

***The Tigray war in the media:  
A comparative analysis of the coverage by  
CNN and Al Jazeera***



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## Abstract

*The conflict in Northern Ethiopia provides a compelling case study on how news organisations frame and report complex and contentious issues. This study focuses on the coverage of the Tigray war on CNN and the Al Jazeera English news websites, examining how the two international media outlets covered the conflict. To conduct this comparative study, the data were collected systematically from a set of texts that were published on the two selected news websites during the two-year conflict between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray regional administration (November 4, 2020-to November 4, 2022), and then analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.*

*A total of 99 news articles from CNN's website and 268 reports from Al Jazeera's website were collected and analyzed. Al Jazeera English and CNN provided distinct and contrasting coverage of the conflict. In terms of the number of articles published throughout the two years, the two media outlets show significant differences with Al Jazeera English having many more published news stories than CNN. Despite Al Jazeera giving more impartial and equitable coverage than CNN, neither of the media outlets provided unbiased and independent news coverage. Their reporting favoured the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Both media had a significant portion of stories in favour of TPLF. Al Jazeera was found to publish relatively more neutral news stories than CNN and had more mixed news stories.*

*Both media outlets appeared to rely heavily on conflict and violent framing, which is not surprising given the conflict's multifaceted and protracted nature. While both media outlets applied attribution of responsibility framing, economic framing, and human interest framing. Al Jazeera English was found to use them more frequently. CNN applied prognostic framing more frequently than Al Jazeera, emphasising potential outcomes and solutions. Al Jazeera on its part used diagnostic framing more frequently, emphasising the root causes of the conflict. Overall, anti-war framing was less used, although Al Jazeera was found to use it slightly more than CNN. The study also found that both media outlets treated various themes in a strikingly similar fashion. Human rights issues, disasters, and humanitarian crises appeared to take precedence over other topics such as bilateral and international relations, reconciliation, agriculture, culture and history.*

*Though they have differences, both media outlets tended to elicit public sympathy and outrage by giving emotional details and personal stories, as well as statistics on the numbers of people affected by famine, displacement, and fear of war.*

*Keywords: CNN, Al Jazeera, Tigray war, framing, agenda setting, global media, conflict*

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## Declaration

Student

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Date: 10/11/2023

Name: Getachew Ararsie

Supervisor

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on the supervision of the thesis laid down by NLA University College.

Supervisor's Signature

Date

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Name

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## Acronyms

AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement
AP	Association Press
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
COHA	Cessation of hostilities Agreement
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Force
EPLF	Eritrean People Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' revolutionary democratic front
EU	European Union
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPDO	Oromo People Democratic Party organization
PM	Prime Minister
SEPDM	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
U.S.	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.



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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa and one of the oldest on the entire planet. The oldest known human ancestral remains, dating to between 5.2 and 5.8 million years ago, were discovered in Ethiopia's Awash Valley in 2001 (National Science Foundation, 2001). This find outshines the finding of Lucy's 3.2 million-year-old skeleton in the same area in 1974 (WoldeGabriel et al., 2001). With an estimated 128 million people (UN DESA, 2021), Ethiopia is a lively synthesis of ancient cultures, showing a fusion of Middle Eastern and African influences in its religious, ethnic, and linguistic composition. The Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic, and Nilotic ethnicities that make up its people are a reflection of this rich cultural legacy. Ethiopia has extreme linguistic diversity with over 200 dialects and over 80 unique languages (Pagani et al, 2012). Although Amharic is Ethiopia's official language, the local languages are encouraged to be taught in schools. Separate regions may have different working languages for the national and regional governments. Oromigna and Tigrigna are also often used in addition to Amharic.

However, in recent years, the country's humanitarian situation has deteriorated as a result of the combination of armed conflict, the effects of climate change, disease outbreaks, and the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19. Between November 2020 and November 2022, the conflict in Ethiopia was marked by clashes between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali. The Tigray region and parts of the Amhara and Afar regions suffered from this conflict (Gesese, et al., 2021; Damtew & Ejigu, 2022; International Crisis Group, 2021). Following that, States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the African Union urged the parties to cease hostilities and work towards a political settlement (Dou & Kim, 2022; Akamo & Fisseha, 2023). This mediation culminated in the successful signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement (COHA) between the Ethiopian government and the Tigrayan forces on November 2, 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa. The cessation of hostilities agreement was then complemented by military leaders and the Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Agreement, signed in Nairobi, Kenya (CDP, 2023; Akamo & Fisseha, 2023). The agreement raised hopes that the protracted struggle that threatened to destabilise Africa's second-most populous nation could finally come to an end.

The conflict stands out as one of the most tragic conflicts of the twenty-first century globally so far. The war in Tigray caused many thousands of deaths, millions of displacements, and starvation due to the full blockade of humanitarian aid (Gebreyesus, et al., 2024). It is indicated by estimates of its death toll ranging from 300,000 to 600,000 civilians and 100,000 to 200,000 fighters. This is in contrast to the wars in Syria and Yemen, which the UN Office for Human Rights reported had death tolls of 307,000 and 377,000, respectively (Naranjo, 2023), or the war in Ukraine, which Ukraine had suffered close to 70,000 killed and 100,000 to 120,000 wounded, and the Russia had suffered as many as 120,000 deaths and 170,000 to 180,000 injured troops within the first 18 months of fight (The New York Times, 2023). In addition to the loss of human lives, the Tigray conflict caused the breakdown of health infrastructure in Tigray which resulted in 86% of 853 health service units in Tigray experiencing structural damage, with 71% of medical equipment partially non-functional (Gesese, et al., 2021; World Health Organization, 2023). Similarly, in the Amhara region, the projected cost of rebuilding the war-torn areas exceeds a staggering half a trillion birr (Addis Standard, 2023). Diseases associated with war, such as fistula and HIV, have become prevalent as the result of limited maternal care, malnutrition, and sexual violence. Consequently, it is anticipated that Post-conflict trauma will likely persist in the foreseeable future (Gesese, 2022; Weledegebriel, 2023).

The Tigray region, one of the 11 Ethiopian regions, has been affected by the conflict with a great loss. The region is still suffering because of the humanitarian crisis, the economic crisis, the psychological impacts of the conflict, and the absence of clear regional administration, particularly in the south and west Tigray. Tigrayans in the rest of the country outside the region itself have been ethnically profiled, forcefully disappeared, extrajudicially executed, arbitrarily detained, and taken to prison. The conflict expanded into the borders of the Amhara and Afar regions by early November 2021 (Abbink, 2021). There is no clean hand from all parties involved in this catastrophic human life loss and damage that happened in northern Ethiopia. Researchers from Amnesty international and Human Rights Watch (2022) accused all parties including the Ethiopian Defence Force, TPLF, the Eritrean Defence Force, the Tigrayan Defense Force, the Amhara Special Force, and Amhara Fano militias of committing serious Human rights violations (France24, 2022).

Conflict is defined because of opposing interests related to limited resources or divergent goals (Pondy, 1967). One common context in which conflict arises is in relationships where

individuals have both competitive and cooperative interests. According to Bacharach & Lawler (1981), the competitive aspects of such relationships tend to generate conflict, whereas the cooperative aspects provide motivation for parties to negotiate and reach a mutually beneficial agreement. Overall, conflict is frequently fueled by competition for scarce resources or competing goals, but it can be resolved through effective negotiation and collaboration (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981).

According to Jeong (2008, p. 5), “Conflict represents the persistent and pervasive nature of inter-group and international competition among disparate interests and values that underlies power dynamics, and it will always stay as long as human beings exist. Though conflict brings a lot of distraction, it may not always be taken as destructive, unless it is violent. Conflict is an important driver of change and change is at the heart of almost all reporting; it is what makes news a piece of news. Conflict itself is not destructive and, when constructively managed, it can help us dig into issues, understand problems, create solutions, and strengthen relationships (Tjosvold, 2006, p. 87).

Almost all Ethiopian regions have experienced conflict and war as a result of ethnic, religious, boundary demarcation, and political instabilities, ranging from ethnic conflicts in the eastern Somali region to political militia insurgency in Gambella and Benishangul, as well as protests in the centre and north, and ethnic tensions in the south. But even so, as documented by OCHA in 2018, there have been few reported conflicts in other parts of the country (Kalkidan, 2017). The main causes of Ethiopian internal conflicts were mainly related to the country's internal political instability and scarce resources, its historical paths, its geographical location, and the current religious fundamentalism in the Horn of Africa (Moges, 2017). Ethiopia has experienced war a number of times. The interstate war held in 1895, and the fights in 1935 against Italian aggression and Somalia in 1977/78 resulted in losses of lives for both sides. A bloody war with Eritrea that lasted for three decades ended in 1991 with a no peace no war agreement, and in 2018 a full peace agreement was signed between the two countries. In recent years, there have been conflicts in Ethiopia such as in west Guji and Gedeo located on the border of Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR). This conflict was caused by territorial disagreement and caused a significant humanitarian crisis. There has always been conflict between the two ethnic groups of Somali and Oromo, whose regions share the longest interior border in the country between the Oromia grassland and the Somali desert. Their relationship has been

characterised by territorial competition which often leads to disputes and conflicts over resources, including wells and grazing land (Kalkidan, 2017).

Mass media can significantly influence participation and play a big role in conflict management during conflicts, directly influencing behaviour and indirectly through social interactions (Anagizawa-Drott, 2014; Jakobsen, 2000). This is mainly because realities are first defined and mediated by powerful global news outlets before they reach the public (Matsaganis & Payne, 2005; ones, 2006; Snyder & Ballentine, 1996). In fact, “it is difficult to see how work on news coverage of war and conflict can justifiably avoid engaging with wider contextual questions of political power” (Al Nahed & Hammond, 2018, p. 365).

In essence, their function can combine two opposed and incompatible forms. The media can actively play a proactive role or participate in the conflict and be held accountable for escalating aggressiveness. According to Thompson (2007, p. 7) “hate media in Rwanda contributed to the genocide by playing a proactive role, the international media also played a role by, in essence, acquiescing to the killing campaign by downplaying”. On the other hand, Media can maintain its independence and approach the conflict as a peacemaker to reduce violence and end the conflict through “building confidence, facilitating negotiation or breaking diplomatic deadlocks [among the parties] for discussion” (Batic & Schirch, 2007, p. 10). The positive impact of media can be observed when the media report on conflicts favoured the orientation of anti-war issues and reconciliation (Galtung, 2002). Different frames can emphasise different aspects of a story and influence the audience's attitudes and beliefs, so the use of different framing techniques in news reporting can shape how audiences perceive and interpret events. Understanding the nuances of framing techniques in news reporting can help readers develop a more informed perspective on current events and evaluate news sources more critically. The structure of the frame in a news text serves as a reflection of power showing the identities of actors or interests for control over the narrative (Entman 1993, p. 55).

According to Coleman et al. (2009, p. 149), “the agenda-setting role of the news media plays an important part in focusing people’s attention on the problems that government and public institutions can work to resolve”. NGOs and civil society called for intervention in the face of apparent indifference.

Nations and humanitarian organisations were keen to follow international media reports, such as CNN and Aljazeera which played a role in the Tigray War by shaping the public opinions.

Especially the US and the UN's actions toward the parties involved in the conflict were followed by what western media such as CNN reported or investigated. For example, the US warned to sanction Ethiopia after CNN revealed that airline ferry weapons were used in the war in October 2021. On March 4, 2021, the UN rights chief said war crimes may have been committed in Ethiopia after CNN revealed the Tigray massacre. A month after the conflict started, in December 2020, the EU warned to delay budget support to Ethiopia if the situation did not improve (Plaut & Vaughan, 2023).

Consequently, the EU announced it had suspended budgetary aid to Ethiopia worth £88 million until Ethiopia's aid reached the needy in Tigray. In August 2021, France put pressure on Ethiopia by withdrawing its promised \$100 million back in 2019 to support the project of the rebirth of the Ethiopian Navy in the Red Sea in Eritrea. On November 2, 2021, the US took a measure against Ethiopia by announcing that the US would remove Ethiopia from the free trade pact known as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) if Ethiopia had not mended its way by January 1, 2022. In addition, on September 17, 2021, The Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed sanctions on certain persons concerning the Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis in Ethiopia (US Department of The Treasury, 2021). These measures taken by international organisations and countries were highly manifested by the international media. The conflict got worse as Abiy's government used drone strikes to bring the TPLF to heel. As a result, armed drones supplied by the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China and Iran played an increasingly deadly role in the conflict (Plaut & Vaughan, 2023).

The Tigray conflict received considerable regional and international media scrutiny since its inception until both sides agreed to a peace dialogue. Prominent global news outlets, such as Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, Reuters, AP, and The Washington Post, reported extensively on various aspects of the conflict, ranging from the hostilities between Abiy Ahmed's government and the TPLF regional administration to the multitude of scenarios that unfolded during the war. Furthermore, the media followed the negotiations between the parties involved in the conflict with keen interest.

These media affected the Tigray War in different ways by shaping public opinions toward the parties involved in the conflict and putting pressure on nations and organisations to take action. Especially the US and the UN's actions toward the parties involved in the conflict were followed by what these media reported or investigated. For example, the US warned to sanction Ethiopia

after CNN revealed that airline ferry weapons were used in the war in October 2021 (Plaut & Vaughan, 2023).

Given the crucial role of the media in shaping influence policymakers' attitudes, international organisations, states, and public opinion during wartime (McCombs, 1972; Cook, et al., 1983; Protes, et al., 1987), a thorough content analysis of media content is required. This thesis is one of the first to examine the comparative study of CNN and Al Jazeera news websites' coverage of the Tigray conflict. International media coverage of the Ethiopian Tigray conflict played an important role in informing the global public about the situation and bringing attention to the ongoing crisis. However, the reporting of the Tigray conflict had also been subject to criticism, with many arguing that certain outlets had provided biased or incomplete coverage. According to Abbink (2021), the global media have been marked by bias, incompleteness, lack of context understanding, credulity, and an anti-federal government attitude. Studies suggest that the lack of coverage of the Tigray conflict by the American media is due to Ethiopia's relative position as an American strategic and economic partner as well as key to counter-terrorism strategies (Caruso & Akamo, 2024, p. 8). Although the Ethiopian government has made several statements on the conflict, international media failed to provide ample context (Solomon & Mezgebu, 2021, p. 5).

The existing study examines the global media coverage, and the Tigray conflict is limited and not comprehensive but revealed some findings. Temesgen (2021) found differences in the coverage of BBC and Reuters on the Tigray conflict, with Reuters emphasising military actions by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and international responses, while BBC's reports were more focused on governmental military strategies and the counteractions of the Tigray Armed Force. Both outlets appeared to exhibit a bias, favouring the TPLF in their reporting. A framing analysis of coverage by the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) and Reuters found that the two media channels labelled the conflict as law enforcement and as a military offensive campaign against TPLF which tends to civil war. In addition, the two media outlets published stories about making peace by negotiating and supporting government officials to create peace in the region (Betelhem, 2021, p. 55). Additionally, a study of Al Jazeera's framing of the conflict found that the major cause of the Tigray war was represented as political disputes between Ethiopia's federal government and Tigray's regional government. The moral judgement of the war was conveyed by way of a covert 'blame judgement' directed at the leader of the federal government (Yemane, 2022). Although these studies contribute to our understanding, they suffer from a limited sample

period, spanning only a few months. Considering the two-year fight, these studies do not address the broader aspects of the Tigray conflict as comprehensively as the present study. In addition, they focused more on comparing local and foreign media coverage. Therefore, the current study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing a more extensive and comprehensive examination of media coverage, encompassing a broader two-year timeframe.

Additionally, Throughout the conflict, the Western media were strongly criticised by the Ethiopian government and its people for their coverage. Demonstrations were arranged by pro-government Ethiopians in different big cities around the world with banners such as “BBC stop fake news “and “CNN stop fake news”. Many blamed international media outlets for what Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called "a sophisticated narrative war waged against the nation" (voanews.com, 2021, December 1; Bloomberg, 2021). The Ethiopian government sent a warning letter to CNN, BBC, Reuters, and AP to revoke the granted licence given by the Ethiopian Media Mass Authority. The letter was issued because the government believed that these media were indulging in manufacturing and disseminating false news and supporting TPLF (Fanabc.com, 2021, November 20; Bloomberg, 2021).

However, as there was no visible criticism from TPLF and its supporters toward these Western media, it may mean that from TPLF supporters’ perspective, those media’s reporting was addressing the conflict in a good manner. From the Ethiopian diaspora and government, CNN received more criticism than Aljazeera, which makes it interesting whether the two media channels had a real difference in their coverage of the Tigray conflict. Despite the peace deal to end the conflict, the impact of the conflict is still felt affecting many people. So, it is an important and timely topic to research. Furthermore, as of my knowledge, no comparative study has been conducted specifically focusing on CNN and Aljazeera news websites on the coverage of the Tigray conflict. Thus, the purpose of this research is to analyse how CNN and Al Jazeera covered the Tigray conflict in the two years between November 4, 2020, and November 4, 2022. These news websites were selected because they are among the most popular international news websites, and they are well visited worldwide. Their accessible online archive and their usage of the English language are also the reasons to select these international news websites. In addition, they are different in terms of proximity to the Tigray conflict, which makes an interesting ground for comparison.



## **1.2. Research Objective**

### **1.2.1. General objective**

The purpose of this research is to analyse how CNN and Al Jazeera covered the Tigray conflict in the two-year period between November 4, 2020, and November 4, 2022.

### **1.2.2. Specific objectives**

1. To analyse the extent of the coverage of the conflict by CNN and Al Jazeera.
2. To identify the tones in the coverage.
3. To analyse the frames the two media channels used.
4. To identify the themes they used.

## **1.3. Research questions**

In this study, the researcher answers the following research questions:

1. To what extent did CNN and Al Jazeera cover the conflict?
2. What tones did they use?
3. How did they frame it?
4. What themes did they use?

## **1.4. Significance of the study**

This study gives knowledge about the media framings that international news organisations employed in their coverage of the particular conflict. By means of references to pertinent literature and case studies, readers will become familiar with how the framing has been realised in various news reports. The study gives theoretical and practical perspectives on the news framing strategies used by the chosen international media outlets and how the war was covered. The study also aids readers in foreseeing the potential positive and negative effects that these news websites may have on Ethiopia and its national and international socio-political context. The results of this study provide other media outlets with useful insight on how to approach conflict reporting and let them think about the moral implications of their reporting and approaches to covering conflicts in a more ethical manner.

Lastly, as this conflict is a recent happening, it can serve as a source of literature and inspiration for further studies in this area. The study will contribute to reducing the knowledge gap in Ethiopian conflict reporting.

### **1.5. Scope**

The study was limited to the coverage of the CNN and Al Jazeera news websites, in the period from November 4, 2020, to November 4, 2022. The study focuses on the two media channels' online news websites and excludes other formats of their news dissemination such as TV news, documentaries, and radio broadcasts.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1. The nature of conflict**

#### **2.1.1. What is conflict?**

There is no consensus on a common definition of conflict, rather scholars define it based on their perspective. According to Putnam & Poole (1987), conflict involves the following three themes: interdependence between the parties (i.e. each has the potential to interfere with the other), perception of incompatibility among the parties' concerns, and some form of interaction. Thomas (1992) defines conflict as “the process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his” (p. 269). According to Gilboa, scholars distinguish between two types of conflict or violence: Higher Intensity Conflict (HIC) and Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC). HIC has more attention than LIC as the former is the conflict characterised by interstate or between states while Low-Intensity Conflict is primarily characterised by internal violence or civil war.

Some scholars describe conflicts by their outward appearance. For example, conflict is described as "a breakdown in standard mechanisms of decision-making" (March & Simon, 1958, p. 112), it “breaches in normally expected behaviour” (Beagle & Siegel, 1966, p. 21); and is "opposition processes in any of several forms competition, status, rivalry, bargaining, sabotage, verbal abuse, etc "(Walton, 1966, p. 41). It has been argued that conflict primarily occurs within one of the following four levels: Intrapersonal conflicts occur when individuals dispute their own thoughts, ideas, emotions, or predispositions. Interpersonal conflicts happen between individuals. Intragroup occurs within a group such as among a member of one group, while intergroup conflict occurs between groups (Cheldelin & Druckman, 2008, p. 30).

The conflict between the Tigray Defense Force and the Ethiopian Defense Force is an example of an armed conflict. To qualify as armed conflict, the government must use military action instead of mediation or a peace negotiation, plus the non-government parties have to possess an organised army (Committee of the Red Cross, 2008, p. 3).

In terms of armed interstate conflicts, international humanitarian law distinguishes between two types of conflicts, namely international and non-international armed conflict. International armed conflict is a conflict that occurs when one or more states have the resources to engage an armed force against another state, regardless of the reasons or the intensity of the confrontation.

Non-international armed conflict occurs between governmental forces and non-governmental armed groups or between such groups only. The Ethiopian Tigray conflict belongs to the latter (Committee of the Red Cross, 2008).

The Uppsala Conflict Data Project defines an armed conflict as a contested incompatibility that concerns government territory or both where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths which can be categorised as minor armed conflict and a maximum of 1000 battle-related deaths which are categorised as war (Singer & Small, 1994).

Considering both international humanitarian law and the Correlates of War project criteria, the conflict between the Tigray People's Liberation Front and the Ethiopian government can be categorised as a non-international armed conflict. The estimates of total combatant deaths on both sides start at 250,000 and range up to 600,000 (USA Today, 2022). This means that the conflict should also be called a war since the total number of deaths is far beyond 1000. It can also be taken as an 'internationalised internal armed conflict' as it happened between the government of a state and internal opposition groups with intervention from other states such as sanctions on political leaders applied by the USA or Turkiye drones supporting the government side in this war (Singer & Small, 1994).

### **2.1.2. Conflict management**

Conflict is inevitable and lives with human beings, that is why conflict management is worth giving attention to. Conflict management is an effort undertaken by the parties in conflict or involving an outside party's intervention to make the conflict less damaging or to stop the ongoing conflict. "Conflict management operates from the premise that the escalation or intensification of a conflict is not inevitable. Rather, the goal of conflict management is to deny 'victory' to the aggressor(s), or perhaps more accurately, to deny the utility of aggression" (Butler, 2009, p. 14). Wolfsfeld (2003) says the media may play in the possible resolution of conflict. He stated that the weaker side must successfully bring its frame of the conflict to the media to gain public support and push the third party to intervene. The "news media are more likely to play an independent role when the powerful lose control because it allows the weaker side a better platform for the promotion of its frame of the conflict and increases the probability for third parties to intervene" (p. 228).

In case of an international and intense internal conflict, the role of international organisations is decisive. The African Union's (AU) role in the Ethiopian Tigray conflict and the EU sanctions on Russia to weaken Putin's power are good examples. The effectiveness of the AU

intervention to mediate between the Ethiopian government and TPLF is exemplary as it led both parties to sign a peace deal to end the war on November 3, 2022.

Generally speaking, conflict-handling modes are discussed by Thomas-Kilmann (1974). According to him, there are five conflict mode instruments: competing, collaboration, compromising, avoiding, and accommodation with two dimensions: assertiveness and cooperation. He visualises each of them as follows:-

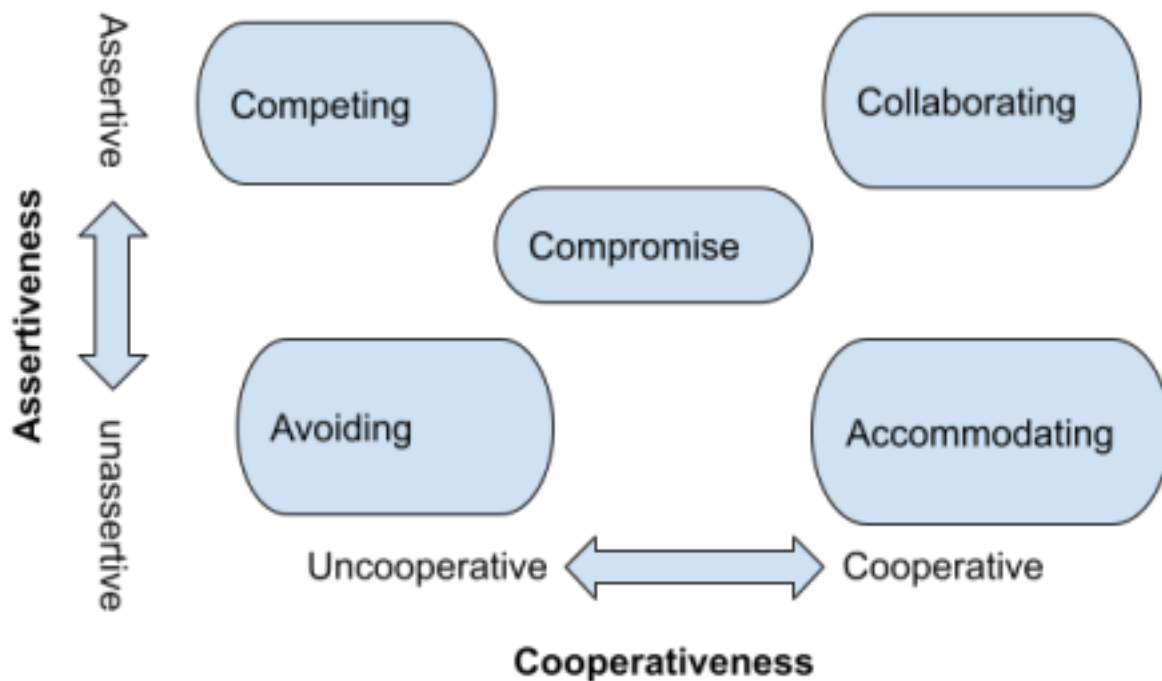


Figure 1. Two-dimensional taxonomy of conflict-handling model adapted from Thomas and Kilman, 1974, p. 11).

*Competing* is assertive and uncooperative, a power-oriented mode. When competing, a person follows his or her own concerns at the other person's expense to win her or his own desire. *Collaborating* is both assertive and cooperative. When collaborating, a person tries to work with the other person to get something in common and satisfy the concerns of both. In addition,

collaborating can mean when persons might take the form of exploring a problem to learn from each other's perspective and resolve conditions that would otherwise have them competing for resources.

*Compromising* is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. When compromising, the person tries to find an expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. Compromising addresses an issue more directly than avoiding it but doesn't explore it in as much depth as collaborating. Unlike the other alternatives, *avoiding* is unassertive and uncooperative. When avoiding, an individual neither immediately follows his or her own concerns nor those of the other person. He or she prefers being silent in addressing the conflict. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically postponing an issue until a better time, simply withdrawing from a threatening situation, or sidestepping an issue. *Accommodating* is unassertive and cooperative, the opposite of competing. When accommodating, a person avoids his or her own desire to satisfy the concerns of the other person; there is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode.

Gilboa (2009) distinguishes four stages of international conflict based on different critical conditions and principal intervention goals (1) onset-prevention,(2) escalation-management,(3) de-escalation-resolution, and (4) termination- reconciliation. According to Gilboa (2009) *Onset-prevention* is the beginning of disagreements, and violence can stop deteriorating through effective prevention measures. If not, parties may escalate the conflict believing they can impose a solution via violence. *Escalation-management* is the second phase and it ends in a formal or informal ceasefire or an armistice. In the de-escalation- *resolution phase* "leaders attempt to negotiate an agreement to end violence. If leaders reach a formal agreement, they may end violence and facilitate transformation" (Gilboa, 2009, p. 93). *Reconciliation Moves* from formal peace agreements to —changing the motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions of the great majority of the society members. This phase may bring harmony between enemies.

The Tigray conflict may have gone through various phases during the two-year fight. Starting from the beginning, the onset of prevention was not effective because both parties believed violence was a solution to their disagreement. Ceasefires, negotiations occurred several times during the conflict, but the actual agreement was reached after two years.

## 2.2 Media and conflict

The media coverage of a conflict depends on the political significance of the conflict. Nygren et al., (2018) studied media coverage of the war in Ukraine in 2014 and found that the coverage of the war in mainstream media correlates strongly with the political-historical context of each country. Themes in the coverage are related to the audience and the political situation in each country. "it is also the case that the extent to which the media assigns priority to cover one conflict rather than another, in turn, shapes the response of the international community" (Andrew, 2006, p. 6). The French novelist Albert Camus proclaimed that the act of inadequately naming things contributes to the afflictions of our world. The United States, by declaring a 'war on terrorism', has initiated a universal conflict that can be targeted toward adversaries. Hence, how such a war is portrayed in the media becomes a vital subject of examination for both scholarly experts and professionals alike (Thussu & Freedman, 2003).

Media are more interested in stories related to conflict, war, and violence. This is because conflict is among the basic news values that grab people's attention. Media people say bad news is good news. Negative events, conflicts, and war are among the most newsworthy issues by the media (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). Their article critiqued the reporting of three major foreign crises in the Norwegian press. They asked, "How do events become news?". As a result, Galtung and Ruge presented 12 factors identified as being important in the selection of news. Among those selected factors, reference to something negative was included in their list. According to Golding and Elliott (1979), cited in Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch (2009, p. 166), "Bad news is good news, and it is about disruptions in the normal current of events". Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch (2009) added that news related to war or conflict provides drama and shock value which attracts audiences. However, this attractiveness raises concern about the manipulation of truth. The first casualty when war comes, is truth, said former American Senator Hiram Johnson in 1917 (Knightley, 1975). Truth is mostly manipulated when reporters come up with their own opinions, beliefs, and perceptions. In addition, fighters use it as a weapon to convince the world or their own society to get more support. Truth has a tendency to be manipulated or modified, and it gets even worse in times of conflict, especially when the media have political affiliations.

Gerd Horten (2011) in his comparative study of the American and German Media Coverage of the Vietnam and Iraq Wars, he argues that the process of war is becoming increasingly mediated and has gained notable momentum in the last half-century. This shift has solidified the media's role

as a pivotal component of military endeavours, akin to the army, navy, and air force in terms of importance.

Therefore, neutrality is always in question, and it gets more complicated when it comes to times of conflict or civil war which can touch sensitive ethnic divisions or the country's diplomatic relations with other countries. That is where the media's independence or professionalism is tested. To be neutral, they must adhere to factual reporting and present a full and fair account of the situation. Street (2021, p. 9) adds:

It is, though, impossible to get even close to this notion of neutrality. The practicalities of the media's daily routines mitigate against giving a full account, besides long, factual accounts may divert viewers or readers away.

In discussing the potential power of the media, the so-called 'CNN effect' is a frequently used concept. The expression was first used in the United States about the 42-day Gulf War in 1991 when CNN established the importance of a 24-hour news network with truly global reach (Gilboa, 2005, p. 327). The 'CNN effect' concept suggests that the coverage provided by global news organisations, especially when focused on humanitarian issues, can directly shape public policy and government agendas. It was typically associated with the West's response to famine or conflict in Africa (Street, 2021). According to Vladimir Bratic & Lisa Schirch (2008, p. 8):

The media shapes what we see and hear about conflict. The perspectives of those who run the media shape the stories that are covered. Journalists have opinions and beliefs based on their experiences. Media owners have economic interests; they want to sell their stories and programs to the public who will buy their newspapers or watch their programs.

Days after the conflict between the government and the Tigray regional administration broke out, Tigray's media portrayed its local administration as innocent. On the other side, almost all the local media in Ethiopia (excluding Tigray's media) reported critically against TPLF. This was assumed because the rest of the regional news outlets had already discomfited with TPLF, and the media were assumed to be an enemy of the government if they would not report against TPLF. As a result, invisible measures were taken by the government toward the media that were not covering TPLF as a terrorist organization. (Abiy's parliament itself later removed TPLF from the official terrorist list on 22 March 2023) (Walta, 2023). The two fighters knew how the media could play a big role in changing and building people's perceptions. The media are instruments of war. News contributes to the processes of the construction of national identity, imperialism, and the control of colonies,



while also an essential lubricant in day-to-day financial affairs both within and between domestic markets (Barrett & Rantanen, 1998). Thomas (2005, p. 1) adds that:

The reason for winning modern wars is as much dependent on carrying domestic and international public opinion as it is on defeating the enemy on the battlefield. And it remains true regardless of the aspirations of many journalists to give an impartial and balanced assessment of the conflict.

### **2.3. Global media ethics and conflict**

The study of moral principles and ideals that direct human behaviour falls under the category of ethics. The terms 'ethics' and 'morality' imply a universalistic understanding of ethics, implying the existence of a set of moral principles that all people must uphold. On the reverse, there is a claim that ethics is individualised and dependent on cultural norms, social customs, and personal convictions. Because of this counter argument, some researchers have embraced a nuanced viewpoint that acknowledges the significance of both communitarian and universalistic ethics in order to reconcile these divergent viewpoints. Truth, objectivity, responsibility, transparency, limiting harm, and other related terms are all universal ideals that fall under the purview of universalistic ethics. On the other hand, communitarian ethics acknowledges the impact of regional cultures, norms, and individual qualities on ethical behavior and offers useful insights into the beliefs, needs, and perspectives of individuals and communities (Ward, 2005).

The global media can assist to enlighten and raise knowledge of internal matters, which can help with communication and contribute to the conflict's resolution. The media may also occasionally portray the dispute in an overly simplistic or exaggerated manner, resulting in misunderstandings or incorrect interpretations of the circumstances. Especially during conflict time, media attention can occasionally aggravate or prolong conflicts by giving a forum for certain people or organisations to air their grievances. "Jingoistic news headlines may be welcomed by the government as support for the justness of war, but may depart from the usual standards of journalistic impartiality and objectivity" (Gunter, 2009, p. 41).

The idea of objectivity has been central to journalism since its inception. The debate over the philosophical and practical implications of objectivity has generated a lot of discussion, with the normative 'ideal' of fact-based reporting being viewed as an impractical ideal. To promote professional practice, objectivity and impartiality are necessary. Both aim to achieve impartial reporting of facts obtained from reality (Seaton, 2005). Inquiries into and explanations of the

journalistic foundation of the field have been at the centre of the objectivity debate in journalism for decades. Modern uses of objectivity have been discussed by academics and professionals because, to quote Joseph Pulitzer, “we demand facts, who cares about the intellectual ramblings of our correspondents?” (Chalaby, 1996, p. 311). Academics contend that objectivity must remain a significant role in journalism and serve as a compass in the development of journalistic professionalism (Schudson, 2005; Schudson & Anderson, 2008). It is believed that objectivity is a tactical ritual that equips reports with information. A clear definition of objectivity is a norm, a tool that aids journalists in separating facts from professional values and reporting solely the facts by any means feasible (Schudson, 2001). In times of war, being objective is highly valued and plays a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions and understanding (Tumber, 2000).

In order to serve the public interest and give citizens the knowledge they need to make educated decisions, journalists must work to present an accurate and unbiased depiction of events and topics. Journalists are morally obligated to behave in the best interests of society and think about how their reporting may affect it (Ward, 2019). The ability of the media to ‘create consent’ among the populace makes journalism's job even more important. As a result, in order to keep the public's trust, journalists must approach their work with honesty, fairness, and responsibility (Brants, 2010).

Change in the primary threat to freedom of expression from public to private corporate power is a defining feature of our day. In other words, even though laws protecting freedom of expression are frequently interpreted to guard against government repression of individual rights, they can just as easily be read to guard against repression by private groups, such as media conglomerates and the people and businesses connected to them. The bulk of society's freedom of expression must be weighed against the few individuals and businesses that own the media in the issue of media ownership. This is comparable to the justification for limiting hate speech, where some freedoms of expression are curtailed to protect the rights of many to live in a safe and non-violent environment (Butler, 1999, cited in Lancia, 2009).

In 2012, the University of Sydney's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies hosted a conference to discuss the challenges and opportunities in new media and journalism, with the goal of developing a global standard for conflict coverage in the media. This standard was developed in collaboration with the International Federation of Journalists over three years. This is how serious conflict reporting has to be to discipline reporters while they work on sensitive issues like

conflict. The role of journalists has to be to promote nonviolent conflict resolution by reporting on conflicts in a balanced, fair, accurate, and sensitive manner. Media have to foster an environment in which people can share their experiences, respect differences, practice ethics, engage in nonviolent behaviour and love one another. It provides journalists with a new road map that connects them to their sources, the stories they cover, and the consequences of their reporting. It is "ethics of journalistic intervention" that brings nonviolence and creativity into the practical job of everyday conflict reporting (Odine, 2013, p. 217).

#### **2.4. African conflicts and international media coverage**

One of the characteristics of the modern world is conflict. Numerous conflicts have emerged since the end of the Cold War, resulting in the deaths of countless people and the displacement of millions more (Newman, 2004). Almost all African countries have been experiencing civil war, ethnic conflict, external conflicts, diseases, famines, and so on. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Morocco are examples among many.

Since the mid-1950s, civil war and internal conflict began to erupt in Africa more frequently. Ethnic conflicts and civil wars caused crisis in places such as Rwanda, Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, and Liberia (Gilboa, 2009). During the four decades between the 1960s and the 1990s, there have been about 80 violent changes of governments in the 48 sub-Saharan African countries (Adedeji, 1999, p. 3, cited in Bujra, 2002, p. 1). The north-south civil war in Sudan (1983-2005), the intra-state war in Darfur, Sudan, as well as the Ethio-Eritrean civil war (1998-2000), and the recent conflicts in northern Ethiopia have made the Horn of Africa among the most conflicted regions on the continent.

Africa has made significant contributions to human, social, scientific, and technological development in this globe, but the continent has also suffered from conflicts that have resulted in the displacement of millions of people and the deaths of thousands (Shah, 2004).

However, in modern media representations, African wars are often portrayed as primitive and chaotic (Baaz, 2005). Slanted and superficial reporting can obscure the regional and international significance of these conflicts, as well as the underlying geopolitical and economic realities. African history and culture are often depicted as incomprehensible, adding to the perception of savagery and the idea that African wars are particularly bizarre and barbaric.

Research has shown that international media coverage of African wars and conflicts is often crisis-driven and disproportionately negative, perpetuating the notion that Africans are naturally violent and prone to tribal feuds (Baaz, 2005). Such coverage not only fails to accurately convey the complexity of African conflicts but also reinforces damaging and harmful stereotypes.

International news coverage on African issues often begins with a report that sensationalises a crisis like war, famine, and disease having violent images or graphics inside the report. “War reporting is grounded in the notion of conflict as a news value. As a result, war reporting is often sensationalised and a mere device to boost circulations and ratings” (Allen & Seaton 1999, cited in Lee & Kim, 2006, p. 500). The press portrayal is that “Africa is a ‘dark continent’ where violent and irrational people live, or that the continent is lost because of its constant struggle with violence, famine, and disease” (Ammina, 2010, p. 209). US media coverage of Africa has reinforced a negative image of the continent as having little understanding of the underlying problem they are covering (Hawk, 1992, cited in Ammina, 2010, p. 212). Similarly, Fair (1992), in her study of coverage about US food aid sent to Africa in the mid-1980s, found that “Africans were represented as dependent and helpless, while the United States was portrayed as the aid giver and the West as compassionate”.

Scholars have researched negative portrayal of Africa in Western media in considerable detail. According to Awondo et al (2012), the homophobic sentiments made by some African politicians are what give the continent of Africa its bad reputation in the Western media. Similarly, Zhang & Mating-wina (2016) criticised the BBC for maintaining negative preconceptions about Africa. According to Huang & Leung (2005), the Western media has a prejudice against developing nations and frequently presents them as “bad others.” In their portrayal of African nations, American and British media frequently emphasise conflict, as noted by Lee et al (2006). According to Franks (2010), the BBC's portrayal of Africa, which is based on data from aid organisations, has been inaccurate and misleading.

However, in a recent study, international news coverage of Africa has become significantly more positive in tone. There has been a decrease in stories that focus exclusively on humanitarian disasters and an increase in stories about business and sports (Bunce, 2016). Some studies dispute the idea that Western media portray Africa negatively. For instance, Scott (2015) claims that negative portrayal is a myth and does not accurately reflect the state of the world today. According to Nothias (2014), between 2011 and 2013, the portrayal of Africa in British, French, and US

American news magazines between 2011 and 2013 news media changed from negative to positive. Bunce, Franks, and Paterson (2016) claim that the media's portrayal of Africa is evolving. Additionally, Scott (2009) asserts that despite what is frequently believed, UK press coverage of Africa is not as marginalised, derogatory, or insignificant as --.

## **2.5. International media coverage and Ethiopian conflicts**

The global media gave considerable coverage of Ethiopia during the Tigray War, as is expected since the media are attentive when a country faces serious challenges such as conflict, famine, or drought. According to Odine (2013, p. 203), due to a drought that was predicted months in advance by an international warning system, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya faced the world's worst food crisis in 2001. The media, on the other hand, failed to adequately convey the gravity of the situation to the global community. The media's failure exacerbated the crisis as food prices skyrocketed, resulting in the deaths of 12 million people who lacked access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, and sanitation. The failure of international media to report on the crisis not only cost lives but also had a severe impact on pastoralists who rely on rain for survival.

The story of the 1984 famine in Ethiopia was known on the global television screen. It was broadcast on 425 different television channels across the world and watched by a potential audience of 470 million (Gill, 1986, p. 91). It was believed that Ethiopia had a Marxist-Leninist government aligned with the Soviet Union and the famine gave the Western media the opportunity to demonstrate the failure of Soviet Union ideology and how evil communism was. However, somehow the coverage helped to call for charity (Sorenson, 1990).

BBC journalist Michael Burek explains the media coverage of the 1983-1985 famine of Ethiopia in the UK as such:

You had perhaps 10 million people watching the Nine O Clock news, 8 million people watching the Six O'Clock news, and 5 million people watching the lunchtime news...You are lucky if you get 5 million people watching the Ten o'clock news now . . . so over two days, two-thirds of the population of the United Kingdom actually saw those pieces in a way that could never happen again today (Franks, 2006, p. 307).

By October 1984, many people including government officials, aid workers, and journalists had already been trying to draw attention to the food crisis in the Horn of Africa, but without much

success (Gill, 1986). But the stories with a charitable dimension fare much better in the season of goodwill and the Geldof/Band-Aid angle on the story with the famous single ‘Do They Know It's Christmas?’ gave the famine coverage a huge boost to various development charities (Franks, 2006, p. 307).

Fast forward to more recent times, Tesfaye (2014) conducted coverage of Ethiopia on BBC and CNN news websites and found that both media channels were giving more coverage of negative aspects of Ethiopia and low coverage of positive development issues.

In addition, a critical analysis of news coverage on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) negotiations sheds light on a different but related aspect. Yohannes (2020) studied the coverage of the GERD in the eyes of Al Jazeera and BBC. He found that Al Jazeera and the BBC portrayed the GERD’s construction as a potential source of conflict, tension, and even war. The portrayal of the GERD as an “existential threat” to Egypt revealed a biased discursive portrayal of the project that favors Egypt’s current monopoly over the Nile. Sudan was portrayed as a passive entity caught in the crossfire between Ethiopia and Egypt. Meanwhile, Egypt was portrayed as a victim of Ethiopia, an ambitious social actor. Both media outlets – Al Jazeera as well as BBC – undermined Ethiopia’s legitimate efforts to use its resources.

Looking at more recent studies, research by Betelhem (2021) examined the framing of the conflict between the Federal Government and the Tigray People Liberation Front (between November 4, 2020, and January 11, 2021) through the lenses of ENA and Reuters. She found that both media outlets primarily relied on government official sources and excluded the voices of marginalised groups. She added that neither of the two news agencies was following journalistic ethical values. The global media are found to focus much on conflict, war, and disease when it comes to reporting from the African continent. Having said that, conflict and civil war reporting is where the global media can play both a constructive and destructive role.

Media, especially during times of conflict, “are normally not independent in political decision-making on conflict management, and even in democratic regimes with a high level of freedom of speech and press media framing is rather a tool, than a source of decision- -making” (Entman, 2003, cited in Arthur, 2020, p. 536). Hence, it is evident that news agencies often possess limited autonomy in agenda setting, especially when it comes to situations involving armed conflicts in which their states are engaged, and they are substantially influenced by external forces (Entman, 2003). Ethiopia’s conflict has evoked a specific response pattern by the international

community, primarily the United States of America (USA), the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN). They had criticism from people supporting the government for addressing, or rather ‘targeting’, the Ethiopian government. Global media originating in these countries had a tendency to reflect US and EU statements critics have accused them of singling out the Ethiopian government (Abbink, 2021).

In reviewing the existing literature related to the Tigray conflict, it becomes apparent that there are only a few studies to speak of. These studies share some limitations and gaps that are important to consider. Temsgen's (2021) research focuses on a comparative study between Reuters and the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), Yemane's (2020) study examines the coverage of the Tigray conflict by Al Jazeera, and a study by Bahiru (2021) examined the framing of the conflict between the Federal Government and the Tigray People Liberation Front (between November 4, 2020, and January 11, 2021) through the lenses of ENA and Reuters. Although these studies contribute to our understanding, they suffer from a limited sample period, spanning only a few months. Considering the two-year fight, these studies do not address the broader aspects of the Tigray conflict as comprehensively as the present study aims to do. In addition, they focused more on comparing local and foreign media coverage. Therefore, the current study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing a more extensive and comprehensive examination of media coverage of the Tigray conflict, encompassing a broader two-year timeframe.

## **2.6. The Tigray conflict**

### **2.6.1. The Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) vs. The Prosperity Party (PP)**

When the Derg regime overthrew the Shewan-Amhara-dominated regime of Haile Selassie in 1974, the Tigray people hoped that the new Derg regime would address Tigrayan’s ethnic-nationalist aspirations and self-determination. However, their expectations were not reached as the Derg regime led by Mengistu Hailemariam ended up being the enemy of their aspirations (Berhe, 2004).

TPLF started its historic journey in 1975 as a small guerrilla to secure the self-determination of the Tigray people, having an ethnic-nationalist movement. TPLF created one of the strongest armed forces in Africa by mobilising Tigrayans and giving a proper military training that can compete with not only rival groups but also a military-equipped government (Berhe, 2004). In 1975, TPLF found its biggest ally EPLF (the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front) to fight against

the Soviet backed regime of Mengistu Hailemariam. EPLF fought for four years (1971-1975) against Mengistu before it united with TPLF (Hamilton, 2000).

After a decade-long war of insurgency against the Derg regime, TPLF together with its ally EPLF removed the Derg regime and caused Mengistu Hailemariam to flee to Zimbabwe “in the wake of the collapse of the previous formula developed by Derg, a formula which at the outset in the mid-1970s appeared to offer a solution to the contradictions that had led inexorably to the failure of its imperial predecessor” (Clapham, 2009, p. 182). TPLF came to power in 1991 as the main actor of the state power of Ethiopia named EPRDF (the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front) led by the upcoming prime minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi.

After the overthrow of Derg, TPLF agreed on Eritrea’s independence. However, the unity between TPLF and EPLF did not last long. This was mainly because the Eritrea Liberation Front (ELF) territorial interpretation of Eritrea included North-West Tigray, an interpretation that was not accepted by TPLF as it was beyond Italian colonial defined boundaries (Young,1996). In addition, the ideological differences between the two parties and disagreement on borderline territory led to a deadly civil war in May 1998 at a border town called Badme, which ended in 2000, but without a peace agreement.

EPRDF led Ethiopia for almost 30 years. The EPRDF was a coalition of four ethnically defined parties: the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM, later renamed the Amhara Democratic Party), the Oromo People’s Democratic Organization (OPDO, later renamed the Oromo Democratic Party), and the Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement (SEPDM). The partnership was a multi-ethnic coalition with TPLF as the leading party. The prime minister, Meles Zenawi, came from the TPLF. The common perception among most Ethiopians was that TPLF dominated other regions and favoured the regions of Tigray from which it originated, though there were no visible social and economic developments in the Tigray region compared to the other regional states. Throughout these years many demonstrations were held by citizens against EPRDF related to governance, ethnic conflict, institutional systems, and political and social systems.

In the EPRDF's governance, it's important to acknowledge the role played by Hailemariam Desalegn, who served as the country's Prime Minister. Hailemariam Desalegn assumed the role of Prime Minister following the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2012 and continued in



office until 2018. Ethiopia continued to face political and institutional difficulties during his presidency, notably within the framework of the ethnic federalism that the EPRDF had developed.

During the EPRDF, Ethiopia did not have well-functional institutions or policies that could prevent conflicts (Berihu, 2021). Especially, political and institutional problems and the ethnic federalism system that EPRDF formulated were believed to be the main causes of ethnic conflicts. Even though EPRDF tried to implement a multi-party system, in reality, it was TPLF that dominated the country from 1991 until the current prime minister was appointed in 2018.

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which was in power from 1991 until 2019, was a coalition of four parties representing various regions and ethnic groups. However, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed proposed in 2018 that the EPRDF be merged into a new party called the Prosperity Party (PP). Some EPRDF founders and ethno-nationalist politicians who wanted to keep the old party structure and ideology objected to the move. Some previously excluded regional parties, on the other hand, decided to dissolve and become part of the PP. The EPRDF's fragmentation began in 2012, following the death of its strongman, Meles Zenawi, and culminated in the political assassinations of Ethiopia's military chief and the president of the Amhara Regional State in 2019. Abiy's reforms include abandoning the EPRDF's nationalist narrative, understating ethnic oppression, and emphasising ethnic harmony and national unity. However, TPLF, the main actor of EPRDF, refused to accept the change, and the relationship between TPLF leaders and PP faded. TPLF, which wanted to keep the centrally directed economic model and the federal constitutional arrangement, objected to the move (Goitom, 2019).

The Prosperity Party, led by Dr. Abiy Ahmed, was formed in 2019 by the merger of several smaller parties that had never been allowed to join the EPRDF — the ruling parties in the Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Harari, Somalia, and Gambella regions as well as parties that were a part of EPRDF: Oromo Democratic Party (ODP), Amhara Democratic Party (ADP), and Southern Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (SEPDM) (Borkena, 2019). The reform forced the resignation of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, the ruling party in the Tigray Region, and as a result, the EPRDF split into PP and TPLF. The ruling party PP has made significant gains in recent elections, winning a majority in the Ethiopian parliament in 2020 while the conflict was going on.

The EPRDF and the PP have different ideologies and policies. The EPRDF was a center-left party focusing on economic development, land reform, and social justice. The PP, on the other hand, is a center-right party that has emphasised economic liberalisation and privatization. The two

parties have also taken different approaches to governance. The EPRDF was criticised for its authoritarian style of governance and for suppressing opposition voices. The PP, on the other hand, has promised to promote democratic reforms and greater political openness, though the democratisation process is still in question.

Under Abiy Ahmed's leadership, the EPRDF's fragmentation worsened, leading to the political assassination of Ethiopia's military chief (Seare Mekonnen) and the president of the Amhara Regional State (Ambachew Mekonen) on June 22, 2019. Within the leadership, the power struggle crystallised irreconcilable ideological positions.

The leadership of Abiy's Oromo Democratic Party, for example, was divided between those who support Abiy's nationalist narrative and those who prefer the previously dominant ethno-nationalist discourse. According to Abiy's critics, the dismantling of the EPRDF and establishment of the Prosperity Party did not follow proper party procedures, and this change was imposed by a former president of the Oromia Regional State Lemma Megersa, who led the political process that brought Abiy Ahmed to power in 2018, has publicly expressed his opposition to the Prosperity Party (Goitom, 2019).

TPLF claimed that what happened in the name of the merger is the formation of a new party, and argued that EPRDF leadership did not have the mandate to abandon “revolutionary democracy” (Borkena, 2019). The TPLF and the PP have had a strained relationship in recent years, with the TPLF accusing the PP of being undemocratic and monopolising power. In November 2020, the TPLF announced that it would boycott the parliamentary elections, citing concerns about the fairness of the electoral process. In response, the PP accused the TPLF of trying to undermine the democratic process and of seeking to retain power through undemocratic means. In November 2020, the TPLF withdrew from the EPRDF coalition, leading to a rift between the two parties.

### **2.6.2. Causes of the Tigray conflict**

The Tigray crisis, which erupted in late 2020, was not a sudden occurrence, but rather the outcome of long-standing accumulations and difficulties between the Ethiopian government and the region. Less than two months after the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia Hailemariam Desalegn’s sudden, unprecedented, and historical resignation from his power, Dr. Abiy Ahmed was appointed as Prime Minister of Ethiopia on April 2nd, 2018. Ethiopian people, including Tigray people who later came

to look at Abiy as an autocratic leader, were delighted to have him as a leader of their country. In 2018, thousands of people marched to show their support in the biggest cities such as Mekelle, Bahir Dar, Hawassa, Addis Ababa, and so on.

PM Abiy Ahmed released many political prisoners and journalists and renewed media laws that had been a conundrum for press freedom. After almost 20 years of bitter conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the peace agreement made by Abiy with Eritrea made him a Nobel prize winner and brought support worldwide. Meanwhile, TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front) leaders were unhappy about the peace agreement Abiy made with Eritrea. This was because TPLF thought Dr. Abiy Ahmed and the leader of Eritrea Esayas Afewerki would dismantle TPLF (Tesfaye & Gebrehiwot, 2020). As the leader of Ethiopia's ruling coalition, the prime minister assumed control of the government when he rose to power in 2018. However, Tigray region officials believed that federal authorities attempted to punish their party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), since Abiy's election, particularly after the TPLF refused to merge with Abiy's new Prosperity Party, which was established in 2019. The bomb was thrown on 23 June 2018 amid tens of thousands of people attending the rally in support of Prime Minister Abiy in Addis Ababa's Meskel Square. It was assumed to be an attempted attack on Abiy. Tensions between the two sides rose in the following months. Abiy called TPLF leaders "daytime hyenas", arrested some of TPLF officials by federal forces, started investigations into TPLF-affiliated companies, and there were allegations from Abiy's supporters that the TPLF was responsible for the campaign of destabilisation in the country (International Crisis Group, August 14, 2020).

In addition, political parties decided to change EPRDF into the Prosperity Party without the participation of TPLF, which created a huge difference between TPLF and Abiy's relationship. EPRDF was mainly led by TPLF members, notably former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The government cut federal funds to Tigray over the election standoff in 2020 which provoked TPLF leaders to prepare for a fight.

The support from the people of Tigray did not last long. One reason was Abiy's repetitive criticism about the past regime of EPRDF led mainly by TPLF, and scapegoating the TPLF leaders created a deep hole between them. There was a documentary transmitted on national media channels like EBC, FANA, and Walta that focused on how the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was cruel and dictatorial. Many Tigrayans were irritated by the documentary as it framed

not only TPLF but also the people of Tigray as a whole. The documentary series suggested that human rights violations were committed by TPLF (Abdulkadr & Neszmélyi, 2021)

A planned national election in 2020 was postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. TPLF disagreed with Abiy's decision to postpone the election and went ahead with regional elections by itself (John & Gavin, 2021). This was also one of the main reasons for the souring of the relationship between the two parties.

The conflict in Tigray cannot solely be attributed to the leadership of Abiy Ahmed; it also encompasses a protracted verbal and territorial dispute with the neighbouring Amhara region. Tensions escalated as both Tigray and Amhara mobilised their forces along the shared border, particularly in the southern stretches near towns like Alamata and Kobo, an area known as Waja, as well as in the western region of Welkait. Prior to the outbreak of the full-scale Tigray conflict in 2020, there had been confrontations on the border. During these skirmishes, the Ethiopian Defense Forces intervened, siding with the Amhara regional forces to de-escalate the situation and stabilise the area. These conditions can all be seen as the motivations behind the main war fought between the Ethiopian Defense Force, the Amhara Defense Force, the Eritrea Defense Force, and local militias against the Tigray Defense Force. The Amhara regional administrations saw the disagreement between TPLF and Ethiopian government as an opportunity to regain what they perceive as lost territories in south and west Tigray (Tronvoll, 2022, p. 166). There were signs that war was coming. Six months before it erupted, veteran Tigrayan exile and former military strategist Siye Abraha warned the US that fighting was to start by saying this:

It will be a full-fledged war. No one will have any idea where it will end. We can already see the interference of foreign forces in our country and the war of words being waged on social media. We are seeing it daily, are we not? If one allows real bullets to be added to this verbal violence, our entire country will degenerate into a cheap bar for the amusement of our most meddling and insolent neighbours (Sarah Vaughan and Martin Plaut, 2023, p.2).

Furthermore, Eritrea's former minister of defence Mesfin Hagos who is in exile, appealed to many Eritreans not to participate in the fight and pointed out that the Tigray war was a careful plan by both Esias Afewerki and Abiy Ahmed. Mesfin confirmed that in the weeks leading to the outbreak of the war, Ethiopian troops had been flown into Eritrea (African Arguments, 2020). The Ethiopian

government invited other parties like the Somali militia, the Amhara militia, the Afar militia, and the Eritrean forces to fight together against the TPLF.

Other preconditions contributed to provoking the war, such as the deep disagreement over the history, nature, and future of the Ethiopian state; the power struggle within the former ruling party; rising ethnic-nationalism; and the Eritrean question (Tofa et al., 2021). Opposition parties claim that the main actor in the dramatic political sphere of the country was the new prime minister Abiy Ahmed as he dared to do it his way rather than follow the prewritten rules that had been used for decades by the TPLF-dominated EPRDF. On the other hand, TPLF was the one who was assumed as a bad loser, who did not want to see the change, and was arguably jealous of the reforms initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. ‘The war was – in the Ethiopian federal government’s view – the fault of this ‘traitorous gang’, an ‘illegal clique’ who had ‘treasonously attacked the Ethiopian army stationed on their northern border with Eritrea’ (Sarah Vaughan & Martin Plaut, 2023). And vice versa in TPLF’s view, the war was started because of Abiy’s fascist and autocratic regime which was purposely ready with its allies to wipe TPLF from its power.

## **2.7. Theoretical framework**

In this study framing and agenda-setting theories will be used as a theoretical framework.

### **2.7.1. Framing Theory**

Chong and Druckman (2007) emphasise the idea that issues can be approached by media from diverse perspectives, each entailing multiple values. They define framing as the cognitive process through which individuals construct a specific conceptualization of an issue or reframe their thoughts about it. This underscores the notion that issues are subject to interpretation, influenced by the framing applied, and can have implications for various values. Entman (1993) offers perhaps the most widely quoted definition of framing:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (p.52).

Another prominent scholar in framing theory is Gitlin (1980, p. 6), who states that “frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what

exists, what happens, and what matters". Media can construct a frame by employing techniques such as filtering and shaping texts, or by selectively presenting a particular perspective of an event, thereby highlighting specific aspects of reality (Gitlin, 1980). Media are useful tools if they make sense of relevant events, suggesting what an issue is, the degree of urgency, the degree of importance, and the extent of official and public involvement (Otchere, 2020, p. 14). In a crisis, media framings tend to determine the reality to the international community, and human rights groups. A certain group's, society's, or individual's thinking and perspective toward an issue are influenced by how the issue is framed in the media (An & Gower, 2009). Iyengar & Simon (1993) found that television news coverage of the conflict in the Persian Gulf significantly affected Americans' political concerns and the criteria with which they evaluated George Bush. The media was criticised for selecting texts in a way that reflects a certain ideology of the state, groups, or individuals. War journalism can be framed, for example as military strategy, as professionalism and technology, as military victories, and as the enemy's losses (Vladisavljević, 2015). Dimitrova & Connolly-Ahern (2007) studied framing analysis of online news sites in coalition countries and the Arab World during the Iraq War. The study's results indicate that Arab online news platforms tend to highlight the military conflict and violence aspects, framing the narrative around war, while Coalition media emphasises the reconstruction of Iraq. Moreover, the research identifies differences in coverage tone and source usage across the four news outlets, reflecting diverse perspectives in their depiction of the war. In the Ethiopia-Tigray conflict, global media coverage had a significant impact on the perceived status quo of the war. How the media were framing the conflict-affected the reactions or approaches of the humanitarian organisations, human rights groups, or nations toward the fighters (Plaut & Vaughan, 2023). Media plays a vital role in shaping the awareness and perspectives of both the general public and decision-makers. Interestingly, there is a dependability of policy makers on media reports to gain a comprehensive understanding of events (Bloch-Elkon 2007; Entman 2000).

The complex phenomenon of framing refers to the media's ability to create an atmosphere and a focal point that shapes our understanding of events. This can be accomplished with various linguistic devices, metaphor, hyperbole, irony, and narrative elements that aid in the framing of a story (Burgers, et al., 2016). In the case of the Tigray conflict, the Tigray media and the Tigray supporters tended to frame the incident in terms of public safety, emphasising the danger posed to the people living in the Tigray region as the government was trying to control Tigray by killing

innocent people. Government-affiliated media or government supporters, on the other hand, framed the armed conflict as a law enforcement success, praising the government's quick capture of the region, and leading to a safer situation for people (Plaut & Vaughan, 2023; Woldearegay, 2022). Global media received criticisms from the Ethiopian government for framing the conflict in an unbalanced way (Abbink, 2021).

The concept of framing theory given by (Entman, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Goffman, 1974) are particularly fit with this study. In applying framing analysis, this study followed Entman's (1993, p. 52) categories of framing, defining problems, identifying causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting solutions are relevant to identify certain types of frames in the story. Semetko & Valkenburg (2000), Benford & Snow (2000), and Aday & Devitt (2004)'s types of framing were also useful since this study followed predefined frames.

### **2.7.1.2 Types of Framing**

#### **2.7.1.3. Episodic and thematic frames**

Episodic and thematic frames are often used when analysing news reporting. Episodic frames refer to specific, isolated events and do not provide any larger context or connections to other events. These types of frames are described as “only a passing parade of specific events” (Iyengar 1991, p. 140). Thematic frames, on the other hand, provide a broader context or theme for understanding the events being reported. Episodic frames, which focus on specific, isolated events, tend to attribute responsibility to specific groups or individuals. This type of framing can create the impression that the events in question are the result of the actions or decisions of a particular person or group. On the other hand, thematic frames, which provide a broader context or theme for understanding the events being reported, are more likely to attribute responsibility to societal or political forces. This type of framing can create the impression that the events in question are the result of larger, structural issues rather than the actions of specific individuals or groups (Iyengar, 1991).

#### **2.7.1.4. Diagnosis and prognosis frames**

News framing focuses on the *diagnosis* and *prognosis* of an event or issue involves analysing the root causes and predicting potential outcomes. Diagnosis framing seeks to identify the underlying

factors that contribute to a problem, while prognosis framing predicts the likely future developments of a situation. These approaches can be used to inform policy decisions, suggest solutions, and shape public perceptions by providing a forecast of what may happen in the future and highlighting the potential consequences of certain actions or events. Frames, in this context, serve to define the problem at hand and determine the costs and benefits of different causal agents, typically in terms of shared cultural values. They also help to diagnose the underlying causes of the problem and make moral evaluations of the various agents and their impact (Benford & Snow, 2000). Finally, frames offer recommendations for addressing the problem and provide predictions about the likely effects of different remedies. In this way, frames serve as a framework for understanding and addressing complex issues, guiding the way we perceive and respond to problems (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

#### **2.7.1.5. Issue-specific and Generic frames**

Issue-specific frames are relevant only to particular topics or events, and generic frames apply to a wide range of topics and can be identified in various cultural contexts and over time. This distinction in framing types has been used to help clarify the use of the term "framing" in previous research. Issue-specific framing focuses on a specific topic or event, using language and presentation techniques to shape the way people think about that issue. On the other hand, generic framing operates on a broader scale, influencing the way people think about a range of topics through more general framing techniques (Vreese, 2002).

Both issue-specific and generic framing is crucial to consider in media and communication research, as they have an impact on shaping public opinion and behaviour. A deeper understanding of how media use framing can aid researchers, journalists, and others in unpacking the influence of media on society (Vreese, 2002, p, 54).

Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) identify five common news framings: conflict framing, human interest framing, responsibility framing, economic framing, and morality framing. *Conflict framing* "emphasises the conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing audience interest" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p, 95). With a focus on disagreement and conflict, conflict framing depicts news as a battle or struggle between opposing factions. This framing may be utilised to draw readers or viewers by evoking a sense of drama and suspense.



*Human interest frame* refers to “an effort to personalise the news, dramatise or “emotionalize” the news, in order to capture and retain audience interest” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p, 96). Human interest framing emphasises the unique experiences and personal narratives of those involved in the news topic. This framing can increase readers' or viewers' emotional appeal and sense of relatability to the content.

*Responsibility framing* presents an issue or problem by emphasising who is to blame for the cause or solution. It assigns responsibility to the government, an individual, or a group, and can be used to hold people accountable or to promote a sense of justice. This framing can be used to hold people accountable and foster a sense of justice (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). *Economic framing* presents news in terms of its economic implications or consequences. This framing can help readers or viewers understand how the news affects their lives or the economy. The economic consequences or implications of an event, problem, or issue on a specific individual, group, institution, region, or country are presented in this frame. It is concerned with how the event, problem, or issue will impact the economy (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000)

*Moral framing* is a method of presenting news that emphasises the moral implications or consequences of an event or issue. This framing can aid in the formation of a sense of right and wrong and can be used to promote a particular moral viewpoint. The event, problem, or issue is presented in the context of religious beliefs or moral values in this frame. It highlights the moral implications or consequences of an event, problem, or issue and may be used to promote a particular moral viewpoint (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p.96).

Framing theory helped this study in having appropriate definitions for the selected frames. Additionally, it was relevant to identify, categorise or code stories by following the above types of frames. Those frames were implemented by Semetko Valkenburg (2000), Benford & Snow (2000), and Aday & Devitt (2004). Furthermore, during identifying frames in the text, the concept of framing was helpful. According to Entman's (1993) categories of framing, defining problems, identifying causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting solutions are relevant to identify certain types of frames in the story.

### **2.7.2. Agenda setting theory**

McCombs & Shaw (1972) propose that in agenda setting” readers learn not only about a given issue but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a

news story and its position” (p, 1). Similarly, Moy & Rinke (2016) say agenda-setting is the process through which mass media influence public perception of the significance of various issues by giving varying degrees of attention to specific topics. In essence, the media can mould people's views about which issues are more important and relevant by how much coverage they provide to those issues. Cohen (1963) underlines that “the press may not be successful all the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (p. 2). Media can affect an individual’s daily activities by influencing the audience’s minds. They also affect how audiences see the world, and how they decide which issues are less and more important. Lang & Lang (1966), as cited in McCombs & Shaw (1972) describe the mass media as giving attention to certain issues, building up public images of political figures, and constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals should think about, know about, and have feelings about. According to the agenda-setting model of media effects, there is a correlation between the amount of media exposure to the issue and the degree of importance the public attaches to the issues. The issues that receive the least media attention are considered by the public as being the least important. Whereas, for the public to perceive the news as important, the media must give the issue significant exposure (McCombs & Shaw, 1976 Rogers, 1994).

Agenda-setting research supports that media affect the policy agenda (through public debate and powerful lobby) and play a key role in shaping the public agenda (issues discussed or prioritised). In terms of conflict, Hawkins (2004) cited in Odine (2013, p. 209) ponders that “agenda-setting will lay the ground for a “chosen” conflict (blinding spot) to be the subject of public debate and scrutiny for about one year, thereby eclipsing all other points of possible interest”. Because media, policymakers, and the public can only, consciously, process one or two conflicts at a time.

Issues covered by the media determine what the media consumer believes is important by legitimising certain stories while marginalising or delegitimizing others. McCombs & Shaw (1972) systematically examined and analysed the impact of the media on both the candidates and the electorate of Chapel Hill in the 1968 US Presidential Election. They found a significant connection between the attention given to different campaigns in the media and the perceptions of voters regarding the relevance of various issues and their decision-making. Their findings indicate that the media established themselves as influential agenda-setters by playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion by strategically highlighting certain issues or individuals in their coverage. Hence,

the agenda is usually set by media outlets, journalists, or editors as they are the ones who control the content. However, at some stage, the editor's or journalist's decision-making can be influenced by third parties, such as by state leaders' political party campaigns, social media outlets, and public relations efforts (Kioussis et al. 2007 as cited in Guo & Vargo, 2020). In CNN and Al Jazeera's case, the agenda-setting scenario might differ as their geographical location differs. In CNN, the media's agenda can be influenced by a Western tendency toward the situation, while Al Jazeera may be situated within an Arab perspective. A study on framing analysis of Al Jazeera and BBC coverage of the 2011 Libyan uprising and NATO intervention by Nahed (2015) found that the coverage of both these networks was aligned with the national and foreign policy interests of their home countries, making their political contexts the main influence on their news agendas.

#### **2.7.2.1. Who sets the agenda?**

Agenda-setting research supports that media affect the policy agenda (through public debate and powerful lobby) and play a key role in shaping the public agenda (issues discussed or prioritised). In terms of conflict, Hawkins (2004) ponders that agenda-setting will lay the ground for a "chosen" conflict (blinding spot) to be the subject of public debate and scrutiny for about one year, thereby eclipsing all other points of possible interest. Because media, policymakers, and the public can only, consciously, process one or two conflicts at a time.

Agenda-setting theory is a communication theory that contends the issues covered by the media determine what the media consumer believes is important by legitimising certain stories while marginalising or delegitimizing others. There is the reality of what is happening, and then there is the media's agenda, which shapes the public's perception of that reality. This, in turn, can affect how people behave. McCombs & Shaw (1972) systematically examined and analyzed the impact of the media on both the candidates and the electorate of Chapel Hill in the 1968 US Presidential Election. They found a significant connection between the attention given to different campaigns in the media and the perceptions of voters regarding the relevance of various issues and their decision-making. Their findings indicate that the media established themselves as influential agenda-setters by playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion by strategically highlighting certain issues or individuals in their coverage. Hence, the agenda is usually set by media outlets, journalists, or editors as they are the ones who control the content. However, at some stage, the editor's or journalist's decision-making can be influenced by third parties, such as by state leaders'

political party campaigns, social media outlets, and public relations efforts (Kiouisis et al. 2007 as cited in Guo & Vargo, 2020). In addition, media may take or borrow story ideas or media content from their counterparts rather than creating original content on their own, especially in media that have financial limitations or do not have enough professional writers. Online news tends to be easier to copy or manipulate agendas already written by other media which unfortunately expands fake news, misinformation, and disinformation.

In CNN and Al Jazeera's case, the agenda-setting scenario might differ as their geographical location differs. In CNN, the media's agenda can be influenced by a Western tendency toward the situation, while Al Jazeera may be situated within an Arab perspective. A study on framing analysis of Al Jazeera and BBC coverage of the 2011 Libyan uprising and NATO intervention by Nahed (2015) found that the coverage of both these networks was aligned with the national and foreign policy interests of their home countries, making their political contexts the main influence on their news agendas.

Agenda-setting theory was important to this study in giving an understanding of the media's prior agenda. It was also relevant in understanding the amount of exposure to the conflict given by both news outlets. According to Coleman et al (2009), there are two levels of agenda setting: first-level and second-level. First-level agenda setting focuses on the amount of media coverage an issue or other topic receives. In contrast, the second-level agenda setting looks at how the media discusses those issues or other objects of attention, such as public figures, and the tone of those attributes. This study used both levels to answer the amount of the coverage Tigray conflict received and how both media presented it.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The main goal of this study is to compare two famous international media outlets, Al Jazeera and CNN, and their coverage of the war between the Ethiopian federal government and TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front). In particular it analyses their frames, themes, and tones and the extent of coverage of the conflict. This chapter discusses the choice of the methods, sampling strategies, and coding and procedures, data collection and analysis, reliability test, background of selected media, and limitations of the study.

### **3.2. Choice of method**

This study employed quantitative content analysis and qualitative textual analysis, with each approach used in sequential manner. Quantitative methodologies address questions about causality, generalizability, and the magnitude of the effect. In contrast, qualitative methodologies are used to understand why or how a phenomenon occurs, to develop a theory, or to describe the nature of an individual's experience (Creswell et al., 2013). A mix of both methods draws on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2008). Because of the diffusion nature of frames, tones, and themes in this study and their openness to varied interpretations, the mixed method was found to be vital.

A sequential explanatory mixed methods design was employed in this study. According to Ivankova et al. (2006) mixed-methods sequential explanatory design deals with the issues of priority, implementation, and integration of quantitative and qualitative research methods. In this study, priority was given to the quantitative method. This is because the quantitative method had more weight and attention in the data collection process of this study. In addition, even though it depends on the goal of the study, in mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, the quantitative data collection comes first in the sequence and often represents the major aspect of the mixed-methods data collection process and a smaller qualitative component follows in the second phase of the research. The qualitative phase was useful in exploring and interpreting the statistical results obtained in the first, quantitative, phase.

In the implementation, it is whether the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis come in sequence, one following another, or concurrently (Green et al. 1989; Morgan

1998; Creswell et al. 2003). In this study, quantitative data were collected and analysed first from both news websites, and then put emphasis on quantitative findings by the second step using qualitative textual analysis. Textual analysis was selected because unlike content analysis, it helps in giving the real meaning and pointing to the angle of the stories. This was done through taking sample news stories from what had already been collected quantitatively. The sample was taken from each variable collected and categorised by the quantitative method.

Integration was a vital stage to connect both methods to present the findings in a meaningful way. The qualitative method was helpful in discussing, interpreting, and assisting quantitative findings. At the most basic level, the purpose of this strategy is to use quantitative data and results to assist in the interpretation of qualitative findings (Creswell, 2009).

### **3.3. Content analysis and textual analysis**

The application of a content analysis approach was deemed necessary due to the large sample size utilised in this study. According to Krippendorff (2018, p. 43) content analysis can cope with large volumes of data. The availability of electronic texts is fast expanding to other kinds of materials, such as web pages, making content analysis an increasingly important research technique and bringing the analysis closer to large population surveys. Content analysis techniques were utilised to enumerate the number of news stories (the extent of coverage) and words contained within single news stories, on each respective news website during the two years conflict of Tigray. Additionally, content analysis was used to know the extent of the coverage, frequency of coverage in each frame, tones, and themes provided by both Al Jazeera and CNN.

Textual analysis, on the other hand, was selected because it does what the content analysis method does not do in this thesis. “Content analysis proceeds in terms of what-is said, and not in terms of why the content is like that or how people react” (Berelson, 1952, p. 16). Textual analysis describes and interprets elements of a text. Its “approach typically results in a strategic selection and presentation of analysed text as the evidence for the overall argument” (Fürsich, 2009, p. 240). Using textual analysis, I purposely selected news stories from the material which were already coded in the quantitative stage. I took samples from each frame, tone, and theme. Then I presented them in the discussion part to interpret their deeper meanings and give emphasis to the different variables in the study. This was done by reading and rereading words, phrases, and the main ideas and themes of a story.

### **3.4. Coding procedures**

#### **3.4.1. Tones of the story**

Tone is the writer's intention behind the text. The tone of news refers to the affective aspect of media message generation and the depiction of events or issues as either good, neutral, or negative. In this study, the tone was classified into four. Stories that were in favour of the government, stories that were in favour of TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front), stories that were neutral, and mixed.

To study these classified four tones, I adopted the concept of agency, as proposed by Wall (1997; also cited in Fahmy & Al Emad, 2011). The term 'agent' encompassed entities perceived to have taken positive, negative, or neutral actions related to the conflict, involving the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF). Each news story underwent a meticulous examination, with the headline and the first three paragraphs being scrutinised to identify the key agent. Agents were subsequently categorised into *Positive agent*: when parties contributed positively to the conflict, engaging in actions such as problem alleviation, expressing interest or concern, or striving for resolution. Positive attributes were identified through words like help, relief, negotiations, humanitarian efforts, reconstruction, peace efforts, and cooperation. *Negative agent*: Entities causing negative changes in the conflict, either by creating or worsening situations or problems. Negative attributes were associated with words like destroy, bomb, kill, torture, unwillingness to cooperate, acting irrationally, and resisting positive influence. *Neutral agent*: Entities neither causing negative nor positive changes in the conflict, with news stories not attributing either set of attributes to them. *Mixed agent*: News stories that blame/favour both parties.

#### **3.4.2. Frames of the stories**

The framing analysis approach was a tool in this study. News is easily the most prominent discursive site in which communication researchers strive to understand what framing is and how framing works (Dangelo & Kuypers, 2010). There are two general approaches to framing analysis: inductive and deductive. In the inductive approach, the researcher does not pre-determine certain frames in the study, but instead leaves the study to identify all the possible frames. In the deductive

approach, the researcher pre-defines certain frames and examines and analyses the occurrence of the frame in the stories (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

In this study, both deductive and inductive approaches were implemented. The researcher used predefined or pre-specify certain frames and identified themes by the researcher while doing the research. Some of the types of frames were taken from Semetko & Valkenburg (2000). Some stories that were categorised in different frames were identified by using what Gronemeyer & Porath (2017) used while investigating political framing of the Chilean press. Key frames used in this study are as follows: *Conflict framing* centers around conflicts between two opposing parties, often emphasising the involvement of troops, and military developments. To categorise stories within this type of frame, certain key elements can be considered. These elements include elements whether the story portrays a clear disagreement between parties, whether it references two sides or potentially more than two sides involved in the issue or problem, whether the narrative highlights winners and losers, and whether it includes instances where one party, be it an individual, group, or country, blames or accuses another party.

The *violence of war* framing with emphasis on both destruction as well as the human cost raises the question of whether the story highlights the physical destruction caused by the war, including infrastructure damage, casualties, and environmental harm. To identify *human interest framing*, the researcher used criteria to determine if the stories provided a human example or “human face” on the issue. The researcher also assessed whether the stories employed adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy, caring, sympathy, or compassion. Additionally stories were examined to determine whether they emphasise how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem or whether the story delves into the private lives of the actors. The *responsibility frame* aims to attribute blame and responsibility for an issue. To identify this frame, the researcher examines whether the story suggests that either the government or the TPLF is responsible for the problem, indicates their capacity to mitigate the issue, proposes solutions, assigns responsibility to individuals or groups in society, or underscores the need for urgent action. *Economic framing* focuses on the reference to the economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action. It emphasises the economic consequences, financial losses or gains, and the degree of expense incurred, both in the present and the future.



In addition to the above types of framing, this study also used *prognosis*, *diagnosis*, *advanced* and anti-war frames. When the news article stressed potential outcomes or long-term effects of the war, it was identified as a prognostic frame. It was taken as a diagnostic frame (Benford & Snow, 2000) when it focuses on the causes, reasons for the war, or origins of a problem, or answers the question of what is the problem. *Advance framing* focuses on any significant change in the development of the war such as capturing cities or mountains, retaliation, and shifting battle areas. The *anti-war* frame (anti-war activities) looks at how news reports portray opposition to the war. Anti-war framing had the ability to undermine widely accepted pro-war narratives in the media and to elicit public debate and anti-military conflict activism (Aday & Devitt, 2004).

### 3.4.3 Thematic analysis

The theme is the main message of the story. The topic and content of news stories, including those on human rights issues, politics, health, crime, education, and other subjects, are collectively referred to as the news theme. The public's views and sentiments toward numerous events and situations may be significantly impacted by these themes (Gans, 1979). In this study, stories were categorised and coded to analyse what types of themes they had toward this conflict.

Various themes emerged when categorising stories related to the conflict. *Human rights issues*, such as killings, harassment, rape, imprisonment, and torture, constituted one significant aspect. *Humanitarian crises*, primarily involving displacement, hunger, famine, and shortages of food and medicine, were another key focus.

Additionally, there was a distinct theme centred on *disaster and destruction*, encompassing events like bombings, airstrikes, and damage to buildings and property. Moreover, stories related to farming/harvesting during the conflict were grouped under the *agricultural theme*. There was a theme dedicated to *history and culture* which explored historical perspectives and cultural views during the conflict.

The theme of *reconciliation* also emerged, with stories focusing on efforts to make peace and develop solutions to end the conflict. Lastly, *bilateral and international relations* stories delving into diplomatic issues during the war. Overall, the researcher used 20 variables as categories and grouped the news stories under these variables to provide the appropriate information about each story and to help to answer the research questions through a careful reading of selected news stories in this study.

### **3.5. Data Collection and Analysis**

The researcher has to justify why and how data collection is taken through either the primary data which is the first-hand data gathered by the researcher or the secondary data which is the data collected by someone else earlier (Melnikovas, 2018). In this study, web data was employed to conduct content analysis, categorised under primary data collection. Quantitative data were entered into SPSS software and analysed using descriptive statistics, and Google Sheets was also used to make charting, categorising, and coding when necessary. Examples of news stories were presented qualitatively to discuss the quantitative findings.

### **3.6. Sample of the study**

This study collected data based on secondary data on the online news websites of two major international news organizations: CNN (<https://edition.cnn.com>) and Al Jazeera (<https://www.AlJazeera.com>). The data collection comprises 24 months of the armed conflict between the Ethiopian government and TPLF (Tigray People's Liberation Front). The research implemented a quantitative and qualitative content analysis approach. Coverage of CNN and Al Jazeera news websites concerning the Ethiopian-Tigray war (spanning from November 4, 2020 to November 4, 2022) had been taken as a sample. These news websites were selected because they were among the most popular international news websites and they are well visited by people from all over the world. Their accessible online archive and their usage of the English language are also reasons to select these international news websites. In addition, they are different in terms of proximity to the Tigray conflict, which makes an interesting ground for comparison. The time span selected intends to show the overall nature of the news websites' coverage of the Ethiopian Tigray war. Additionally, it helped to include all the coverage of the war up until both sides signed the peace agreement.

Online archives of CNN and Al Jazeera were used to prepare a list of all stories. The words 'Tigray' and 'Ethiopia' were used as search strings.

The unit of analysis was the individual news articles. All articles related to the conflict were analysed regardless of the number of words or paragraphs. First, all stories mentioning the name Tigray or/and Ethiopia were identified. Then, those stories that mainly treat Ethiopian-Tigray conflict-related issues in their headlines were selected and coded. In this study, within 24 months

of intense conflict, 367 news stories were used from both sites together; 268 by Al Jazeera and 99 by CNN. Stories that did not mainly deal with the Ethiopian-Tigray conflict issues as the main theme were excluded. The researcher read every news article and decided whether the story was to be included in the analysis.

### **3.7. Intercoder Reliability**

To ensure reliability and researcher non bias, I checked the coding with a person who has a background in journalism. The coder first familiarised with the variables (framing, themes, and tones). Then we coded 40 stories (20 from each news outlet) among the selected 19 variables of frames, tones, and themes. We came to agree on 35 news articles and disagreed on 5 (2 from Al Jazeera and 3 from CNN) . Differences in coding were computed using Holsti's (1968) formula:  $2(C1.2)$  divided by  $C1+C2$ . Where:  $C1.2$ =number of category assignment agreed on  $C1+C2$  = total number of category assignment made by both coders

$$2(35)/40+40= 0.87$$

0.87 reveals a strong correlation between the two coders.

### **3.8. Background of CNN and Al Jazeera**

#### **3.8.1. CNN**

Cable News Network (CNN) is an international news outlet that is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, US. CNN broadcasts from several US cities, has over 4000 journalists and reaches countries throughout the world. The name Cable News Network (CNN) was chosen to advertise its use of cable as the founder of the channel Ted Turner made it available to cable subscribers nationwide during that time. On June 1, 1980, CNN aired, breaking ground as the first 24-hour news channel. Once CNN accrued stable profitability, it established offices in several European cities. In 1985, CNN International launched, reporting live from foreign nations. By 2000, it expanded to Asia Pacific, South Asia and Latin America.

In 1995, CNN launched its website, CNN.com. At first, it was an experiment known as CNN Interactive. Since its launch, the website has come to incorporate American and international news, press releases, and live television. From an iconic headquarter in an office building in Atlanta, Georgia, CNN has grown to comprise 38 editorial stations worldwide (Georgia Historical Society, 2019).

### **3.8.2. Al Jazeera**

Al Jazeera is a state-owned news channel affiliated with al-Jazeera Media Network, founded on November 1, 1996, based in Doha, Qatar. It was initially a satellite channel for Arab news and current affairs. Since then the channel has expanded into an international media network with a number of outlets (Al Jazeera Media Network, 2012). The Al Jazeera English website opened in 2003. Susi Sirri, news coordinator and spokeswoman for the English site, said the site aims "to fill a niche for English speakers who want to get the other side of the story, the Arab perspective" (Sydney Morning Herald, 2003).

Al Jazeera Media Network has over 70 bureaus around the globe, and more than 3000 employees from more than 95 countries. Al Jazeera has extensive reach across the globe and is available in over 150 countries and territories in more than 430 million homes (Al Jazeera Media Network, 2023).

### **3.9. Limitations**

Data reduction is a challenge in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, as researchers collect large amounts of data that must be distilled for meaningful analysis. In quantitative research, data reduction is typically accomplished through statistical analysis, such as generating means or frequency tables, which allows for the reduction of data pertaining to large numbers of individuals. Qualitative researchers take a different approach to data reduction, developing concepts from their abundant data to identify and extract significant insights (Bryman, 2001. p. 409). This challenge appeared in this study in different ways. First, the researcher did not reduce data which made it challenging to read and understand every single news story and put them in the right categories of themes, frames, and tones. This was mainly because some news stories could be interpreted in different ways. However, when the researcher encountered vague headlines and leads, the best option was to read the article over again. In addition, the researcher selected samples of headlines to give an example to help discuss the findings, so the selection was based on the interest of the researcher.

## Chapter four: Data Presentation and Discussion

### 4.1. Data Presentation

#### 4.1.1. Story frequency

Table 1 presents the overall number of relevant news stories regarding the Tigray conflict between November 4, 2020 and November 4, 2022. Al Jazeera English has 268 online stories, and CNN 99. The further analysis included all news stories from both websites.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>ALJE's number of news stories</b>	<b>ALJE's average number of words per month</b>	<b>CNN's number of news stories</b>	<b>CNN's average number of words per month</b>
2020	November	40	857	15	770
2020	December	16	815	4	446
2021	January	10	508	0	0
2021	February	11	723	0	0
2021	March	14	663	11	878
2021	April	10	596	5	716
2021	May	20	851	10	923
2021	June	13	736	7	586
2021	July	14	700	4	1095
2021	August	16	509	4	529

2021	September	10	776	4	251
2021	October	14	611	10	807
2021	November	20	821	13	929
2021	December	10	629	4	555
2022	January	7	468	2	1081
2022	February	0	0	1	534
2022	March	4	918	0	0
2022	April	5	508	2	378
2022	May	5	279	0	0
2022	June	1	251	0	0
2022	July	0	0	0	0
2022	August	8	423	0	0
2022	September	8	620	1	280
2022	October	8	492	0	0
2022	November	3	785	2	808
Total		268		99	

*Table 1. Frequency of coverage*

There were some noticeable differences between Al Jazeera and CNN's coverage of the Ethiopian-Tigray conflict. In terms of number of news stories, CNN had 19 news items in 2020, making up 19% of their coverage, compared with 56 stories on Al Jazeera, which made up 20.8% of their coverage. However, both websites' coverage of the conflict grew greatly in 2021, with CNN reaching 72 news items, accounting for 72.7% of their coverage, while Al Jazeera had 162 stories (60.4%) – which makes sense given that 2021 contained twelve months of analysis and 2020 only two.

Al Jazeera and CNN both continued to cover the war in 2022, with Al Jazeera running 51 news pieces (18.2% of their total coverage) and CNN running 8 stories (8% of their total coverage). It is interesting to observe that both CNN and Al Jazeera's coverage dramatically decreased in 2022 compared with the year before. In numbers, Al Jazeera produced more coverage of the Tigray crisis than CNN, more than double the number for all periods.

The busiest month for both channels was November 2020, with 40 news stories for Al Jazeera and 15 for CNN. Similarly, the second busiest month for both channels was November 2021, having 20 news articles for Al Jazeera and 13 news articles for CNN. May 2021 also had 20 news articles for Al Jazeera.

Al Jazeera's news stories had an average word count of 632, while CNN's news stories had an average word count of 680, which makes the length of articles for the two outlets comparable.

#### **4.1.2. Tones of the story**

The data shows a clear difference in the level of support that CNN and Al Jazeera news stories had for the Ethiopian government and the TPLF. As for CNN, out of a total of 99 news stories, the majority of news stories (64 news stories/64%) favoured the TPLF and only 18 (or 18%) showed support for the Ethiopian government.

Only 8 stories (or 8%) were found to be neutral in their tones, implying that CNN's news coverage did not generally present the conflict in a balanced and impartial manner. Similarly, only 9 stories (or 9%) had mixed perspectives, again indicating that CNN's coverage did not provide a nuanced view of the situation. CNN's coverage of the conflict was heavily skewed in favour of the TPLF.

Similarly, the analysis reveals that from a total number of 268 news stories of Al Jazeera, (41.0%) appeared to be in favour of the TPLF, while a smaller percentage (14.9%) leaned toward the Ethiopian government. Strikingly, only a paltry number of Al Jazeera’s stories (12.7%) was found to remain neutral, whereas a substantial proportion (31.3%) presented a mix of viewpoints. As a result of comparing the two sets of data, it is possible to see a disparity in the level of support for the Ethiopian government and the TPLF across the Al Jazeera and CNN news stories. In particular, the percentage of news stories supporting the Ethiopian government was slightly higher on CNN than on Al Jazeera, while the percentage of news stories supporting the Tigray region was remarkably higher on CNN than on Al Jazeera. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the percentage of neutral news stories between the two data sets.

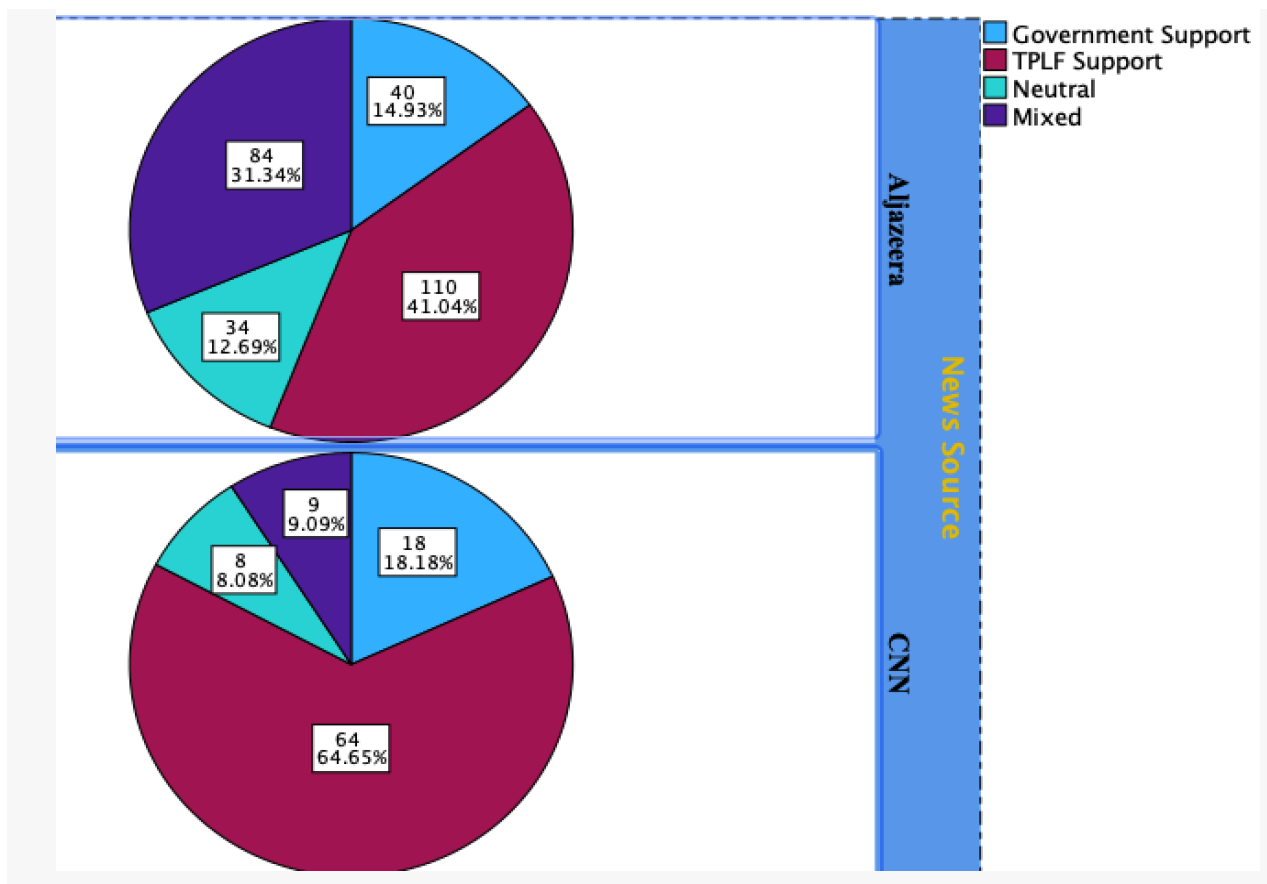


Figure 2. Tones of the story

Al Jazeera's figures show a higher proportion of neutral news stories than CNN. In addition, the percentage of mixed news stories in Al Jazeera is higher than in CNN.



The disparity between the two channels in the number of news stories supporting the Ethiopian government versus the TPLF is worth noting. The percentage of news stories favouring the Ethiopian government is astonishingly low in both channels compared to the overwhelming percentage of stories supporting the Tigray region.

Moreover, CNN’s low percentage of neutral and mixed news stories implies that most news stories in the sample took a clearly defined stance on the issue. On the other hand, the elevated percentage of mixed and neutral news stories on Al Jazeera news stories suggests that a considerable number of news stories presented a balanced perspective.

### 4.1.3. Story framing

Upon comparing the framing techniques applied in CNN News and Al Jazeera, notable differences emerge. From a total of 99 news stories, CNN's reporting displayed a 47% presence of conflict framing, while Al Jazeera showed a higher frequency of 64% from a total of 268 news stories. Human interest framing was applied by both channels, with CNN at 39% and Al Jazeera at 41%. The violence of war framing was utilised in 48% of CNN's reports, which is less than the 58% used by Al Jazeera. Anti-war framing was used less frequently by both channels, but more frequently in Al Jazeera's reporting at 19.8% versus 14.6% in CNN's.

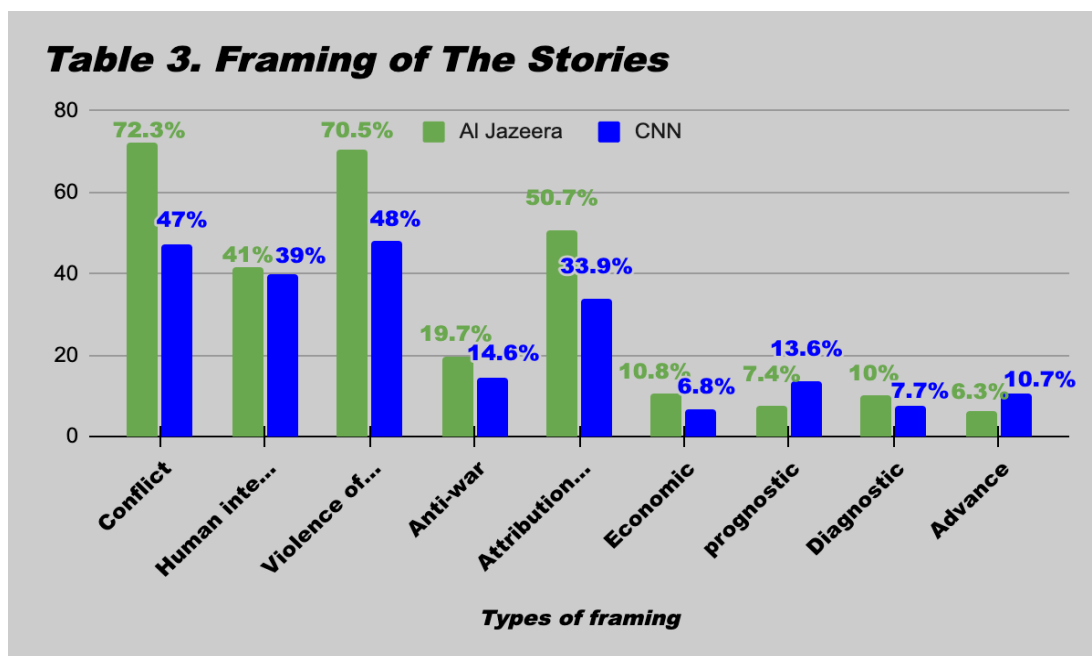


Figure 3. Frames of the story

The attribution of responsibility framing was employed in 33.9% of CNN's stories and 50.7% of Al Jazeera's. Economic framing was applied less by both channels, though slightly more often by Al Jazeera at 10.8% compared to 6.8% for CNN.

CNN utilised prognostic framing in 13.6% of the stories, while Al Jazeera employed this form of framing in 7.4% of its coverage. The diagnostic framing technique was used similarly by both channels, with 10.0% for Al Jazeera and 7.7% by CNN. Comparably, Al Jazeera utilised advanced framing in 6.3% of the stories, compared with CNN's 10.7%.

#### 4.1.4. Themes

The analysis of the themes shows great similarity between the two news outlets. For Al Jazeera, 29.5% of the stories focused on human rights issues, compared with 36.9% for CNN. These results indicate that the two sources differ slightly in their prioritisation of the issue, although they both recognize its significance.

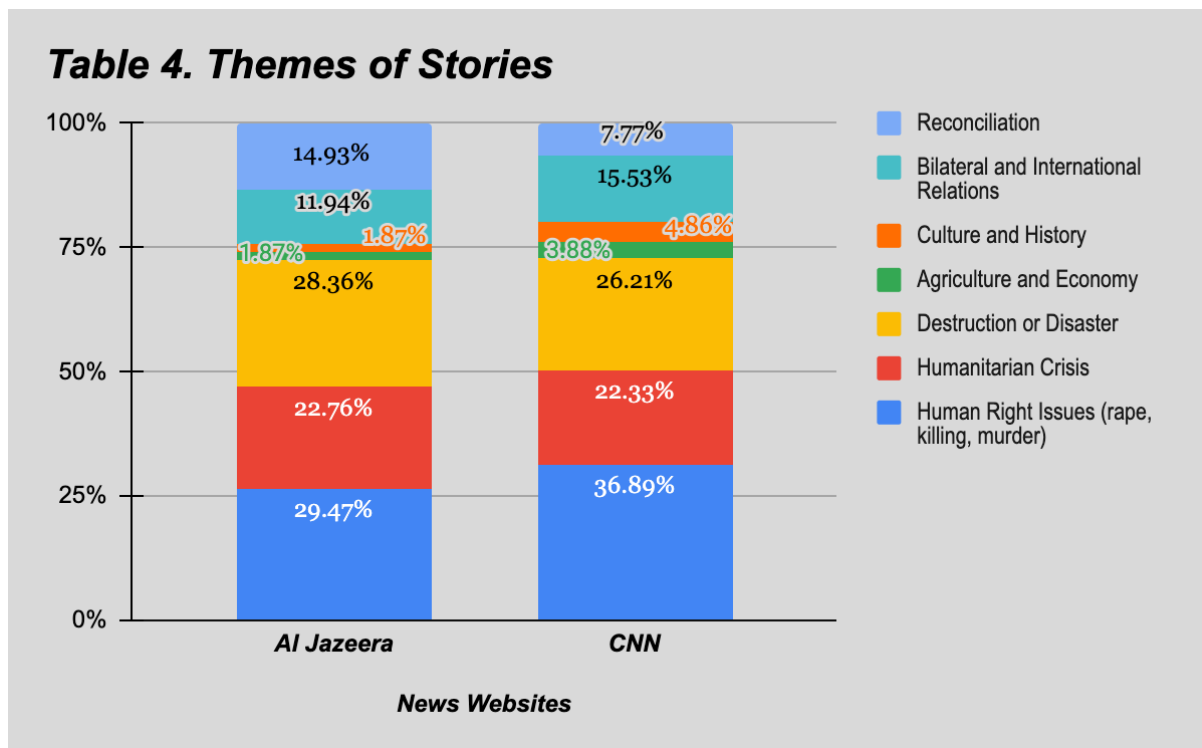


Figure 4. Themes of the story

Moreover, both channels reported on *humanitarian crises* with a similar percentage of coverage, around 22% for each. The theme of destruction or disaster was also a shared concern, with Al

Jazeera covering it in 28.4% of their stories and CNN covering it in 26.2%. Al Jazeera and CNN's coverage of *agriculture and economy* as well as *culture and history themes* were very low; between 2% and 5% for each theme in the two channels.

Both Al Jazeera and CNN had fair coverage of bilateral and international relations, with 11.9% and 15.5% respectively. However, Al Jazeera's coverage of the reconciliation process was higher, 14.9% compared to CNN's 7.8%.

## **4.2 Discussion**

This research aimed to examine how the Al Jazeera English and CNN news websites in their online platforms covered the two-year war between the Ethiopian federal government and TPLF (Nov 4, 2020 to Nov 4, 2022). It explores the extent of coverage, news frames, themes, and tones of the stories used by the two big media related to the conflict. In the process of identifying the stories and their respective framing categories, it was possible for a single story to belong to multiple variables simultaneously. This can be exemplified by a headline from Al Jazeera, *'How Abiy Ahmed's Ethiopia-first nationalism led to civil war.'* At first glance, the headline appears to fall under the conflict framing category, as it presents a complex narrative that links Abiy Ahmed's nationalistic policies to the catastrophic outbreak of civil war. However, upon reading the leads and body of the story, the researcher finds that it also fits into the human-interest framing, as it highlights the emotional impact of the conflict and personalities of the news to capture and retain audience interest. Similarly, the CNN headline *'Airstrikes in Ethiopia's Tigray region will continue, PM says'* can be understood and classified under various frames such as prognosis, conflict, and attribution of responsibility as it fulfills different criteria at the same time. Although there may be instances where news stories can belong to multiple frames, it is important to note that in this sample, all news stories can be classified under a single category when it comes to tones and themes.

### **4.2.1. The extent of coverage**

There is a big disparity between Al Jazeera and CNN in terms of the extent of coverage. Comparing the number of news articles, Al Jazeera (268) had over double what CNN (99) had during two years of conflict. Both channels had the most coverage in the first month of the conflict, i.e. November 2020. This can be attributed to the start of the war during that month, which prompted more

coverage by both media outlets. The second busiest month for both channels was November 2021, which was possibly due to TPLF's attempt to approach Addis Ababa to control the capital during that period.

It is important to note that the number of news stories published is not necessarily an indicator of quality or impact. Judging the extent of the coverage based merely on numbers can prove challenging since no clear-cut criteria are defined for such an evaluation. Other criteria may be necessary like the number of words in a single story. Nevertheless, considering the wide range of countries that these websites cover as international online news sources, Al Jazeera covered the conflict significantly and CNN considerably. While the two media outlets were different in terms of the frequency of their news stories, they were also different in the type of content they brought. Al Jazeera was active in publishing fast news, while CNN to a higher degree prioritised in-depth analysis and reporting.

Al Jazeera and CNN both continued to cover the war in 2022, with Al Jazeera running 52 news pieces (or 19.4% of their total coverage) and CNN running 8 stories (or 8% of their total coverage). It is interesting to observe that CNN's and Al Jazeera coverage decreased considerably in 2022. The possible reason behind this can be as the war drags on, there is a higher chance of audience fatigue from hearing about the fighting and casualties, while media interest may also begin to decline. According to a study conducted by Eddy & Fletcher (2022) at the University of Oxford's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, news audiences in some countries have gradually begun to either lose interest in or actively avoid news about the Ukraine conflict. Another reason for the decline in coverage of the Tigray war was possibly due to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine that shifted the global media to focus on the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Al Jazeera regularly produced more coverage of the Tigray crisis than CNN, more than twice as many articles. The quantity of news stories, however, does not alone indicate the quality and depth of coverage. Moreover, the number of months in each year is primarily a reason for the abrupt increases and decreases in coverage by both news outlets in a certain year. For instance, as shown in Table 1, since the battle began in November 2020, there were two months of news published on their website for this study that year. Likewise, 2021 has 12 months, whereas 2022 has 11 months excluding December, 2022. Additionally, various factors such as the escalation or de-escalation of the conflict or changes in the news priorities of each outlet might have an impact on their coverage of the conflict.

Al Jazeera's news stories had an average word count of 632, while CNN's news stories had an average word count of 680. Although the difference was small, this coincides with the finding that CNN prioritised in-depth reporting and analysis while Al Jazeera concentrated on stories that were shorter and more to the point.

Overall, there was a big difference in terms of the number of news articles, Al Jazeera covered the conflict intensively compared with CNN. A contributing factor to this could be CNN's local agenda. In November 2020, there was a presidential election in the US (though in the following months, CNN had zero news articles concerning Tigray during January and February 2021). CNN also published a number of news articles by Reuters on their website, but that content was not included in the analysis since it was externally produced. However, not only in November 2020, but also during the entire two-year period CNN had a lower number of articles than Al Jazeera. Possibly, CNN was more focused on covering the conflict through platforms like television, radio and podcasts, apart from their website. It is plausible that the relatively lower number of articles from CNN could be attributed to the potential inaccessibility or unavailability of their online news stories. As for their news articles in this study, it can be assumed that Al Jazeera exhibited a greater level of dedication to covering the war and disseminating information through their news website. Geographic proximity might be a possible factor contributing to CNN's limited coverage compared to Al Jazeera. Kinner (2005) identified proximity as a significant reason why Al Jazeera provided more extensive and favourable coverage of the Darfur conflict in a study compared with how the conflict was portrayed by Al Jazeera and BBC. Al Jazeera's headquarters are in Qatar, which is geographically closer to Africa than CNN's headquarters, which are in Atlanta in the United States. As a result, the distance may impact the extent to which conflicts on the African continent are covered by media outlets.

The comparatively inadequate attention given by CNN to the Ethiopian Tigray conflict serves to validate Dalby's (1993, p. 439) proposition regarding US media coverage of African conflicts. According to Dalby, Africa is commonly viewed as a 'savage hinterland' that is remote and detached from posing any recognizable threat to the 'civilized' Western domains, while also being deemed economically insignificant. As a result, Africa receives media coverage only at sporadic junctures of extreme significance, and when it does, such coverage is frequently delivered in an ostentatiously dramatic and hyperbolic manner. In addition, Okon (2013) in a study of Africa

coverage by CNN and Al Jazeera reveals that much of Africa was not reported by CNN in contradiction to Al Jazeera.

#### **4.2.2. Tones of stories**

The tone of a news story is a critical factor that reflects the overall attitude and standpoint of the news organisation concerning the subject matter. In the case of the conflict between Ethiopia and TPLF, the available data reveals that Al Jazeera adopted a rather perplexing tone. Specifically, 41.4% of their stories were found to be in favour of TPLF, while 14.9% showed support for the Ethiopian government. A further 31.3% of the stories were mixed, while 12.7% had a neutral tone. These results suggest that Al Jazeera aimed to provide balanced coverage of the conflict, in an attempt to offer a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the situation to their diverse audience compared to CNN coverage which had a much more supportive tone towards the Tigray region. CNN's significant amount of support to TPLF can be an indication of why the Ethiopian government requested them to stop writing unbalanced news related to the conflict and why people supporting the government demonstrated against this media channel in 2021. This could suggest a bias in media coverage towards events and perspectives relating to the Tigray region.

However, surprisingly CNN published more news stories that supported the government than Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera was more prone to blame both parties or being neutral. Meanwhile, both channels have something in common as most of their news stories were in favour of TPLF. Possible factors may contribute to this phenomenon, such as the Tigray region, which the TPLF represented, was perceived by many in the international community as the victim in the conflict. Consequently, it was not surprising to have a greater number of news articles that supported the victims of the Tigray people. This finding was supported by Abbink (2021) who observes that many leading Western media outlets and news websites focused on the aftermath and the effects of the fighting in the Tigray Region and its population, easily shifting sympathy toward the perceived 'underdog' (TPLF).

This could potentially result in a tacit endorsement of the TPLF. However, there are still scenarios that blame the TPLF and support the government on these news websites. Al Jazeera appears to have presented a more balanced coverage of the situation. Out of 268 news stories, 44% were found to be reported with a neutral or mixed stance, indicating a relatively fair and unbiased

approach to reporting. Furthermore, 41.% of the stories that took a clear stance favoured the TPLF, while only 15 % supported the Ethiopian government.

On the other hand, CNN's coverage of the conflict was heavily skewed in favour of the TPLF, with 64% of their news stories taking a supportive stance toward the group. Additionally, only 18% of their stories supported the Ethiopian government, indicating a clear bias towards one side of the conflict. However, it is important to note that 9% of their news stories were mixed in their stance, and 7% were neutral, suggesting that some effort was made to provide a balanced perspective. According to these findings, the Al Jazeera news stories may present a broader range of perspectives on the issue, whereas the CNN stories may be more polarised in terms of tone. Al Jazeera news stories contain a higher proportion of neutral and mixed news stories than CNN. This indicates that CNN failed to publish a balanced picture of the conflict, as the channel took a clear stance compared to Al Jazeera even though CNN also had a higher percentage of stories supporting the government. This finding is in line with other findings of studies on the Tigray conflict (Temesgen, 2021; Abbink, 2021). Overall, support for the TPLF was found to be more prevalent in both sets of news stories (41% for Al Jazeera and 64% for CNN). This indicates that neither channel was independent and balanced.

An example of bias was found in the coverage of the opening of the war, when both media channels were blaming the Ethiopian government. This was mainly because between 28th November and early December 2020, and up until March 2021, Ethiopian troops launched a fierce attack in Mekelle, causing intense suffering. The news during this period was mostly focused on human rights issues and presented through a human interest framing, with much of the blame placed on the government, and a strong sense of sympathy conveyed towards the Tigrayan people. In addition, Abiy Ahmed, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, denied Eritrean involvement in the conflict, leading international commentators to write negatively about the government.

Examples of Al Jazeera headlines during the first month of the war:

- *'Ethiopia bombs Tigray capital as it rejects mediation calls'*
- *'War crimes feared in Ethiopia's Tigray, Amnesty reports massacre'*

Examples from CNN:

- *'Ethiopia's Nobel laureate leader vows 'military confrontation' with restive region'*
- *'Concern of outright war in Ethiopia grows as PM presses military offensive'*

These and many similar conflict-framing headlines tended to favour TPLF in terms of their tones. However, when the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) regained its position, it launched missile attacks on major cities in Asmara and in regional cities in Amhara. This led to negative coverage of TPLF by both media channels, with a focus on violent framing, destruction, and holding TPLF responsible for the damage and war motivation. Additionally, the Mai Kadra massacre that took place on November 9th, 2020, provided further fodder for negative media coverage of the TPLF.

Al Jazeera:

- *Tigray leader confirms bombing Eritrean capital*
- *At least 600 civilians were killed in northern Ethiopia massacre, rights commission says*

CNN:

- *Forces from Ethiopia's Tigray region bombed Eritrean capital, Tigray leader says*
- *Rebels in Tigray reject calls for ceasefire after Ethiopian government forces withdraw from regional capital*

These headlines by Al Jazeera conveyed that TPLF was responsible for the massacre. It is worth noting that when the capital of Tigray was captured, many news stories in the international media tended to be in favour of TPLF. However, some of the focus was on human rights issues like killing and rape occurred outside Tigray in border areas like Kobo, Humura, Afar regional cities, and Welkiate. The coverage of these incidents by the international media tended to be against TPLF. When similar incidents happened inside the Tigray region, the stories were against the federal government. This is because these incidents were more likely committed by outsiders (the ones who entered and controlled the area by force). In addition, when there was dialog between the parties and whenever one of them refused, the tone of the news was more likely against the one who refused the dialog or peace deal. However, the level of support they gave was different. It was observed that both media channels tended to side with the victim. This means they tended to attribute blame on the transgressor whenever people were killed, displaced or harassed.

It is conceivable that the distinction in tonality exhibited by CNN and Al Jazeera in their coverage of a particular matter could stem from the dissimilar demographics of their respective readers. CNN presents an American perspective on international events, while Al Jazeera prides



itself on being the voice of the Middle East, the southern hemisphere, and the most impoverished regions on earth (Zingarelli, 2010, p. 4).

CNN's audience predominantly comprises individuals from the Western hemisphere, potentially causing its news stories to be influenced by the United States' participation in the conflict, whereas Al Jazeera's audience is worldwide, encompassing many spectators from the Middle East and Africa. This could conceivably give rise to a contrast in editorial perspective and intonation predicated on the inclinations and concerns of their readers.

#### **4.2.3. Framing of stories**

The framing of the stories provides insight into how each news organisation presented the conflict in Ethiopia. The data shows that both news organisations predominantly used conflict framing, with Al Jazeera used in 64% of their stories and CNN in 47%. The prominence of conflict framing could be due to the nature of the conflict itself. It was a huge blow of breaking news globally when the conflict began. The war lasted for a long time and it had a number of battles, up and down throughout the two years. Fighters sometimes tried to have a dialogue to end the war but suddenly, they restarted war in a different direction. The continuous fighting between the two parties prompted conflict-framed news. There were several fronts for the war where the fighters battled each other. Conflict framing emphasises the conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions by evoking a sense of drama and suspense (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95).

In conflict framing, stories confirm at least one of these questions: Does the story reflect disagreement between parties, individuals, groups, or nations? Does one party, individual, group, or nation reproach another? In this study, most of the conflict-framing stories have the first criteria which is the disagreement between parties. In this framing analysis, it is important to note that one story can be categorised into different frames. For example, most of the stories have conflict framing at least in the headline, lead, or body of the news article. Al Jazeera had conflict framing in 64%, compared with 47% for CNN, which is an indication that Al Jazeera tended to mention and explain the disagreement among parties in most of its news stories.

Although many stories tended to favour one of the sides in the conflict, some of the conflict-framing news stories had mixed and neutral tones. This headline on CNN, '*Ethiopia's Tigray forces enter neighboring Afar region, Afar says*' has a story that tells how aggressive TPLF was, though they used the word 'Tigray forces' instead of 'rebel group'. Another headline, '*Ethiopia's military*

*calls on former members to rejoin army as rebels advance on capital*', shows how the government side was committed for this war, while at the same time, the story used the rebel term to refer to TPLF. This and many similar mixed tones emerged in this study. Mixed tone could mean that stories were not taking one side, but in this study mixed tone mostly meant that both parties were blamed.

The following would illustrate how different conflict framing stories in terms of their tones.

Examples CNN's news stories that were not in favour of the Ethiopian government:

- *UN says aid truck hit by debris from Ethiopian drone strike*
- *Ethiopia, Eritrea forces launch new offensive in Tigray: TPLF*

Examples of Al Jazeera's news stories that are not in favour of TPLF

- *Tigrayan forces claim to capture new town of Kom-bolcha*
- *Ethiopia's strategic town of Dessie captured by rebel forces*

Examples of mixed tones in Al Jazeera's news framing:

- *Ethiopia descending into widening civil war: UN*
- *Ethiopia on the edge as conflict breaks out in Tigray | Conflict News ...*

Examples of neutral Al Jazeera news items:

- *Five key takeaways from the Ethiopia peace deal*
- *Ethiopia's warring sides meet for talks in South Africa*

Examples of CNN's stories that are not in favour of TPLF:

- *Forces from Ethiopia's Tigray region bombed Eritrean capital, Tigray leader says*
- *Ethiopia's Tigray forces enter neighboring Afar region, Afar says*

Examples of CNN's not in favor of the Ethiopian government:

- *Fresh airstrikes hit capital of Ethiopia's war-torn Tigray region*
- *Air strikes in Ethiopia's Tigray region will continue, PM says*

Examples of CNN's news stories with mixed tones:

- *There is famine in Ethiopia right now, says UN aid chief*
- *UN report: 350K facing starvation in conflict-hit Ethiopia*

Examples of CNN news framing in neutral tone:

- *Warring parties in Ethiopia agree on permanent cessation of hostilities*
- *Tigrayan forces say they are withdrawing from Ethiopia's Afar region*

Following the conflict framing the second most dominant frame in both media was *violence framing*. Overall, 53% of the stories contained violent framing inside their story (52% for Al Jazeera and 54% for CNN).

Violence-framing occurs in news related to bombings, fighting, and killings without condemning it with emphasis on destruction as well as the human cost of war.

Examples of violence framing:

- *Addis Ababa asks residents to prepare to defend Ethiopian capital* (Al Jazeera, Nov 2, 2021)
- *Two bullets is enough* (CNN, April 2, 2021)

This finding is in line with Hachten (1999), Hess (1996), Riffe et al. (1994) and Rosenblum (1994) who argue that western foreign news agencies prioritise reporting on violent events and conflicts over other types of news stories from developing countries. Being a Middle Eastern company, Al Jazeera can be treated the same way based on the findings in this study. The implication is that violence and conflict are perceived as more newsworthy and attention-grabbing than other types of news, which may contribute to the media's disproportionate coverage of violent events. This phenomenon has significant implications for the public's perceptions of developing countries, as well as their levels of exposure to the diverse range of issues and experiences that exist within these regions.

As Table 3 shows, *human interest framing* is one of the dominant framings. The difference between Al Jazeera and CNN was insignificant (41% vs. 39%). Stories were taken as human interest when they provide a human example or 'human face' on the issue and employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy caring, sympathy, or compassion, or when the story emphasises how individuals and groups are affected by the issue or when the story goes into the private or personal lives of the actors.

Examples of *human interest framing*:

- *'Almost 40% of Tigrayans suffer 'extreme lack of food', WFP warns'* (Al Jazeera)
- *'The Weeknd says he is donating \$1 million toward Ethiopian relief efforts'* (CNN)

CNN and Al Jazeera's coverage of the Ethiopian Tigray conflict was framed in such a way that it elicited an emotional response from the public. Both media were able to provide more detailed and emotional accounts of the victims' deaths by focusing on their human stories, inciting public sympathy and outrage. The news outlets also highlighted the victims' personal lives and the impact of their deaths on their families and friends, heightening the emotional impact of the reporting.

Incidents were intended to emotionally engage the public and encourage them to take action against any brutality that happened during two years of conflict.

Both CNN and Al Jazeera also frequently used *attribution of responsibility framing*, 33.9% and 50.7% respectively. Based on this, as discussed in the data presentation, Al Jazeera had more news articles that contained attribution of responsibility frames than CNN, which indicates that CNN seemed less interested in making people accountable. This indicates that both media gave considerable room in their news articles toward pointing to a responsible body for damage, human rights abuses, humanitarian crises, economic crises, etc during the two years conflict in Ethiopia.

Examples of *attribution of responsibility framing*:

- *Ethiopian leader says troops who raped civilians in Tigray will be held to account after CNN investigation (CNN)*
- *Disturbing' rape allegations in Ethiopia's Tigray conflict: UN (Al Jazeera)*

Al Jazeera's emphasis on *attribution of responsibility* may reflect their interest in highlighting the impact of the conflict on civilians and holding those responsible accountable.

*Economic framing* was applied less frequently both channels, though slightly more often by Al Jazeera at 10.8% compared to 6.8% for CNN. Both channels used this frame to inform readers about economic consequences of the conflict. They published stories that were related to Ethiopia's relations with international trade organizations. For example:

- *Ethiopia to lose access to lucrative US trade program following CNN investigation (CNN)*
- *How the con-flict in Tigray is fray-ing Ethiopi-a's fi-nances | Con-flict | (Al Jazeera)*

*Prognosis* and *diagnosis* frames were also used by both news websites. *Prognosis framing* focuses on the stories that tell about what will happen in the future or what has to be done to solve the conflict, it can be a plan of attack, and frame-consistent strategies for carrying it out. It refers to remedial strategies, tactics, or solutions to overcome the problem (Bell & Messer, 2010, p. 855). *Diagnostic* frames are used to interpret an event or aspect of life as problematic and in need of transformation as a social movement attempts to change a problematic situation through direct action, which is dependent on identifying the root causes. A diagnostic frame also includes the 'attribution of blame for the problem' (Corrigall-Brown, Snow & Vliegenthart, 2007, p. 3). The diagnostic and prognostic frame seems to overlap with the responsibility frame of Semetko and

Valkenburg (2000). However, every responsibility attribution frame story does not mean it has diagnostic or prognostic character or vice versa. For example, in this study, there were stories where diagnostic or prognostic frame stories focused on the consequences or root cause of the war that has no intention of blaming or making people accountable. In addition, not all news stories will fit neatly into either the diagnostic or prognostic framing categories, as some stories may be a combination of both or may not fit either category.

As discussed in the data presentation, CNN used the *prognostic framing* method on its news website more frequently than Al Jazeera, with a usage rate of 13.6% versus 7.4% for Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera used the *diagnostic framing* method on its news website more frequently than CNN, with a usage rate of 10% versus 7.7% for CNN, although neither of the media displayed a significant usage of prognosis or diagnosis framing stories. The finding implies that CNN may prioritise providing insights and analysis on potential outcomes and solutions to the Ethiopian Tigray conflict, whereas Al Jazeera may prioritise focusing on the root cause of the war. However, overall it can be understood that both news websites were less interested in applying these frames.

Examples of *prognosis news stories*:

- *Air strikes in Ethiopia's Tigray region will continue, (CNN)*
- *How far will Ethiopia's PM go to fight rebels in Tigray? | Con-flict | (Al Jazeera),*

Examples of *diagnostic news stories*:

- *How Abiy Ahmed's Ethiopia-first na-tion-al-ism led to civ-il war (Al Jazeera)*
- *TPLF spokesman: Ethiopian prime minister has never been interested in peace' (CNN)*

Finally, *anti-war* and *advanced framing* are studied in this research. Different frames can emphasise different aspects of a story and influence the audience's attitudes and beliefs, so the use of different framing techniques in news reporting can shape how audiences perceive and interpret events. Understanding the nuances of framing techniques in news reporting can help readers develop a more informed perspective on current events and evaluate news sources more critically. Advanced framing focuses on significant changes or developments in the war, as well as the war's progress or advancement, and battlefield outcomes, as well as their implications, such as incidents when the fighters capture cities or mountains during the battle. In contrast, anti-war framing examines how news reports portray opposition to the war and has the potential to challenge pro-war narratives in the media and encourage anti-military activism.

Examples of *advance framing*:

- *‘Ethiopia says it will seize airports in rebel-held Tigray region’ (Al Jazeera)*
- *‘Capital of Ethiopia’s Tigray region under control of Ethiopian forces, says PM after intense bombardment’ (CNN)*

Examples of *anti-war framing*:

- *Ethiopia’s government announce ceasefire as Tigrayan troops retake region’s capital (CNN)*
- *Ethiopia’s Tigray rebels say ready for AU-led peace talks. (Al Jazeera)*

CNN and Al Jazeera used *advanced framing* and *anti-war framing* less frequently in their news websites, which could indicate that they put less emphasis on efforts to de-escalate the war. While anti-war framing and advance framing was used less frequently by both CNN and Al Jazeera, it was used more frequently in Al Jazeera with a usage rate of 19.7%(anti-war) and 6.3%(advance) versus 14.6%(anti-war) and 10.7%(advance) for CNN. This suggests that Al Jazeera may prioritise covering anti-war protests and promoting anti-military conflict activism, whereas CNN may prioritise reporting on significant developments in the war.

#### **4.2.4. Themes**

According to Testerman (2015), “themes emerge from data through repetition, saliencies, and emphasis” (p. 41). Arasaratnam (2015) asserts that “themes are identified on the basis of substantive significance in that there is consistency in the content/focus of the articles in each theme” (p. 291). Themes come from already agreed-on professional definitions found in literature, commonsense constructs, researchers' values, and personal experience (Bulmer, 1979; Strauss, 1987; Maxwell, 1996, cited by Ryan & Bernard, 2003). According to Ryan & Bernard, “we know you have found a theme when you can answer the question of what is this expression an example of?” In this research, there are selected themes where the expression of a single news article could be an example. Selected themes are human rights issues, humanitarian crises, disaster or destruction, agriculture and economy, history and culture, war developments, reconciliation, and bilateral and international relations. This study followed Ryan & Bernard’s (2003) approach to identifying themes. Of their eight observational techniques, this study chose two: repetition, and similarities and differences.

The repetition technique is the easiest way to identify themes. The more the same concept occurs in a text, the more likely it is a theme. "How many repetitions are enough to constitute an important theme, however, is an open question and one only the investigator can decide" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The similarities and differences technique focused on how one expression is different from or similar to the other. The abstract similarities and differences that this question generates are themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

The two news websites' treatment of themes or topics appears to be the same (see Table 3). Both news websites treated the selected themes in the same fashion, focusing on *human rights* issues, *disasters and destruction*, and *humanitarian crises*. It is not surprising at all that both media covered a lot about these themes as the two years of war consumed countless peoples' lives in different forms.

In Al Jazeera, 29.5% of the coverage focused on human rights issues, versus 36.9% for CNN. These results indicate that the two channels differ in their prioritisation of the issue, although they both recognize its significance. In terms of human rights, both channels published articles dealt with women rape, kidnapping, harassment, torture, killing of family members, mass killings, mass arrests, and house-to-house shootings.

Examples of *human rights* themes: :

- *Ethnic cleansing': Ethiopian allies accused of Abala massacre (Al Jazeera)*
- *Massacre in the mountains (CNN)*

Both media published news articles with emotional details which incite public sympathy and outrage. The focus was both on the individual personal life and how friends and families of the victims were affected. CNN was slightly more serious in this theme than Al Jazeera.

Another common theme both media focused on was the humanitarian *crisis* (around 22% coverage for both channels). During the two years of conflict, the humanitarian crisis was unfolding in the entire region of Tigray and in some parts of the Amhara and Afar regions. This crisis allowed both media to have considerable coverage of the humanitarian crisis. Food shortage, civilian displacement, shortage of medical facilities, and hunger were the main issues in this theme. The current results correspond with Chouliaraki (2008b), Joye (2009) and Kyriakidou classification of a "hierarchy of distant suffering" in news through personalising and historicizing the sufferer, incorporating the questions of 'why' and 'what to do' in its representation of suffering, and using

global voices of authority to turn distant suffering into a cause for action. Both media outlets presented statistics on the large number of people who died as a result of famine, displacement caused by the destruction of their homes, or fear of war.

Examples of *humanitarian crises* themes:

- *Thousands are fleeing into Sudan to escape deadly conflict in Ethiopia (CNN)*
- *Al Jazeera: (1) UN warns sit-u-a-tion in Ethiopi-a's Tigray now 'ex-treme-ly alarm-ing (Al Jazeera)*

The theme of destruction or disaster was also a shared concern, with Al Jazeera covering it in 28.4% of their stories and CNN covering it in 26.2%.

Examples of *destruction/disaster* themes:

- *MSF con-demns wide-spread at-tacks on Tigray clin-ics ... (Al Jazeera)*
- *Ethiopia used airlines to transport weapons during Tigray conflict (CNN)*

Much destruction was committed by both parties during the two years of war, however, some intense incidents were not mentioned in detail in the two media channels. For example, The destruction of hospitals and universities in both the Amhara and Tigray regions was not covered much on these news websites. This finding is in line with the claim of Stroehlein (2005) which decries the European journalistic culture that does not cover the war in full understanding without neglecting issues. He asks the question, “Why aren’t the media covering Congo?” Stroehlein knew that about 1,000 people die there every day due to hunger and disease because of the conflict, and international media had ignored it.

Al Jazeera and CNN's coverage of *agriculture and economy* themes were very low; between 1% and 4% for each theme in the two channels. Similarly, *culture and history* themes got extremely low attention from both news websites. With only 4 news articles(1.87 %) for Al Jazeera and 4 news articles (4.86%) for CNN. This indicates that in the overall coverage of the Tigray conflict, each media had similar treatment for the selected themes.

Examples of *agriculture and economy* themes:

- *Ethiopia to get \$300m World Bank grant for re-con-struc-tion (Al Jazeera)*
- *Ethiopia on verge of losing access to lucrative US trade program over human rights violations(CNN)*



Examples of *culture and history* themes:

- *UN fears for revered Christian and tourist sites in Ethiopia that goes back 900 years.*(CNN)
- *Land dispute drives new exodus in Ethiopia's Tigray* (Al Jazeera)

As Figure 3 shows, both Al Jazeera and CNN covered the theme of *bilateral and international relations*, with CNN covering it at a slightly higher percentage of 15.5% than Al Jazeera's 11.9%. On the other hand, Al Jazeera's coverage of *reconciliation* was higher at 14.9% compared to CNN's 7.8%. These findings indicate that Al Jazeera placed a greater emphasis on reconciliation efforts than CNN.

A comparison of Al Jazeera and CNN news coverage reveals that, while both networks report on the theme of bilateral and international relations, and reconciliation, CNN emphasised the first theme more prominently than Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, on the other hand, had significantly more coverage of the theme of reconciliation than CNN. This disparity may indicate that Al Jazeera prioritises the pursuit of amicable solutions to conflicts between previously disagreeing parties. Bilateral relations are interactions between two entities or countries in which they mutually collaborate to achieve common goals. International relations, on the other hand, cover a broader range of inter-country agreements, ranging from formal to informal. However, both issues had one theme because of the researcher's expectations of a lower number of articles related to these issues. Reconciliation plays a role in the restoration of cordial relationships between two previously estranged parties. This includes admitting past mistakes, making amends, and fostering a renewed sense of trust and understanding between them.

Examples of *bilateral and international* themes:

- *US threatens new sanctions over conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray* (Al Jazeera)
- *Biden dispatches Democratic senator to Ethiopia amid Tigray crisis* (CNN)

Examples of *reconciliation* themes:

- *Can Ethiopia avert deepening turmoil and prioritize peace* (Al Jazeera)
- *Ethiopia's government announce ceasefire as Tigrayan troops retake region's capital* (CNN)

Notably, Al Jazeera tried to promote a reconciliation process between the Ethiopian government and TPLF fighters to end the ongoing conflict in the Tigray region, which was not prioritized by CNN. This demonstrates the network's commitment to promoting peace and stability in these

conflict-affected areas. CNN's more pronounced coverage of the theme of bilateral and international relations, on the other hand, can be attributed to the fact that the US and the UN, both critical players in international politics, were involved in the conflict in different ways. This may have drawn CNN's attention to the topic, and the network may have devoted more resources to covering it.

## **Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion**

### **5.1. Summary of major findings**

The Tigray conflict has provided an intriguing case study of how news organisations frame and report complex and contentious issues. This study can help gain insight into the editorial priorities, biases, and perspectives of news organisations, as well as how they possibly shape public opinion and understanding of the conflict.

The study focused on the coverage of the Tigray war on CNN and the Al Jazeera news websites. These two media outlets were selected because of the following reasons: first, both media channels were among the top international media outlets that followed the Tigray war, and second, the two media channels are different in their geographical location as CNN is situated in the West while Al Jazeera is in the Middle East, which could yield interesting comparative findings. Third, both media's news websites used the English language which is suitable for this study.

This study analysed media coverage from the start of the conflict on November 4, 2020, till the end of the war on November 4, 2022, by asking four research questions: To what extent did the two media channels cover the conflict; what tones did they use; how did they frame the conflict; and which themes did they use.

The data collected through a content analysis were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data were presented in the form of charts and tables using Google Sheets and SPSS software. By using both quantitative and qualitative content analysis, the results from the collected data and supporting literature, the overall coverage of conflicts in the sampled media was discussed and interpreted.

Nine frames, seven themes, and four tones were used. The identified frames were conflict framing, violence framing, human interest framing, anti-war framing, attribution of responsibility framing, economic framing, prognostic framing, diagnostic framing, and advance framing. For tones, the study detected news stories that were in favour of TPLF, news stories that were in favour of the government, news stories that were neutral, and news stories that were mixed. Selected themes include human rights issues, humanitarian crises, disaster or destruction, agriculture and economy, history and culture, war developments, reconciliation, and bilateral and international relations.

Overall, from the two-year conflict, 367 news stories were gathered –268 from Al Jazeera, and 103 from CNN. This difference between the two media's number of news stories was surprising, though in line with the finding of Stroehlein (2005), Fair (1993), Dalby (1993), and (Jibrin & Jimoh, 2014) that the Western media do not prioritise African conflicts. The US media especially tend to find Africa less interesting to devote space for coverage. With more than 99 stories, CNN covered the war with approximately one story every week for the two-year period via their news website.

Additional major findings:

- Al Jazeera and CNN both had the highest volume of news articles published in November 2020 and November 2021. The outbreak of war caused much coverage in November 2020. Secondly, the TPLF's takeover of several Amhara cities, including the attempted approach to Addis Ababa, inspired both news outlets to cover the war frequently again in the following year, in November 2021.
- The average word count for Al Jazeera's news stories was 632, while CNN news stories had an average word count of 680. This means that both media channels published news stories that were in-depth and gave detailed information for readers. CNN had slightly more in-depth reporting and analysis compared with Al Jazeera.
- CNN published fewer articles on its news website than Al Jazeera. One plausible explanation for this disparity is that CNN may have prioritised coverage of the conflict through other channels such as television, radio and podcasts rather than its website. The outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war may also have affected the reporting of the Tigray conflict. The lower number of online news stories from CNN in this study could also be attributed to limited accessibility or unavailability. Al Jazeera, on the other hand, appeared to be more committed to covering the war through its news website. Furthermore, geographic proximity may have contributed to CNN's limited coverage versus Al Jazeera. Kinner (2005) identified proximity as a factor in a study comparing Al Jazeera and BBC's coverage of the Darfur conflict.

- It is worth noting that the two media outlets' coverage of the conflict was a little lopsided. However, Al Jazeera's coverage was found to be relatively more balanced, even though a significant portion of their news stories supported the TPLF (41.4%) and a smaller percentage supported the Ethiopian government (14.9%). A sizable portion of its coverage had mixed bias (31.3%), and a small portion had a neutral tone (12.7%). Similarly, CNN's coverage garnered significant support for the Tigray region (64.7%), with a smaller proportion supporting the government (18.2%). A small percentage of CNN's coverage was found to be neutral (8%) or presented mixed perspectives (9.1%). Overall, the findings imply that none of the media outlets was balanced in their reporting.
- In essence, the tone of news stories is an important factor that reflects a news organisation's overall attitude and perspective on a subject. Al Jazeera and CNN were not found to be independent in their news coverage, and their news stories favoured TPLF.
- The tone of news stories could be influenced by a number of factors, including the perception of the Tigray region as a victim of the conflict and the human rights issues that have arisen as a result of the conflict. The tone of news stories may also be influenced by the location of events, with news stories critical of TPLF in areas outside Tigray and critical of the government in Tigray. The tone of news stories could also change depending on the conflicting parties' dialog intentions. In both sets of news stories, support for TPLF was found to be more prevalent. Both Al Jazeera and CNN supported TPLF on their online news websites. This suggests that, despite their differing approaches, neither of the media outlets was unbiased when publishing Tigray war-related news.
- Both Al Jazeera and CNN used conflict framing extensively in their coverage of the Ethiopia-TPLF war, with Al Jazeera using it in 64% of their stories and CNN using it in 47%. The preponderance of conflict framing in their coverage could be attributed to the conflict's multifaceted and protracted nature. The length of the conflict, the

intermittent resumption of hostilities, and the lack of resolution may have contributed to the media's emphasis on conflict framing. The numerous fronts or battlefields on which both parties were fighting made for an abundance of conflict-related news coverage for both media organisations.

Violence framing was also most used framing by the two media outlets, appearing in more than half of their news stories. Al Jazeera, with 58% of its 268 news articles, and CNN, with 54% of its 99 news articles, followed the trend of Western foreign news agencies in prioritising coverage of violent events and conflicts. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hachten (1999), Hess (1996), Riffe et al. (1994) and Rosenblum (1994), who found that such news organisations prioritise violent news events over other types of stories from developing countries. It is likely that Al Jazeera followed the same pattern in the material covered in this research.

Both CNN and Al Jazeera frequently used attribution of responsibility framing in their news articles. Al Jazeera used this frame more often, with 50.7% of its news articles containing it, compared to CNN's 33.9%. Al Jazeera's increased use of the attribution of responsibility frame suggests that they were more focused on identifying and holding responsible parties accountable for any negative outcomes resulting from the conflict. CNN, on the other hand, emphasised this frame to a smaller extent. Overall, both media outlets gave significant coverage to assigning blame for various issues such as human rights violations, humanitarian crises, and economic crises that occurred during Ethiopia's two-year conflict.

CNN used prognostic framing more frequently than Al Jazeera, with a usage rate of 13.6% versus 7.4% for Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, on the other hand, used the diagnostic framing method on its news website more frequently than CNN, with a 10% usage rate versus 7.7% for CNN. CNN used prognostic framing more than Al Jazeera, and Al Jazeera used diagnostic framing more than CNN, but both used these frames infrequently. CNN concentrated on possible outcomes and solutions, whereas Al

Jazeera concentrated on the root cause of the conflict. Overall, neither media was particularly interested in utilising these frames.

While anti-war framing was used more frequently than advance framing by both CNN and Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera used it more frequently than CNN, with a usage rate of 19.77% versus 14.6% in CNN. While only 6.3 percent of Al Jazeera stories used advance framing, 10.7 percent of CNN stories used it. This suggests that Al Jazeera may prioritise anti-war protests and anti-military conflict activism, whereas CNN may prioritise reporting on significant developments in the war. However, it should be noted that both media were poor at publishing anti-war news and did not prioritise conflict resolution.

The two news websites appeared to treat themes similarly, with both focusing on human rights issues, disasters and destruction, and humanitarian crises, and less on bilateral and international relations, and reconciliation agriculture, economy, culture and history. CNN had a slightly higher percentage of coverage of human rights issues. Both media outlets published emotional details that elicited public sympathy and outrage, as well as personal life stories of victims and statistics on the large number of people who died as a result of famine, displacement caused by home destruction, or fear of war. The study discovered that the coverage of the Tigray war by both media outlets corresponded with Chouliaraki's (2008) classification of a "hierarchy of distant suffering" in news.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

The study aimed to investigate the amount of coverage devoted to the Tigray conflict by CNN and Al Jazeera, how both news websites framed the conflict, and what was the tone of their coverage. Table 1 summarises the difference between CNN and Aljazeera's amount of coverage. Al Jazeera had more coverage than CNN. This difference coincides with previous studies of Western media coverage of African conflicts stating that they give little coverage while Middle Eastern media provide more coverage due to their geographical proximity to Africa (Dalby', 1993, p. 439; Kinner, 2005).

Al Jazeera and CNN provided distinct and contrasting coverage of the conflict. Neither of the media outlets provided unbiased and independent news coverage, with their news stories favouring the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). This finding was supported by the same findings that international media were in favour of TPLF (Temesgen, 2021; Abbink, 2021). A comparison of the two, however, reveals that Al Jazeera provided more impartial and equitable coverage than CNN. The percentage of Al Jazeera's news stories with a neutral or mixed stance was higher, indicating a balanced and fair approach to news reporting. In comparison with Al Jazeera, CNN's coverage had more percentage supporting the Ethiopian government, even though it was heavily skewed in favour of the TPLF.

Based on a comparison of CNN and Al Jazeera's coverage of the Ethiopia-TPLF conflict, it appears that both media outlets heavily relied on conflict framing, which is not surprising given the conflict's multifaceted and protracted nature. Both outlets frequently used violent framing, reflecting the tendency of Western news organisations to prioritise violent events and conflict. This is in line with Hachten (1999), Hess (1996), Riffe et al. (1994), and Rosenblum (1994) studies which argue that Western foreign news agencies prioritise reporting on conflict and violent framings over other types of news framing from developing countries. Even though this study agrees with these prior findings, unlike the North-south dichotomy, it also leaves Al Jazeera in the same category. While both media outlets prioritise the attribution of responsibility framing, Al Jazeera used it more frequently, indicating a stronger focus on identifying and holding responsible parties accountable for negative outcomes resulting from the conflict. Both media similarly prioritise human interest framing. They publish news articles highlighting the impact of deaths of families and friends, heightening the emotional impact of the reporting to the typology of a 'hierarchy of distant suffering' in news by Chouliaraki (2008b), Joye (2009) and Kyriakidou (2011).

A comparison of CNN and Al Jazeera's coverage of the Ethiopia-TPLF war revealed that both media outlets treated various themes with remarkable similarity. They appeared to prioritise human rights issues, disasters, and humanitarian crises over other topics like bilateral and international relations, reconciliation, agriculture, economy, culture and history themes. CNN paid slightly more attention to human rights issues and bilateral and international issues. Both media outlets relied heavily on emotional details and personal stories to elicit public sympathy and



outrage, as well as statistics on the vast numbers of people affected by famine, displacement, or fear of war.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and discussions pointed out in the thesis, several recommendations can be made to improve the two media channels' conflict coverage. These recommendations aim to address potential biases, improve framing techniques, and enhance overall reporting.

1. Address bias and balance reporting: Both media demonstrated a significant bias in their coverage, with CNN showing a higher percentage of support for TPLF, and Al Jazeera also exhibiting bias towards TPLF. News organisations must retain objectivity and give a balanced view of conflicts. They should endeavour to convey different points of view while avoiding favouring one side over the other.
2. Diversifying framing techniques: The extensive use of conflict framing by both media outlets reflects the complex and ongoing nature of the conflict. However, there is room for improvement in terms of encouraging both Al Jazeera and CNN to explore other framing methods, such as prognostic and diagnostic framing, to offer deeper insights into the root causes and potential solutions of the conflict and other frames that are mentioned in this study. The same goes for usage of themes. Both media outlets focused on important themes like human rights issues, disasters, and humanitarian crises, they could further diversify their coverage to include topics like bilateral and international relations, reconciliation, agriculture, economy, culture, and history. Providing comprehensive coverage will give readers a more nuanced understanding of the conflict's wider implications.
3. Prioritise anti-war and conflict resolution reporting: Given the length of the Ethiopia-TPLF conflict, both news websites should prioritise coverage of anti-war protests, conflict resolution attempts, and potential peace ideas. The news organisations can help promote a peaceful end to the conflict by actively reporting on such events.

4. It was observed that both media's number of news stories decreased after the Russia-Ukraine war. Though it is understandable to give deserved coverage to the Russia-Ukraine war as it was a huge crisis itself, the media outlets should not ignore conflicts happening in other parts of the world.
5. This study is based on written media texts only. Hence, it is recommended that future studies seize the opportunity to research the Tigray conflict using different media formats, including visual elements such as pictures, online videos and TV reporting within these media outlets.

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## Appendices

### Media News Website

- ❖ Aljazeera English
- ❖ CNN(Cable News Network)

### Tones of the story

- *In favor of TPLF*: When the overall tone is positive toward TPLF. This can include framing TPLF innocent or absolving the TPLF from responsibility and accountability for the outcome of the conflict.
- *In favor of the Ethiopian government*: When the overall tone is positive toward Ethiopian government. This can include framing Ethiopian government as innocent or absolving the Ethiopian government from responsibility and accountability for the outcome of the conflict
- *Neutral* (stories that were reported factual without putting emphasis)
- *Mixed* (blaming both or/and favoring both)

## Themes

<b>Human right Issues</b>	<b>Humanitarian crisis</b>	<b>Destruction or disaster</b>	<b>Agriculture and Economy</b>	<b>Culture and History</b>	<b>Bilateral and International Relations</b>	<b>reconciliation</b>
killings, harassment, rape, imprisonment, torture, and other human right issues)	displacement and hunger or famine, shortage of food and medicine	bombing, airstrike, damage, destroying buildings, property	Focusing on the economic consequences, financial losses or gains now or in the future? and, stories that are related to farming or livestock were taken as agricultural themes.	Stories that focused on historical perspective and cultural view during the conflict taken to this theme	Related with the diplomatic issues during the war	Stories were focused on making peace or put efforts to write about how to stop the conflict

## Frames

<i>Conflict framig</i>	<i>Human interest framing</i>	<i>Violence of war</i>	<i>Anti-war Framing</i>	<i>Attribution of responsibility</i>	<i>Economic framing</i>	<i>Prognostic framing</i>	<i>Diagnostic framing</i>	<i>War developments(Advancement)</i>
(focus on the troops, and military developments): Does the story reflect disagreement between parties individuals-groups-countries? Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the issue/problem? Does the story refer to winners and losers? Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?	(focus on the human participants in the event), to identify human interest framing, the researcher asked: Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue? Does the story employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy caring, sympathy, or compassion? Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem? Does the story go into the private lives of the actors?	emphasis on destructi on as well as the human cost of war)	(anti-war activities)l ooked at how news reports portray opposition to the war	Does the story suggest that some level of the government or TPLF is responsible for the issue/problem? Does the story suggest that some level of government/T PLF has the ability to alleviate the problem? Does the story suggest that an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem? Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?	Is there a referen ce to the econom ic conseq uences of pursuin g or not pursuin g a course of action?)	When the news article stressed potential outcomes or long-term effects of the war, it was identified as a prognostic frame.	When it focuses on the causes, reasons for the war, or origins of a problem, or answers the question of what is the problem. how is it defined? it was taken as a diagnostic frame	stories was focused on any significant change in the developmen t of the war such as capturing cities or mountains, retaliation, and shifting battle areas.

## CNN news stories

Headline	Month	Year
Ethiopia's Nobel laureate leader vows 'military confrontation' with restive region	November 4	2020
Ethiopia's Abiy resists diplomatic pressure to halt offensive	November 6	2020
Ethiopia Prime Minister says Tigray military ops 'limited' as Sudan closes border	November 6	2020
Air strikes in Ethiopia's Tigray region will continue, PM says	November 7	2020
Thousands are fleeing into Sudan to escape deadly conflict in Ethiopia	November 11	2020
Concern of outright war in Ethiopia grows as PM presses military offensive	November 9	2020
War crimes feared in Ethiopia's Tigray conflict	November 11	2020
Mass killing of civilians in Ethiopia's Tigray region, says Amnesty International	November 12	2020
Forces from Ethiopia's Tigray region bombed Eritrean capital, Tigray leader says	November 16	2020
Ethiopia says it has seized another Tigray town as conflict embroils Eritrea	November 16	2020
A full-scale humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Ethiopia, the UN says	November 17	2020
Ethiopian troops are advancing on Tigray's capital, says government spokesman	November 18	2020
These refugees fled a massacre in Ethiopia's Tigray region. They join tens of thousands making the journey to Sudan	November 22	2020
Ethiopia enters 'final phase' of operation in Tigray region, says Prime Minister	November 26	2020
Capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region under control of Ethiopian forces, says PM after intense bombardment	November 28	2020
Forces from Ethiopia's Tigray region say Eritrean troops are part of the conflict and the war is far from over	December 4	2020
CNN uncovers reality for refugees on the Ethiopia-Sudan border	December 8	2020
'They left us for dead.' Tigray refugees tell of horrors after Ethiopian troops vowed they'd be safe	December 8	2020
ICRC: We can't wait for the guns to fall silent in Ethiopia to start acting	17 December	2020
US calls for withdrawal of Eritrean forces in Ethiopia following investigation into massacre	March 1, 2022	2021
Leader of Tigray's forces accuses Ethiopian and Eritrean governments of	March 2,	2021

genocide		
UN Security Council to discuss Ethiopia conflict following CNN investigation into Tigray massacre	March 3	2021
UN rights chief says war crimes may have been committed in Ethiopia after CNN reveals Tigray massacre	March 4	2021
Blinken: Acts of 'ethnic cleansing' committed in Western Tigray	March 11	2021
Biden dispatches Democratic senator to Ethiopia amid Tigray crisis	March 18	2021
Women reveal rape being used as weapon of war in Ethiopia	March 20	2021
Massacre in the mountains	March 22	2021
'Practically this has been a genocide'	March 22	2021
Ethiopian leader says troops who raped civilians in Tigray will be held to account after CNN investigation	March 23	2021
Ethiopian Prime Minister says Eritrea will withdraw troops from Tigray	March 26	2021
Ethiopia dismisses evidence of war crimes verified by CNN investigation	April 2	2021
Two bullets is enough' Analysis of Tigray massacre video raises questions for Ethiopian Army	April 2	2021
The Weeknd says he is donating \$1 million toward Ethiopian relief efforts	April 4	2021
US looking into reports of Ethiopian military executing unarmed men after CNN investigation	April 6	2021
UN breaks silence on Ethiopia crisis, urges investigation into reported Tigray atrocities	April 23	2021
Ethiopian Orthodox Church Patriarch condemns Tigray 'genocide	May 8	2021
UN confirms military forces blocking aid in Ethiopia's Tigray region following CNN investigation	May 13	2021
Eritrean troops disguised as Ethiopian military are blocking critical aid in Tigray	May 13	2021
Top House Foreign Affairs member calls for sanctions in Tigray after CNN report shows military forces blocking aid	May 13	2021
CNN's Zain Asher explains the history behind the conflict in Ethiopia's war-torn northern Tigray region	May 13	2021
US condemns 'atrocities' in Tigray and calls for those responsible to be 'held to account' after CNN investigation	May 15	2021
US Senate passes unanimous resolution calling for withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Ethiopia	May 21	2021
The Nobel Peace Prize winner who's presiding over a humanitarian catastrophe	May 25	2021

Tigrayans told, 'We'll see if America will save you now,' as hundreds rounded up by Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers	May 27	2021
Hundreds of detained Tigrayans released following CNN report	May 29	2021
Ethiopian government defends actions in Tigray Region, accuses critics of 'orchestrated attack'	June 3	2021
UN report: 350K facing starvation in conflict-hit Ethiopia	June 4	2021
There is famine in Ethiopia right now,' says UN aid chief	June 14	2021
Condemnation builds over deadly government airstrike in Tigray	June 24	2021
New video of Ethiopia massacre shows soldiers passing phone around to document their executions of unarmed men	June 29	2021
Ethiopia's government announce ceasefire as Tigrayan troops retake region's capital	June 29	2021
Rebels in Tigray reject calls for ceasefire after Ethiopian government forces withdraw from regional capital	June 30	2021
Ethiopia is at war with itself. Here's what you need to know about the conflict	July 03	2021
Food and fuel running out in capital of Ethiopia's war-torn Tigray region	July 3	2021
Ethiopia's Tigray forces enter neighboring Afar region, Afar says	July 20	2021
UN says food aid in Ethiopia's war-torn Tigray region will run out Friday as 400,000 people face famine	July 30	2021
At least 30 bodies float down river between Ethiopia's Tigray and Sudan	August 4	2021
Tigrayan fighters reportedly seize control of UN World Heritage Site in Ethiopia	August 6	2021
UN fears for revered Christian and tourist site in Ethiopia that goes back 900 years	August 7	2021
Sexual violence against women and girls in Ethiopia's Tigray region amount to war crimes, Amnesty says	August 12	2021
Video of Ethiopia massacre shows soldiers documenting executions	September 5	2021
Men are marched out of prison camps. Then corpses float down the river	September 10	2021
Biden signs executive order authorizing new Ethiopia sanctions amid reports of atrocities	September 17	2021
Where is the outrage for Ethiopia?	September 29	2021
Ethiopia to expel UN officials amid fears of Tigray famine	October 1	2021
UN Secretary-General rebuffs Ethiopia's demand for senior UN officials to leave the country	October 2	2021
Ethiopia used airlines to transport weapons during Tigray conflict	October 7	2021

US warns it could sanction Ethiopia after CNN reveals airline ferried weapons during Tigray war	October 7	2021
Ethiopia committing 'possible genocide' in Tigray	October 7	2021
Ethiopia used its flagship commercial airline to transport weapons during war in Tigray	October 8	2021
Capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region hit by airstrikes, eyewitness and local forces say	October 18	2021
Three children killed in airstrikes on Ethiopia's Tigray region, UN says	October 19	2021
Fresh airstrikes hit capital of Ethiopia's war-torn Tigray region	October 21	2021
Mekelle struck, residents flee Amhara as Ethiopia battle intensifies	October 22	2021
Ethiopia on verge of losing access to lucrative US trade program over human rights violations	November 2	2021
Ethiopia announces state of emergency as Tigrayan forces gain ground	November 2	2021
Rebels threaten Ethiopian capital as UN slams atrocities committed in Tigray conflict	November 3	2021
Ethiopian rebels edge closer to Addis Ababa, as fears grow over all-out war	November 4	2021
Armed groups join forces in Ethiopia in biggest threat yet to embattled Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed	November 5	2021
Ethiopia's military calls on former members to rejoin army as rebels advance on capital	November 6	2021
Young mother and elderly priest among Tigrayans arrested in Addis Ababa, witnesses say	November 8	2021
Ethiopia's war is echoing on the streets of Washington	November 9	2021
TPLF spokesman: Ethiopian prime minister has never been interested in peace	November 9	2021
Amnesty International accuses Tigrayan rebel fighters of gang raping women in Ethiopia	November 10	2021
Ethiopia's leader said he would bury his enemy. His spokeswoman doesn't think it was incitement to violence	November 10	2021
Blinken warns war-torn Ethiopia is on 'path to destruction,' calls on Abiy to step up to end conflict	November 19	2021
Ethiopia's Nobel Peace Prize-winning leader says he'll lead troops on front lines against rebels	November 23	2021
Ethiopian government says it has recaptured Lalibela, UN World Heritage site	December 1	2021
UN suspends food distribution in two towns in Ethiopia after looting	December 9	2021



Ethiopian government rejects Tigrayan fighters' ceasefire call, dashing hopes of an end to the conflict	December 21	2021
Ethiopia to lose access to lucrative US trade program following CNN investigation	December 24	2021
Biden raises concerns with Ethiopia's Abiy over Tigray air strikes, urges ceasefire	January 10	2022
Ethiopian Airlines employees are fleeing the country by hiding in the planes they work on	January 31	2022
Amnesty International accuses Tigrayan rebel fighters of gang-raping children in Ethiopia	February 16	2022
Food aid convoy enters Tigray for the first time in months, World Food Program says	April 1	2022
Tigrayan forces say they are withdrawing from Ethiopia's Afar region	April 26	2022
Tigrayan forces accept immediate ceasefire and AU-led peace talks with Ethiopia govt	September 12	2022
'Only God knows when we can meet,' says marathon runner Gotytom Gebreslase, cut off from her parents amid conflict in Ethiopia	November 3	2022
Warring parties in Ethiopia agree on 'permanent cessation of hostilities'	November 3	2022

## Al Jazeera news stories

Headline	Date	Month	Year
Five key takeaways from the Ethiopia peace deal	4	November	2022
Will the Tigray ceasefire hold?	2	November	2022
Ethiopia: Government, Tigrayan forces agree to end two-year war	1	November	2022
Ethiopia's Tigray runs out of medical supplies as malaria spreads	27	October	2022
Ethiopia's warring sides meet for talks in South Africa	25	October	2022
WHO chief warns time running out to 'prevent genocide' in Tigray	19	October	2022
Ethiopian army captures several towns in war-torn Tigray	18	October	2022
Ethiopia says it will seize airports in rebel-held Tigray region	17	October	2022
AU calls for 'immediate ceasefire' in Ethiopia's Tigray region	16	October	2022
AU-led Ethiopia peace talks delayed over logistics: Diplomats	7	October	2022
Ethiopian government, Tigray rebels accept peace talks invitation	5	October	2022
UN says aid truck hit by debris from Ethiopian drone strike	26	September	2022
What Ethiopia and Tigray need for peace talks to succeed	22	September	2022
UN: Warring sides committing atrocities in Ethiopia's Tigray	19	September	2022
Ethiopia needs the world to hold Tigray's TPLF to its word	14	September	2022
Ten dead in second day of air raids in Ethiopia's Tigray region	13	September	2022
Is peace on the horizon for Ethiopia's Tigray region?	12	September	2022
Ethiopia's Tigray rebels say ready for AU-led peace talks	11	September	2022
Explainer: Why is there renewed fighting in northern Ethiopia?	2	September	2022
Air raid hits capital of Ethiopian Tigray region: Hospital chief	31	August	2022
What triggered the latest fighting in Tigray?	27	August	2022
Ethiopia forces accused of deadly attack as Tigray war escalates	26	August	2022
Fighting resumes in Ethiopia despite truce – Tigray forces	24	August	2022
UN calls for ceasefire amid renewed fighting in northern Ethiopia	24	August	2022
What is needed to end the famine in Tigray?	21	August	2022
Ethiopia government proposes plan for peace in war-torn Tigray	17	August	2022
EU, US envoys urge Ethiopia to restore services in Tigray	2	August	2022
Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed says his government has formed a committee to negotiate with the northern Tigray region's forces.	14	June	2022
Tigray Crisis: Ethiopia's Civil War	31	May	2022
<u>Er-itre-an troops shelled school in north Ethiopia  </u>	31	May	2022
<u>Can Ethiopia build on a truce to end war in Tigray?</u>	25	May	2022
<u><a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/20/ethiopias-tigray-forces-announce-release-of-4000-prisoners">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/20/ethiopias-tigray-forces-announce-release-of-4000-prisoners</a></u>	20	May	2022
<u>Ethiopia to get \$300m World Bank grant for re-con-struction</u>	17	May	2022
<u>Tigray rebels leave Ethiopi-a's Afar re-gion</u>	25	April	2022
<u><a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/22/weve-finished-our-tears-main-hospital-in-tigray-exhausts-food">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/22/weve-finished-our-tears-main-hospital-in-tigray-exhausts-food</a></u>	22	April	2022
<u><a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/13/who-chief-says-world-treats-crises-differently-due-to-race">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/13/who-chief-says-world-treats-crises-differently-due-to-race</a></u>	13	April	2022
<u><a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/4/12/ethiopia-seizing-the-fragile-opening-for-peace">https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/4/12/ethiopia-seizing-the-fragile-opening-for-peace</a></u>	12	April	2022
<u><a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/1/aid-convoy-enters-ethiopian-territory-controlled-by-tigray-forces-for-first-time-in-3-months-wfp">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/1/aid-convoy-enters-ethiopian-territory-controlled-by-tigray-forces-for-first-time-in-3-months-wfp</a></u>	1	April	2022

<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/25/ethiopia-tigrayan-fighters-agree-to-cessation-of-hostilities">Analy-sis: Can Ethiopi-a's 'truce' end its dev-as-tat-ing civ-il war?</a>	28	March	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/25/ethiopia-tigrayan-fighters-agree-to-cessation-of-hostilities">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/25/ethiopia-tigrayan-fighters-agree-to-cessation-of-hostilities</a>	25	March	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/24/ethiopia-declares-truce-to-allow-aid-into-tigray">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/24/ethiopia-declares-truce-to-allow-aid-into-tigray</a>	24	March	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/11/ethiopian-rights-body-750-civilians-killed-in-amhara-in-q2-2022">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/11/ethiopian-rights-body-750-civilians-killed-in-amhara-in-q2-2022</a>	11	March	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/28/almost-40-of-tigrayans-suffer-extreme-lack-of-food-wfp-warns">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/28/almost-40-of-tigrayans-suffer-extreme-lack-of-food-wfp-warns</a>	28	January	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/13/nobel-panel-abiy-has">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/13/nobel-panel-abiy-has</a>	13	January	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/12/blockade-creates-hell-in-ethiopias-tigray-who">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/12/blockade-creates-hell-in-ethiopias-tigray-who</a>	12	January	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/11/ethiopian-drone-strike-kills-17-on-day-of-biden-abiy-call">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/11/ethiopian-drone-strike-kills-17-on-day-of-biden-abiy-call</a>	11	January	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/program/inside-story/2022/1/9/does-ethiopias-pm-want-a-peaceful-end-to-the-tigray-war">https://www.aljazeera.com/program/inside-story/2022/1/9/does-ethiopias-pm-want-a-peaceful-end-to-the-tigray-war</a>	9	January	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/9/aid-agencies-suspend-work-in-northwest-tigray-after-deadly-strike">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/9/aid-agencies-suspend-work-in-northwest-tigray-after-deadly-strike</a>	9	January	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/7/two-children-among-3-eritrean-refugees-killed-in-tigray-air-raid">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/7/two-children-among-3-eritrean-refugees-killed-in-tigray-air-raid</a>	7	January	2022
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/24/ethiopia-govt-says-army-will-not-go-deeper-into-tigray-for-now">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/24/ethiopia-govt-says-army-will-not-go-deeper-into-tigray-for-now</a>	24	December	2021
Tigrayan forces announce retreat to Ethiopia's Tigray region	20	December	2021
Ethiopia forces claim re-cap-tur-ing of towns from Tigray rebels ...	18	December	2021
Ethiopia slams new probe pro-pos-al at UN rights body ses-sion	17	December	2021
UN rights coun-cil or-ders probe into abus-es in Ethiopi-a's con-flict	17	December	2021
Rights groups re-port wave of abus-es against Tigrayans in Ethiopia	16	December	2021
Tigray rebels re-take Ethiopi-an Her-itage town Lal-i-bela: Res-i-dents ...	12	December	2021
How armed drones may have helped turn the tide in Ethiopi-a's war	10	December	2021
Ethiopi-an forces re-cap-ture two key towns from Tigrayan forces ...	6	December	2021
Ethiopi-an gov-t says it re-took string of towns from Tigray forces	1	December	2021
Ethiopia PM pledges vic-to-ry in video from front line: State me-dia	26	November	2021
Can Ethiopia avert deep-en-ing tur-moil and pri-ori-tise peace	25	November	2021
UAE air bridge pro-vides mil-i-tary sup-port to Ethiopia gov-t	25	November	2021
Ethiopi-a's PM has gone to the bat-tle-front: State-af-fil-i-at-ed me-dia	24	November	2021
Ethiopi-a's PM Abiy Ahmed vows to lead army 'from the bat-tle-front	23	November	2021
Can the African Union solve Ethiopi-a's year-long con-flict?	16	November	2021
UN re-leas-es funds for Ethiopia aid as hu-man-i-tar-i-an cri-sis deep-ens	15	November	2021
Ethiopia war: Keny-at-ta in Ad-dis Aba-ba, AU calls for a cease-fire ...	14	November	2021
Tigray rebels killed dozens of civil-ians: Ethiopia rights body	13	November	2021
Ethiopi-a's Tigray is un-der a 'sys-tem-at-ic' block-ade: WHO chief	12	November	2021
UN says Ethiopia de-tained 72 dri-vers work-ing for WFP	10	November	2021
Tigray rebels raped women in Ethiopi-a's Amhara re-gion: Amnesty	10	November	2021
Ethiopia 'de-scend-ing into widen-ing civ-il war': UN	9	November	2021
Tigray is starv-ing, it is time for the UN to act   Op-in-ions	4	November	2021
A year into war, fate of Tigrayan fed-er-al forces still a mys-tery	4	November	2021
A year on, Ethiopia dec-i-mat-ed by civ-il war	4	November	2021
Ethiopi-a's war marked by 'ex-treme bru-tal-i-ty' from all sides: UN	3	November	2021
Ethiopia ac-cused of lim-it-ing rare UN probe on Tigray abus-es	2	November	2021

<a href="#">Ethiopia de-clar-es na-tion-wide state of emer-gency</a>	2	November	2021
<a href="#">Ad-dis Aba-ba asks res-i-dents to pre-pare to de-fend Ethiopi-an cap-i-tal</a>	2	November	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopia air raid on Tigray kills 10, in-clud-ing chil-dren</a>	28	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopia launch-es new air raids on Tigray re-gion: Gov-'t</a>	24	October	2021
<a href="#">UN sus-pends all flights to Tigray amid Ethiopi-an air raids</a>	22	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopia: The on-go-ing hu-man-i-tar-i-an cri-sis in Tigray</a>	24	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopia launch-es new air raids on em-bat-tled Tigray re-gion</a>	20	October	2021
<a href="#">Tigrayan forces claim to cap-ture new town of Kom-bolcha</a>	31	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-an troops in-ten-si-fy strikes against Tigray forces: Re-ports</a>	9	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-a's strate-gic town of Dessie 'cap-tured' by rebel forces</a>	30	october	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopia launch-es fourth air raid this week on Tigray cap-i-tal</a>	21	october	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-a's strate-gic town of Dessie 'cap-tured' by rebel forces</a>	30	October	2021
<a href="#">Fin-ish us off: Ethiopi-a's Qe-mant say tar-get-ed in armed cam-paign</a>	6	October	2021
<a href="#">UN warns of 'un-prece-dent-ed' mal-nu-tri-tion in Ethiopi-a's Tigray</a>	1	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-an par-lia-ment ap-proves PM Abiy's new cab-i-net   Abiy Ahmed</a>	6	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-an Air-lines de-nies trans-port-ing weapons in Tigray con-flict</a>	6	October	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-a's Tigray cri-sis 'set to wors-en dra-mat-i-cal-ly': UN   News   Al ...</a>	2	September	2021
<a href="#">Over 120 killed in Ethiopi-a's Amhara re-gion, of-fi-cials say   News   Al ...</a>	8	September	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopia says Tigray forces beat-en in Afar; Tigrayans deny   News ...</a>	9	September	2021
<a href="#">Probe in Ethiopi-a's Tigray did not reach site of Axum at-tack: UN ...</a>	13	September	2021
<a href="#">US threat-ens new sanc-tions over con-flict in Ethiopi-a's Tigray   News ...</a>	17	September	2021
<a href="#">Will threat of sanc-tions end the con-flict in Ethiopi-a's Tigray?   News ...</a>	18	September	2021
<a href="#">Tigray moth-ers share shock-ing ac-counts of dire famine con-di-tions ...</a>	23	September	2021
<a href="#">Wit-ness-es ac-cuse Tigray fight-ers of Kobo killings   News   Al Jazeera</a>	25	September	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-a's Tigray cri-sis 's-tain on our con-science': UN   Unit-ed Na-tions ...</a>	29	September	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopia or-ders ex-pul-sion of top UN of-fi-cials for 'med-dling'   News ...</a>	30	September	2021
<a href="#">Ethiopi-an par-ents liv-ing in agony as stu-dents strand-ed in Tigray ...</a>	1	August	2021
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