- Staff reporter. (2005, March 23). Conditions for truckers are impossible — and bad for roads. *The Star*, p. 2.
- Staff reporter. (2005, December 12). Drive Safely, Arrive Alive. *The Star*, p. 8.
- Staff reporter. (2005, March 24). Drive to keep death off the roads. *Sowetan*, p. 12.
- Staff reporter. (2005, March 22). Finally, the will to change. *The Star*, p. 14.
- Staff reporter. (2005, March 22). Let's stop the carnage on the roads. *Pretoria News*, p. 15.
- Staff reporter. (2005, March 27). Profile of fatal injuries in South Africa. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 2.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 30). Steady decline in road deaths. *Sowetan*, p. 14.

Staff reporter. (2005, March 30). He's fast but he's a bloody idiot. *Pretoria News*, p. 13.

Verwey, S. (1998). Media democracy: Reflections of the past or frictions of the future. Retrieved June 21, 2006, from http://general.rau.za/aambeeld/june1998/media_democracy.html/

Wikipedia. (2006). Traffic psychology. *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*. Retrieved July 14, 2006, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traffic_psychology/

World Health Organization (WHO). (2004). *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. Geneva: WHO.