

FRAMING MANDELA:

An (Inter)National Comparative News Analysis of the Iconic Leader's Death

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ABSTRACT - Few studies have investigated how the press covers political leaders' deaths and the societal, cultural and political connotations of such coverage. Even fewer have tackled the topic when that leader is black. We use Framing Theory applied through an interpretive textual analysis to over 80 news articles from two South African and two Brazilian dailies to understand how Nelson Mandela—a black iconic leader—was framed in the 11 days straddling his death and death events. These two countries were selected, because South Africa was Mandela's home, and Brazil has the largest Black population of any country outside of Africa. Additionally, both nations are locked in partnerships, including their participation in BRICS and IBSA. Comparing and contrasting seven emergent frames points to the need to consider the social construction of the collective memory of his death as pursuant to understanding Mandela's legacy.

Key words: Mandela. Brazil. South Africa. Framing Theory. Interpretive Textual Analysis

ENQUADRANDO MANDELA:

Uma análise comparativa (inter)nacional da morte do líder icônico

RESUMO - Até agora poucos estudos investigaram como a imprensa cobre a morte de líderes políticos, e as consequentes conotações sociais, culturais e políticas dessa cobertura. Ainda menos estudos abordam o tema quando se trata de um líder negro. Utilizamos a Teoria do Enquadramento, aplicada através de uma análise textual interpretativa a mais de 80 artigos de notícias de dois jornais sul-africanos e dois brasileiros para entendermos como Nelson Mandela – um líder icônico negro – foi enquadrado nos 11 dias entre sua morte e os eventos ao redor da mesma. Estes dois países foram selecionados, porque a África do Sul era a nação de Mandela, e o Brasil devido ao fato de ter a maior população negra de qualquer país além da África. Além disso, essas nações são parceiras já que fazem parte dos BRICS e IBSA. Ao compararmos e contrastarmos sete quadros emergentes dessa cobertura, apontamos para a necessidade de considerarmos a construção social da memória coletiva de sua morte como modo de compreendermos o legado da morte de Mandela.

Palavras-chave: Mandela. Brasil. África do Sul. Teoria do Enquadramento. Análise Textual Interpretativa.

ENCUADRANDO A MANDELA: Un análisis comparado (inter)nacional de noticias sobre la muerte del icónico líder

RESUMEN - Poco estudios han investigado cómo la prensa cubre la muerte de líderes políticos y las connotaciones societales, culturales y políticas de tal cobertura. Menos aún han abordado el tema cuando el líder es de raza negra. Usamos la teoría del encuadre (framing) y la aplicamos en un análisis textual interpretativo de más de 80 artículos de dos diarios sudafricanos y dos brasileños para comprender cómo Nelson Mandela –un icónico líder negro– fue encuadrado en los 11 días en torno a su muerte. Estos dos países fueron seleccionados ya que Sudáfrica era la patria de Mandela y Brasil tiene la mayor población negra de cualquier país fuera del continente africano. Además ambas naciones están adscritas a alianzas, incluida su participación en BRICS e IBSA. La comparación y contraste de siete encuadres emergentes apunta a la necesidad de considerar la construcción social de la memoria colectiva de su muerte para comprender el legado de Mandela.

Palabras clave: Mandela. Brasil. Sudáfrica. Teoría del Encuadre. Análisis Textual Interpretativo.

Introduction

Outside of Africa, Brazil is home to the largest African diaspora population and it is South America's leading economy. Within Africa, South Africa is also predominantly black and has Africa's strongest economy. The two nations have traditionally been governed by white men. Among their international political alliances, Brazil and South Africa are both IBSA and BRICS nations. These memberships serve at least in part to help these two regional hegemony act with greater prominence in the global sphere (SOSALE; ROSAS-MORENO, 2016). While both nations are recognized as their region's leading democracies and as being free, each has its own history of segregation. What happens, then, when a leader who traditionally would be considered a minority in both by the government because of the color of his skin but is globally recognized for his societal contributions passes away?

On Dec. 5, 2013, news of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela's death spread quickly. Not entirely unexpected given the former South African president's age of 95 years and months of sickness, the world still expressed shock at his parting. He was one of the world's most respected statesmen who led the fight to dismantle South Africa's racist apartheid regime and establish a multiracial democracy, winning

a Nobel Peace Prize in the process; Madiba, as he was affectionately and respectfully known, was a beacon of hope for many who work to achieve equality in their own nations.

This study investigates South African and Brazilian (inter) national news framing of Nelson Mandela's death and the events surrounding it. Forty-One South African news articles from two leading South African dailies and 40 Brazilian news articles from two leading Brazilian dailies spanning the 11-day period straddling Madiba's death and internment form this study's sample. Each of the four newspapers was carefully chosen to decrease news normalization and routinization (BLUMLER; GUREVITCH, 1995) as well as to dismiss "per chance" findings, revealing societal and cultural differences and similarities in (inter)national news storytelling (SHOEMAKER; REESE, 1996).

Few studies have investigated how the press covers political leaders' deaths and the societal, cultural and political connotations. Even fewer have tackled the topic when that leader is black. Framing Theory applied through an interpretive textual analysis provides the perspective to explain how an international legacy, a gentleman who spent 27 years in prison yet emerged having forgiven his oppressors, has been memorialized in (inter)national news coverage. It also points to how a black man's final story has been told by two (inter)national partly-free ranked presses (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2014), particularly given comparable press, political and economic systems with segregation histories.

Frames and Framing in (Death) News

The information source of nations' leaders and elites, news has become a prominent discursive site for communication researchers to understand what framing is and how framing works (D'ANGELO; KUYERS, 2010). And, Framing Theory has become an increasingly attractive approach to news studies because of its unique (inter)national applicability. At the least, it involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue (DE VREESE, 2005). Framing can seem unavoidable because, at the institutional and individual journalist levels (SHOEMAKER; REESE, 1996), it is necessary to interpret, organize and present large amounts of information (GITLIN, 1980).

"Frames are *organizing principles* that are socially *shared*

and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world” (REESE, 2003, p. 11, italics in original). They are active, negotiated elements that through their cultural and ideological embeddedness form shared and understood codes that lend meaning, coherence and explanation, especially for complex issues (VAN GORP, 2010). Formed and transferred through selection and salience, frames define problems, can diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies, through connection; shared understanding—culture being highly implicit—is key (ENTMAN, 1993). They are composed of *manifest* content—informational, or that which is explicitly stated, intended and surface-ial—and *latent* content—interpretive commentary requiring investigation of deeper, perhaps unintended themes or even omissions (CLARKE; EVEREST, 2006; GAMSON, 1989; see also ALTHEIDE, 2002).

Manifest and/or latent, frames can be so taken-for-granted that their impact is by stealth (GAMSON; MODIGLIANI, 1989; LEWIS; REESE, 2009; VAN GORP, 2007). Also, manifest and/or latent, frames are not topics, but rather ways of approaching, understanding, even evaluating various topics (CONNOLLY-AHERN; BROADWAY, 2008). Hence, frames and framing allow deeper discussions of news messages’ underlying structures for tapping into group mental imagery (schemas) prompted through sometimes emotional clues and connections (ENTMAN, 1993; GAMSON, 1989), empowering researchers to decipher shared messages and meanings, particularly at charged times.

Charged times might include news coverage of prominent people’s passings. This is because when famous people die, the public mourns and remembers them primarily in the same forum where they came to know them in life—in the news media (KITCH, 2000). Applying framing theory to death news coverage in such an instance offers a unique opportunity to consider the “spiral of opportunity” stakeholders can engage in; they can force news into a single interpretive context supporting elite interests and creating a public through significant numbers of people becoming actively engaged in debate about how society at large should respond to an issue (MILLER; REICHERT, 2003). Hence, the press becomes an important site of meaning-making, community-building and memorializing.

Death news framing can involve tensions. For instance, and regarding meaning-making, news media can become more about the message makers than about the message, if journalists make more of

who they are and their power to talk about events than the dignitary who has passed (ROSAS-MORENO; BACHMANN, 2012). Regarding community building, death news reports can help create a common narrative and forum of experience, integrating and helping a nation heal. But, it can also traumatize a population through continuous coverage, as in the case of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's 1995 assassination (COHEN, 2002). Regarding memorializing, news media memorializing discourse can situate the deceased in a framework that makes sense of the deceased's accomplishments in the present (CARLSON, 2007) but create a faulty caricature of the deceased (ROSAS-MORENO; BACHMANN, 2012).

In brief, this study looks at four different (inter)national papers' framing of Mandela's death and its shifting frames, where the news is considered a site of struggle, one that takes on many frames/meanings primarily by the various actors writing these stories, giving frames, meanings, definitions, making moral judgments, and so forth (GITLIN, 1980; ENTMAN, 1993).

Method

As previously noted, two national news sources from each nation were selected for this application of Framing Theory through an interpretative textual analysis. From Brazil, this includes Brazil's *Folha de São Paulo* (or, *Folha*) and *O Globo* (or, *Globo*). Published out of São Paulo, Brazil's industrial capital, and owned by the Frias family, *Folha* is a top two circulating paper (FARAH, 2014). Brazil's and *Folha* Group's flagship print and online news source, it has evolved since Brazil's 1985 transition from military dictatorship to democracy to be, without doubt, the most influential on public opinion. Meanwhile, *Globo*, not to be confused with *TV Globo*, the world's second largest TV network (TOLIPAN, 2012), is published out of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's cultural capital, by *Editores Globo* and owned by the Marinho family. *Globo* is one of the top three circulating newspapers in the country (FARAH, 2014). Both are aimed at Brazil's top social classes, Classes A and B (KUGEL, 2011).

From South Africa, *The Star*, or *Star*, and *Mail & Guardian*, or *M&G*, were selected. Both newspapers survived the first nonracial elections in South Africa's history in 1994 marking the passage from apartheid to democracy. Although *M&G* is a daily online newspaper

with a paper edition published as a weekly, it is ranked as one of Africa's top ten papers (4IMN.COM, 2016). This might be, since *M&G* considers itself “the first paper whose news selection was colour-blind,” when most, if not all, 1980 South African newspapers were aimed at racially defined markets (*M&G*, 2015). *M&G* is published through Mail & Guardian Media, while *Star* is owned by the Independent Newspaper Group, which is home to some of South Africa's oldest newspaper titles (SOUTHAFRICA.INFO, 2013). *Star* was launched in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape in 1887 as the Eastern Star and is now mostly circulated in the Johannesburg region. Both newspapers are published from Johannesburg, which can be considered South Africa's industrial capital, and both attract an upper-class readership.

The time period for the study was 11 days, from Dec. 5—the day of Mandela's passing, which occurred at almost 9 p.m. that day—to Dec. 16, the day after his funeral, allowing for event news coverage to be printed. The search terms were “Mandela or Madiba and death,” or the Portuguese language equivalent, in news article headlines. Once relevant headlined articles were pulled from LexisNexis searches of the South African dailies over the time period, a total of 41 relevant headlined articles surfaced, with 21 being from *Star*, and the remaining 20 from *M&G*. Once relevant headlined articles were pulled from *Folha's* and *Globo's* own sites, and every other article was sampled, a total of 40 articles—20 from each news source—were included for analysis. In all, a total of 81 items were considered for analysis, as Table 1 shows:

Table 1 — This Study's Data

Nation	Source	Number of items included
South Africa	<i>Star</i>	21
	<i>M&G</i>	20
Brazil	<i>Folha</i>	20
	<i>Globo</i>	20

This interpretive textual analysis investigated how more than 80 stories from South African and Brazilian dailies portrayed Nelson Mandela's death and its events, comparing and contrasting the two national with the two international sources, and the frames used in each particular context. Since framing can function to define

problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (ENTMAN, 1993), it can involve encoding as well as a communication receiver deciphering or decoding a message to make meaning of it. Hall's (1993) encoding/decoding model can apply, because this type of textual analysis requires an interpretive approach. Hall (1993) proposes that audiences assume three hypothetical readings while interpreting media texts: a *preferred* reading, when audiences respond to a media message in the way intended by its producers; a *negotiated* reading, which allows members to accept the preferred reading but also resist and modify it in order to account for their own experiences; and an *oppositional* reading of media texts, where the social position of the reader — his/her race, class, gender, sexuality, and so forth — situates them in opposition to the hegemonic interpretation. Thus, we could understand the latent content of the news articles surrounding Mandela's death as the latter two. This methodology, then, digs beneath denotations to examine more connotative social meanings, where culture is viewed as a narrative or story-telling process with "texts" or "cultural artifacts" such as news reports (un)consciously linking to larger stories at play in society (ROSAS-MORENO; BACHMANN, 2012; REED, 2012).

While a powerful tool, especially when used to apply Framing Theory, interpretative textual analysis is not without its flaws. Systemic guidelines for record interpretation, as an example, do not support textual comparisons. Rather, "they are left to an informal discussion which solely draws on the ingenuity and experience of the author who is working backward from the data" (TRUEX, 1996, p. 3). Rigor was added as researchers reviewed each story numerous times to understand in the manifest and latent way(s) the stories surrounding Mandela's death were framed, thereby countering "the low relevance of reliability in qualitative research" (LINDLOF; TAYLOR, 2002, p. 239). Further, and in the Rojecki (2005) and Esser and D'Angelo (2006) traditions, this interpretative textual analysis allowed identification of whispered, culturally-embedded, latent frames.

It should be noted that both researchers have personal ties with the nations included in the study. One, natively from the United States, has lived in both nations, and the other is originally from Brazil. Both are fluent in Portuguese and English, thereby able to navigate both news story samples, ensuring a type of objectivity for findings through intersubjective agreement (LINCOLN; GUBA, 1985, p. 292).

South African National News Coverage Frame Findings

In considering the national news framing of Nelson Mandela at the time of his death and burial, several frames percolate across both *Star* and *M&G* news stories. First is the manifest frame *Mandela and Sports*. A former boxer and avid sports fan, Mandela literally and figuratively fought for the South Africa he envisioned. One latent frame that arose was *Brand Mandela*, in which Mandela was more than a man; his approach to life and politics represented achievable vision. He was also a rainbow man, uniting many across various societal boundaries, as will be explained. Concurrently, he left a legacy, but no wealth. A third latent frame that arose from national news coverage of Mandela's death was *Fear of Destabilization*. South African news reports suggested worries that without lynchpin Mandela living, South Africa, and all of Africa, would implode.

South African Manifest Frame: Mandela and Sports

This manifest frame with its fighting motif was extremely clear through both *Star* and *M&G*'s coverage. Many of the articles specifically called him a fighter for his actions prior to, during and after his imprisonment, albeit for different purposes and perhaps in different ways.

For instance, prior to his 27 years on Robben Island, he was a "...one-time boxer himself" (*Star*, Dec. 9, 2013). His personal connection with sports tied with his personal fandom for games, including political ones:

Mandela became the symbol of the struggle against apartheid after he was convicted in the Rivonia Trial of charges of sabotage and was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. (*M&G*, Dec. 5, 2013)

Similarly,

At the end of his trial, Mandela gave a now iconic speech in which he said: "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal, which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." (*M&G*, Dec. 5, 2013)

During Mandela's imprisonment, he was known to keep a consistent personal training regiment. While he openly claimed that working out helped him to relieve stress, it seemed to also calm him and enable him to endure the many hardships of his captivity. One must remember that Mandela was not young when he entered his sentence; he was in his 50s. In fact, his warder went on record saying,

"He would never fight for himself but for others. We listened in with listening devices when he spoke to others," said Brand. "Mandela was always trying to get money for the young ones for their education. He was always fighting for the release of old prisoners, trying to get Sisulu [Walter Sisulu, ANC veteran] released, but he was already old himself." (*M&G*, Dec. 10, 2013)

Following his imprisonment, the fighter motif strengthened; "Ours is not to ask for equality on a lower scale; ours is to *fight to win* on an equal but higher level" (*M&G*, Dec. 6, 2013, emphasis added). This charge led Mandela to also become a popular figure at sporting events, perhaps even a good luck charm:

He respected all he touched: Queen Elizabeth, who for the first time in UK history will honour a non-British citizen with a Westminster Abbey remembrance day, down to Francois Pienaar, whom he met and motivated to win the World Cup in 1995, even donning the Springbok captain's No 6 jersey - showing respect for the player and serving him on the day. (*Star*, Dec. 11, 2013)

Mandela even became the figurative "Captain of Team SA" for his contribution to South African sport (*Star*, Dec. 6, 2013), whether in boxing, rugby, cricket, biking, and the list goes on. News reports make the argument, "World and Olympic champions would not have come to South Africa... had he not guided the land to a freedom as peaceful as you could have wished for" (*Star*, Dec. 11, 2013).

Given this manifest national news frame, it seems fitting that "Mandela's last public appearance was a brief one, at the end of the Soccer World Cup in 2010" (*M&G*, Dec. 5, 2013) and that his memorial service would be held in FNB Stadium, also known as Soccer City. Further,

The death of Nelson Mandela, like the World Cup Tournament and Rugby World Cup, has united our people, truly demonstrating that we are a rainbow nation whose pillars are the Freedom Charter. (*Star*, Dec. 14, 2013)

South African Latent Frame: Brand Mandela

South African national news coverage of Mandela's death seemed to relay a story at least many South Africans were *familiar* with: Mandela was beyond a brand; he was a "global citizen" (*Star*, Dec. 16, 2013) who "belongs not only to us, but to the entire world" (*M&G*, Dec. 6, 2013). Mandela also bordered a type of deity, since he was "... just so perfect... it was unbelievable that a person like him *could* die" (*Star*, Dec. 6, 2013, emphasis added). He was noted as being both the father of a nation and a nation's favorite son, clearly tying in with Christian deity references. And, although Mandela's personal religious preferences were never noted, others' were: "I met a black god. We have freedom because of that man" (*M&G*, Dec. 7, 2013).

News reports clearly evidenced his national branding power through the naming of buildings, statues and other landmark memorabilia after him. These also seemed to be a tribute to, or continuation of, his life. In fact,

Madiba had grown into more than just a much loved hero of the people of South Africa. He had become a citizen of the world, a leader and inspiration to a large swathe of humanity far beyond our borders. (*Star*, Dec. 6, 2013)

Also:

He was the strongest prodigy (perhaps the only) to take South Africa from a slanted and doubtful past to a nation that became honoured by the world - causing the South African flag to become *the second most recognised brand* after the Mandela name during that time. What a man. (*Star*, Dec. 11, 2013, emphasis added)

As a brand, Mandela was "...an embodiment of strength, struggle and survival, principles that are cherished by humanity..." (*M&G*, Dec. 6, 2013). Again, his brand went beyond him in that he "...did not leave wealth but a legacy... a legacy... about values and morals..." (*Star*, Dec. 11, 2014).

Part of his branding was loving color. He was known for his "vibrant... most unique and colourful shirts" (*Star*, Dec. 14, 2013), for which he had his own personal designer, Sonwabile Ndamase. It is interesting to note that upon Mandela's death, news reports indicate Ndamase received an upswing in orders for Madiba shirts, further evidencing *Brand Mandela*.

Perhaps the largest element of this latent frame was Mandela's

rainbow nature: Mandela “...racially integrated [a] rainbow nation” (*Star*, Dec. 12, 2013). In fact,

Many across racial, class, ideological, gender and religious divides have spoken about who he was, what he did, what he disliked and despised. He constructed bridges for all South Africans to integrate, know one another and construct a common goal enshrined in the Freedom Charter, a pillar of our constitution. (*Star*, Dec. 14, 2013)

While he did not leave wealth at the end of his rainbow as part of his legacy, he left his nation much more:

He can never die because the ideals of freedom, human dignity, respect for individuals, food and shelter for all humankind, will be carried forward by the next generation. (*M&G*, Dec. 9, 2013)

Yet, news reports whispered that Mandela’s death could reverse much of what he had worked for.

South African Latent Frame: Fear of Destabilization

Between the national news story lines were suggestions that losing Mandela would mean losing much if not all of what he had fought so hard for. In other words, a living Mandela seemed to be a type of insurance or continuation of the cultural, political and societal advances that had occurred within South Africa largely through his efforts. Consider:

A people repressed for so long becomes [sic] unpredictable. (*M&G*, Dec. 13, 2013)

Along those lines, security measures were taken to ensure mourning matters did not get out of hand:

The tree-lined residential streets were soon clogged with cars as police struggled to control traffic. People walked, and occasionally stumbled in the dark, to where bright TV lights and strobing blue police lights lit a scene more than a little confused in its tone. (*M&G*, Dec. 6, 2013)

And:

“Long live the spirit of Mandela, long live,” chanted some onlookers at 1am as they jubilantly sang and danced outside the Mandela home, watched closely by a strong contingent of police who tried to maintain order. (*Star*, Dec. 6, 2013)

As preparations were made for the funeral services, these kinds of reports also surfaced:

"We have activated response teams in emergency, disaster and metro police divisions to proactively manage potential crowd hot spots such as Church Square and Union Buildings." (*Star*, Dec. 9, 2013)

While crowd control at any function might seem standard and precautionary, in this case, it seemed more of a show of might, perhaps even a reminder of (violent) days gone by. Reports noted:

"I don't think SA will be the same without him." (*Star*, Dec. 7, 2013)

And that, although Mandela had done a lot, much work still remains:

As Madiba left us, South Africa was and is still engaged in a complex process to respond to the important challenges our country faces, which include the issues of the eradication of poverty, achieving social equity, and establishing a truly non-racial and non-sexist society. (*Star*, Dec. 6, 2013)

Since South Africa has traditionally been Africa's largest and strongest economy, its slip could have negative ramifications for all of Africa. Within hours of Mandela's passing, and although financial analysts had "...dismissed fears that South Africa's markets would slide into a tailspin on the [sic] Madiba's passing," the rand—South African monetary unit—had dropped "...to its lowest level since the height of the recession five years ago" (*M&G*, Dec. 6, 2013).

Signs within national news reports seemed to say, "Mandela represents the best in all of us, which is *why we have been so afraid to let him go...*" (*Star*, Dec. 9, 2013, emphasis added)

Brazilian (Inter)National News Frame Findings

Applying Framing Theory through an interpretative textual analysis of 40 Brazilian news stories revealed four international frames surrounding Nelson Mandela's death. One manifest frame is *The (charismatic/supernatural) Myth*, which highlights Mandela's charisma as a leader. The second manifest frame is *Collective Father Figure*. It indicates a tension. While Mandela is recognized

internationally as being a caring father figure, having worked his entire life for equality, he seemed to have perhaps neglected his own children in his life's pursuits. Being imprisoned for 27 years did not help that relationship. The other two frames are latent. Connecting with Brazil's own mixed racial history, as will be explained, is the frame *De facto Racial Segregation*. The other latent frame — *Religion* — ties in with Brazil's religious history, since Brazil is the world's largest Roman Catholic nation.

Brazilian Manifest Frame: 'The (charismatic/supernatural) Myth'

An interesting opinion piece written in *Globo* (Dec. 15, 2013), by Helena Celestino, discusses Mandela's life and death through his widow Graça Machel. What is particularly remarkable is that, although the story is ultimately about Graça (her life with Samora Machel and later Nelson Mandela), it seems to be about Mandela, thanks to the author's play (in the headline) with the meaning of the word "Graça" in Portuguese, which stands for her name (Graça), as well as for 'grace'. Thus, the piece "A Graça de Mandela", takes the double meaning of 'Mandela's widow'(manifest) as well as a the "saint" (latent) meaning, that sees Mandela as a supra-natural, higher/enlightened being, in this case, "Mandela's Grace"².

Stories that framed Mandela as a mythological figure with super/supra natural gifts suggested that he did not need any governmental/official titles to bring awareness to a cause or issue. For instance,

Mandela lent his charisma to African causes and, along with Graça, to raise money for campaigns against AIDS and to aid the children of the continent. It was next to her that Mandela announced his son's death from AIDS and called for ending the silence about the disease, a government obscurantist policy of current president Zuma. (*O Globo*, Dec. 15, 2013)

Another story highlighted his mythological nature, a person whose altruistic actions touch us spiritually. As Ellison states,

(...) the personal biography of Mandela certainly touches our soul ... (*Globo*, Dec. 9, 2013)

Former Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso also recognized Mandela's mythological characteristics, stating that

His life was surrounded by an aura of greatness, of decency and humility. There is no one to better define the relationship between Mandela and his contemporaries than his compatriot Manphela Ramphele: "It was not him who sought glory, but glory sought him instead (...) So strong was the impression of almost superhuman that Mandela left among those who lived with him, heard or knew of his actions and words..." (*Globo*, Dec. 6, 2013).

Although many articles recognized Mandela's 'mythological' characteristics, Adam Roberts urged us not to think of him as a "saint", and stated:

He used to joke about his death, saying the first thing he would do in heaven—he had no doubt that's where he would go—would be to enroll in the African National Congress. This was his way of saying he was a political and pragmatic man, not a saint (*Globo*, Dec. 8, 2013)

It is also interesting to point out that both Brazilian papers—*Globo* and *Folha*—reproduced in its entirety—although translated to Portuguese—Simon Jenkins' (*The Guardian*) piece where he stated that Mandela was not a mythological saint-like figure, but a great man:

... The world may crave a "Mandela-like icon", but to what end? For serious media outlets to discuss him alongside Mother Teresa, Gandhi and Jesus of Nazareth is barking mad. He was Nelson Mandela. ... and if it suits them to revere him as a symbol of unity, goodness and peace, so be it. That is their business. ...But the South African quality I recall Mandela possessing to the full was not saintliness, it was a hardened sense of irony. I doubt if he is wearing the BBC's tin halo right now. I would bet he is laughing his head off. (*Folha*, Dec. 12, 2013)

Another *Folha* piece (Dec. 5, 2013) reminded readers that Mandela was a great man, one that we all strived to be like. Quoting South African President Jacob Zuma, the report stated that,

What made Mandela great was also what made him human. We saw in him what we strived to see in ourselves. (*Folha*, Dec. 5, 2013)

Brazilian Manifest Frame: Collective Father Figure

A few stories clearly framed Nelson Mandela as a type of collective African father figure. For example, a report in *Globo* stated that

Upon leaving prison, Mandela was to become the symbol of the country itself, the father of the nation, the family of every South African and one that even opponents revered as one who led a

mission that at first seemed impossible: to reconcile the largest part of South Africa, without bitterness, even after 27 years of confinement. A mission that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 and the respect of the entire planet. (*Globo*, Dec. 5, 2013)

A *Globo* ‘man on the street’ report featured Joseph Nkosi, a security guard in Johannesburg, who stated he “feels like he had just lost his father, someone who took care of me” (*Globo*, Dec. 6, 2013). It is interesting to point out that the manifest frame *Collective Father Figure* was identified in both dailies from Brazil, as illustrated in the report by Rossi, discussing a previous interview with the Nelson Mandela in *Folha*. Rossi refers to Mandela as a ‘grandfather’ (*Folha*, Dec. 6, 2013) who was, “serene and in that ‘wise-grandpa’ we all wish we had demeanor...” (*Folha*, Dec. 6, 2013). Additionally, a *Folha* (Dec. 10, 2013) report on his funeral noted that, “Mandela is South Africa, he is the new South Africa.” Interestingly enough, while these stories revered the leader as a collective father, one story referred to Mandela as an absent de facto father to his own children:

Undoubtedly Mandela’s greatest achievement was to spread a liberal constitution for racial equality, sexually and other rights. In his personal life, he also failed. In the 90th birthday of Mandela, Graça Machel said: “he is definitely not a saint.” His children referred to him as a distant father. He could be strict and cold. Grace said he was stubborn, angry and intolerant when their children were going badly in school. (Roberts, Dec. 8, 2013)

Brazilian Latent Frame: De facto Racial Segregation

Brazilian stories that framed Mandela as the sole person responsible for ending Racial Segregation and/or racism in South Africa but failed to critically discuss any type of lingering *De facto Racial Segregation* were especially interesting in the context of Brazilian race relations; being the last country in the Western world to abolish slavery in 1888, Brazil is a country that still struggles with racism and the lingering effects of racist ideologies such as whitening (*branqueamento*).

As Joyce (2012) explains, the Brazilian myth of whitening through miscegenation (*branqueamento*) is at the heart of the Brazilian ideology (‘myth’) of racial democracy in the country, which is a completely distinct social conceptualization of race differing from that of the US, where in most purposes a binary code is used—

one is either black or white. The author further shows that in much of Latin America, the dominating racial code is one that values you by how close to white you appear. Thus, as a general rule, it is assumed that the closer you are to the 'white' side of the scale, the more beautiful, intelligent and respected you are. Thus, this concept of whitening is at the heart of Brazil's discourse of racial democracy, revealing its racist nature from its inception. Thus, although there was never a strict or legal type of racial segregation/discrimination in Brazil, this has been a persistent problem of the country, where traditionally, racial problems were ignored—in the law and social discourse—due to the fact that Brazilians were seen as miscegenated—not black and/or white.

This brief history of Brazilian race relations highlights the fact that stories addressing lingering aspects of *De facto Racial Segregation* were missing, although racism may continue even after laws have changed.

For example, while reporting the news of Mandela's death, *Globo* stated that Nelson Mandela died. With the announcement, many people took to the streets to dance and to sing in a calm tribute to the life of the former president who led the country to the end of racial discrimination regime. Candles and South African flags took to the streets of Johannesburg. (*Globo*, Dec. 5, 2013)

Brazilian Latent Frame: Religion

Although many Brazilian articles cited Mandela's attitude toward forgiveness for having been incarcerated, a clear Christian/Catholic Religious frame was missing, placing the Christian concept of 'forgiveness' as a type of character trait, or historical Marxist thinking that believes history moves forward. Given that Brazil is the world's largest Roman Catholic nation, this point cannot be underscored. For example, *Globo* stated that,

(...) Mandela's great lesson were about forgiveness. "He gave me hope, and through him I learned what it really means to forgive" (...) the president who sought reconciliation rather than revenge of those who imprisoned and persecuted him. (*Globo*, Dec. 5, 2013)

The few times religion was cited was not in regard to Mandela's own beliefs or a religious bias in his actions, but instead on how to react (proscriptive frame, not necessarily religious) to

the event: the death of this mythological figure without an exact religious ‘home’ or affiliation. For instance, one story reported that president should be capitalized here

Zuma declared December 8 to be a ‘National Day of Prayer and Reflection’, inviting South Africans to pray in their “houses, temples, churches, synagogues and mosques (...) Let us pray, meditate and reflect on their contribution to the world — said Zuma, calling Mandela son and father of the nation. — He taught us that it is possible to overcome hatred and rebuild a nation. (*Globo*, Dec. 6, 2013)

Interestingly enough, this same story suggesting that people should act ‘spiritually’ but not ‘religiously’ in the Christian sense, was begun by comparing Mandela to none other than the Pope:

The death of former South Africa President Nelson Mandela will be marked by one of the largest and most watched events ever organized in the world. South African President Jacob Zuma said on Friday that the official ceremony (...) The event will have the same proportions of that of Pope John Paul II in 2005, which attracted five kings, six queens and 70 presidents and prime ministers, as well as two million believers. (*Globo*, Dec. 6, 2013)

In turn, the one story in the sample covering Pope Francis (*Globo*, Dec. 6, 2013), also did not use a (Roman-Catholic) religious frame when referring to Mandela by reporting that,

The Pontiff praised “the strong commitment shown by Nelson Mandela in promoting human dignity of all the citizens of the country and the formation of a new South Africa built on the firm foundations of non-violence, reconciliation and truth.” (*Globo*, Dec. 6, 2013)

The latent frame *Religion* was also identified in a *Folha* report by Zanini (Dec. 10, 2013), when the journalist cites Mandela’s former cellmate at Robben Island, Andrew Mlangeni, and his description of Mandela in the same ‘non-identifiable faith based’ sort of way. He:

... Remembered Mandela’s humbleness and faith in collective leadership...Nelson Mandela was the perfect example of the value of self-sacrifice, wisdom and patience and created hope where there was none (*Folha*, Dec. 10, 2013).

It is also interesting to point out that former Brazilian President Lula was quoted in *Folha* (Dec. 5, 2013) as referring to Mandela as God’s creation:

Those who read Mandela's story will certainly be thankful that God put a man like him, of such greatness on earth, and above all, a black man. If paradise exists, Mandela deserves to be in it. (Magalhães et al, Dec. 5, 2013)

Discussion/Conclusion

Framing Theory was applied through an interpretative textual analysis to more than 80 news articles over 11 days from two national South African dailies and two international Brazilian dailies to understand how Nelson Mandela was framed in his death and death events. The following table, Table 2, summarizes the national and international manifest and latent frames that have arisen through this analysis:

Table 2 — (Inter)National News Frames of Mandela

Nation	Frame Typology	Frame Name	Frame Descriptor
SA	National, Manifest	Mandela and Sports	Mandela literally and figuratively fought for the South Africa he envisioned
SA	National, Latent	Brand Mandela	Mandela was more than a man, and a rainbow man who worked to achieve equity
SA	National, Latent	Fear of Destabilization	Mandela was the lynchpin of (South) African society and culture
Brazil	International, Manifest	'The (charismatic/supernatural) Myth'	Mandela was a larger-than-life leader
Brazil	International, Manifest	Collective Father Figure	Perhaps an absent father to his own, Mandela was present for many others
Brazil	International, Latent	De facto Racial Segregation	Mandela fought for racial equity
Brazil	International, Latent	Religion	Christian, but without personal religion

It's important to reconsider that these two nations have comparable press, political and economic systems with segregation histories. While each nation is recognized as being a regional hegemon and free, each has its own history of segregation and a press that ranks only as partly free (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2014), even with constitutional press freedom guarantees. Also, each nation is a young democracy, with South Africa having had democratic elections in 1994, ending apartheid—or legislated separation, and Brazil in 1985, ending military dictatorship.

As organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, frames emerging from this study have clearly indicated some tensions in memorializing a great statesman in his passing. It becomes particularly evident when comparing the national and international news frames that some frames are more prevalent cross-nationally than others. Consider, for instance, how while Mandela's personal sports history founded his symbolic positioning nationally as Captain of Team SA, no such reference bubbled up in Brazilian coverage, particularly when Brazil is internationally known for at least its commitment to soccer. Also, consider, how in the national news reports, Mandela was latently framed as a rainbow man, one who left a legacy of morals and values rather than any inheritance related to money. No such reference was made in Brazilian news reports. This difference could stem from Brazil's recent economic successes, where its middle class has known unprecedented growth (PEZZINI, 2012) and its economy is being recognized (at the time that this study was completed) as being one of the fastest growing economies in the world (EUBRASIL, 2014).

This might connect with another difference between national and international news coverage: The South African national latent news frame *Fear of Destabilization*, or uncertainty as to (South) Africa's economic and political future once Mandela passed was absent from Brazilian international news framing. This clearly evidences the political power Mandela held within his native South Africa and across Africa.

Another difference in the framing when considering national and international reports is the *De facto Racial Segregation* latent frame that powerfully arises from the Brazilian reports. Brazil's dance over time with *branqueamento*, or a philosophy of whitening, combined with its myth of being a racial democracy clash in the face

of at least Mandela's political successes with apartheid abolishment, or white minority rule removal. Perhaps this friction speaks louder to South Africa's state of social and cultural progression than Brazil's, indicating that race relationships might be healthier in South Africa than Brazil.

While differences arise from the national and international comparison, similarities also exist between the nationally and internationally emergent frames. Consider how both nationally and internationally, religion seemed important. Within South African news reports, Mandela was recognized as being a type of "black god," as one article noted (*M&G*, Dec. 7, 2013). Similarly, his Christian-like qualities of forgiveness were highlighted in Brazilian news reports. The emphasis on religion in Brazilian news reports seems more likely, given the fact that Brazil is the world's largest Roman Catholic nation and the degree of influence Catholicism and religion have in Brazilian culture (ROSAS-MORENO, 2014).

Similarly, and perhaps continuously, another parallel between the countries' news coverage was how Mandela was considered larger than life; *Brand Mandela*, a latent frame that rises from South African national news, connects with the Brazilian international manifest frame, *The (charismatic/supernatural) Myth*. Both of these frames echo across time and space, cementing that Mandela was recognized for his unique leadership prowess: his ability to unify a racially, socially, culturally disparate people, forcing political change. Given Brazil's and South Africa's segregation histories and/or racial tensions, this point is particularly poignant.

As noted earlier, news coverage of an individual's passing can be problematic because of a tendency to focus on the positive. Given the racial tensions over time in both South Africa and Brazil, it would be interesting to see how another frame—the frame of "collective memory"—might be presented through Mandela's public life/death story. Public memory "becomes implicated in range of other activities having as much to do with identity formation, power and authority, cultural norms, and social interaction, as with the simple act of recall" (ZELIZER, 1995, p. 214).

While the terms "public" and "collective" memory have been used interchangeably, Maurice Halbwachs (1952) uses "collective memory" as a unifying concept and social framework of comparative consciousness: "while these remembrances are

mutually supportive and common to all, individual members still vary in the intensity with which they experience them” (p. 48). Therefore, the collective experience of Mandela’s life in Brazil and in South Africa varies in remembrance within each country, but especially poignant to investigate is how his life is framed through the reporting of his death, by both presses (Brazilian and South African). In other words, how is Mandela’s life created distancedly and posthumously by these social actors? One call for future research would be to investigate this conundrum. Perhaps an analysis of “anniversary journalism” using the anniversary of his death as example and to look at the social construction of collective memory of his death is the next step in understanding Mandela’s legacy.

NOTES

- 1 Another latent meaning for Mandela’s ‘grace’ could be in reference to his ‘kindness’, ‘poise’, and/or ‘charm’.

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