OUT OF AFRICA — GLOBAL NEWS ANALYSIS 26–27

Methodology Design

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Abstract

This paper sets out the methodology of *Out of Africa*, a study of how six global English-language broadcasters cover East Africa. Four are state-funded contra-flow outlets: TRT (Türkiye), CGTN (China), RT (Russia) and Press TV (Iran). Two serve as reference outlets: CNN International and Al Jazeera English. The study asks whether a multipolar news order gives East Africa more voice, or only more centers that narrate it.

The design is mixed-methods and comparative. Its core is a **same-event design**: outlets are compared on their coverage of the same events in the same time windows, which separates *selection* from *framing*. Quantitative content analysis codes the full corpus for news factors, actors, sources and framing functions. Three strands of critical discourse analysis, Foucauldian, Fairclough and Wodak's, and van Dijk's, code a purposive subsample at the levels of discourse formation, text and proposition. Computational text analysis in R tests lexical patterns across the corpus. A large language model (Claude) serves as a validated third coder for selected variables, under a pre-registered protocol of human benchmarking. Integration happens through frame synthesis and joint displays. The design also tracks change over five months (June to November 2026).

The paper contributes a replicable protocol for combining interpretive and computational methods in comparative news research, and a transparent standard for using AI in content analysis. It also discusses copyright, data protection and the limits of studying encoding without decoding.

Keywords: contra-flow, frame analysis, critical discourse analysis, content analysis, news factors, AI-assisted coding, East Africa, communicative sovereignty

1. Introduction

In 1965, Galtung and Ruge showed that foreign news follows rules. Events in the periphery reach the center when they are large, negative, elite and personified. Their study of the Norwegian press covered the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises. It became one of the most cited works in journalism research.

The news order they described had one center. Today it has several. Since the mid-2000s, states outside the West have built international broadcasters in English and in African languages: CGTN with its Nairobi hub, RT with an Africa desk, TRT with TRT Afrika, Press TV with its English service. Each claims to correct a Western bias. Each is funded by a state with interests in the region. East Africa, where Gulf, Turkish, Chinese, Russian, Iranian and Western interests meet around the Red Sea and the Horn, is a natural place to test these claims.

The methodological problem is that the question needs several kinds of evidence at once. Whether outlets select different events is a question for counting. How they frame those events is a question for interpretation. Whether their frames serve their sponsors is a question about discourse and power. Whether any of this changes over time needs a diachronic design. And at the scale of hundreds of articles in six outlets, interpretive coding alone is slow and costly.

This paper sets out a design that meets these demands. It makes four methodological contributions.

1. A **same-event comparative design** that separates selection from framing by holding the event constant.

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2. A **layered coding architecture** that combines quantitative content analysis with three strands of critical discourse analysis, each at its own unit of analysis, joined through frame synthesis.
3. A **division of labor between tools**: MAXQDA as the place of record for interpretation, R as the place of record for numbers.
4. A **validation protocol for AI-assisted coding** that treats a large language model as a third coder, admitted only for variables where it meets the same reliability standard as human coders.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 states the research questions and propositions. Sections 3 to 6 describe the design, outlet selection, sampling and data collection. Sections 7 to 10 describe the four analytical components. Section 11 explains integration. Sections 12 to 14 address reliability, ethics and limitations.

2. Research questions and propositions

The study is guided by three research questions. They are derived from the project's theoretical framework, which re-reads Galtung and Ruge's news factors for a polycentric news order.

RQ1 (selection). To what extent do Galtung and Ruge's news factors, especially negativity, personification and reference to elite nations, explain which East African events six global broadcasters covered between June and November 2026? Does reference to elite nations work as reference to the sponsor state for the contra-flow outlets?

RQ2 (framing and attribution). How do the outlets frame causes of, and responsibility for, the same conflicts and crises? Does their attribution of blame to outside actors follow the sponsor state's strategic narrative?

RQ3 (change and norms). Once an event passes the news threshold, how stable are the outlets' frames over time? To what extent does any outlet meet Galtung and Ruge's own 1965 recommendations, through background, non-elite and African voices, and complexity, and so approach peace journalism?

The framework yields seven propositions, each with a stated condition for disconfirmation.

No.	Proposition	RQ
P1	Convergent selection: all outlets select the same high-threshold, negative events.	RQ1
P2	Divergent attribution: outlets differ more in cause and blame than in topic.	RQ2
P3	Strategic self-reference: state outlets reference their sponsor where it flatters and omit it where implicated.	RQ1
P4	Thin contra-flow: differences concentrate in analysis and opinion, not in wire-based news.	RQ2
P5	Displaced framing: outlets whose sponsors have conflicts elsewhere link East African events to those conflicts.	RQ2
P6	Vertical voice: East African non-official voices are rare across all outlets.	RQ3
P7	Competing certainties: state outlets attribute blame with more certainty on weaker evidence.	RQ3

The propositions are stated before data collection and will be registered with the codebook version used to test them. Exploratory findings beyond them will be reported as such.

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3. Research design

The study uses a **mixed-methods design with an embedded qualitative strand** (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative content analysis covers the full corpus and establishes patterns. Critical discourse analysis is embedded in a purposive subsample and explains those patterns. Computational text analysis runs across the full corpus and tests the qualitative readings at scale. The three strands are integrated in a final synthesis, not merely reported side by side.

3.1 The same-event comparative logic

Comparative news studies often compare outlets across all their coverage. That confounds two things: what each outlet chooses to cover, and how it covers what it chooses. This design separates them.

- **Selection** is studied across the whole corpus: which events each outlet covers, how often and in which genres.
- **Framing** is studied within **event episodes**: the same event, covered by several outlets within the same window (normally seven days). Holding the event constant means that differences in framing can be attributed to the outlet, not to the event.

The pilot review identified four event clusters suitable for episodes: the Sudan war (El Fasher and El-Obeid), the Ethiopia–Eritrea and Tigray escalation, the Ebola outbreak including the first case in Kenya, and Somaliland and Israel. Within these, single-day pairs (for example, two outlets reporting the same Ebola case on the same day) are the sharpest comparisons.

3.2 Phases

> Phases: corpus → exploration in R → codebook and coding in MAXQDA → reliability and AI validation → integration and writing.

The design runs in six phases. AI-assisted coding is a parallel track. It feeds the full-corpus content analysis only for variables where it reaches the human reliability standard. Section 10 sets out that protocol.

3.3 Division of labor between tools

Tool	Role	Place of record for
MAXQDA	Human coding, memos, segment retrieval, intercoder agreement	Interpretation: every coded segment and memo
R	Text analysis, statistics, visualization, reliability coefficients	Numbers: every figure comes from a script
Claude (via API and Claude Code)	Validated third coder, code drafting, scripting	Nothing on its own; all outputs logged and audited

4. Case and outlet selection

4.1 Why East Africa

East Africa is selected as a **most-contested case**. Few regions concentrate as many external interests. Gulf states, Türkiye, Egypt, Israel, Iran, China, Russia and Western powers all have military, commercial or

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diplomatic stakes around the Red Sea, the Horn and the Great Lakes. If sponsor interests shape coverage anywhere, they should show here.

The region is defined as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) states (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda), plus Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Somaliland is coded as a separate entity without prejudice to its status.

4.2 Why these six outlets

Outlets are selected purposively to vary **sponsor state** and **outlet type** while holding **language** constant.

Outlet	Sponsor	Group	Selection rationale
TRT World / TRT Afrika	Türkiye	State contra-flow	Dedicated Africa service; Türkiye an active military and commercial actor in Somalia and the Horn
CGTN / CGTN Africa	China	State contra-flow	Africa hub in Nairobi since 2012; China the largest infrastructure partner in the region
RT	Russia	State contra-flow	Expanding Africa desk; Russia–Africa summit diplomacy; sanctioned in the EU
Press TV	Iran	State contra-flow	English service; Iran a party to the Red Sea rivalry
CNN International	USA (commercial)	Global reference	Commercial benchmark of Western international news
Al Jazeera English	Qatar	State-funded bridge	State-funded but with a reputation for Global South reporting; a test of whether funding alone predicts framing

The BBC World Service is not included, to keep the design at six outlets. Its inclusion would strengthen the Western reference group and is noted as an extension.

4.3 Why English

All six outlets publish in English, which holds the language of analysis constant and allows a single codebook. English is also a lingua franca of East African elites and news audiences, especially in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The cost is that services in French, Arabic, Swahili and Amharic are excluded. A follow-up study can test whether framing differs by language service of the same outlet.

5. Sampling and corpus construction

5.1 Period

The study period runs from 1 June to 6 November 2026. It covers Ethiopia's general election (1 June), the RSF advance on El-Obeid, the return of war in Tigray and the Ethiopia–Eritrea rupture (from late September), the spread of Ebola to Kenya (October) and the run-up to the Russia–Africa summit (late October).

5.2 Population and unit

The **population** is all English-language items published on the six outlets' websites in the period whose headline or lead names an East African country or entity (Section 4.1). The **sampling unit** is the item: an

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article, a video page with text, or an opinion piece. Live blogs are excluded because their text changes after publication.

5.3 Three-tier sample

Tier	Purpose	Selection rule	Target size
1. Full corpus	Selection analysis (RQ1), computational analysis	Census of each outlet's Africa section and site search by country name, deduplicated	Estimated 600–1,200 items
2. Event episodes	Framing comparison (RQ2)	All tier 1 items within seven days of key dates in the four event clusters	Estimated 150–250 items
3. CDA subsample	Discourse analysis	Purposive: 8–12 items per outlet from tier 2, chosen for typicality, extremity and same-day pairing	48–72 items

If the census in tier 1 proves too large to code by hand, a **constructed-week** sample (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014) will be drawn: two constructed weeks per month per outlet. Constructed weeks control for weekly news cycles more efficiently than simple random sampling.

5.4 Key dates for event episodes

Key dates are set from wire chronologies, not from any one outlet, to avoid selection bias. Provisional anchors: Ethiopia election day (1 June); RSF encirclement of El-Obeid (late June); UN fact-finding genocide finding (early July); fighting in Tigray resumes (23 September); Ethiopia–Eritrea ties cut (1–2 October); Kenya's first Ebola case (6 October); Russia–Africa summit (28–29 October). The final list will be fixed before tier 2 is drawn.

5.5 Subsample selection

The CDA subsample is chosen in three steps. First, R identifies items typical of each outlet (closest to its centroid on keyness scores) and extreme items (farthest from the corpus centroid). Second, coders add same-day pairs from event episodes. Third, the set is checked for balance across outlets, clusters and genres. Selection decisions are documented.

6. Data collection, archiving and data management

6.1 Collection

Items are collected with a purpose-built Python script that reads a list of addresses, fetches each page, follows redirects, extracts the main text and metadata, and stores three versions: raw HTML, plain text with a metadata header, and a structured JSON record. Each retrieval is logged with status, final address and a UTC timestamp. The script respects robots.txt and pauses between requests.

Where live retrieval fails, the script queries the Internet Archive for the nearest capture and logs the capture date. Remaining gaps are filled by manual saving (HTML and PDF), with the method recorded. Items that cannot be retrieved by any route are listed as missing and reported.

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6.2 Known access problems

Two outlets pose specific problems. RT's main domain redirects to a mirror, and RT is subject to EU sanctions, so access from Norway may vary. Press TV publishes on several domains, and some pages disallow automated retrieval. The study does not circumvent access restrictions. Missing items are analyzed for bias: if missingness clusters in one outlet or topic, results for that cell are flagged.

6.3 Identifiers and versioning

Each item receives a stable ID (outlet letter plus number) used as file name, MAXQDA document name and R key. The corpus is frozen after collection, with item counts per outlet recorded. Text files are never edited after freezing. Corrections to metadata are made in the corpus index, not in the files.

6.4 Data management

- **Storage:** an access-controlled UiA project area with backup. No copies on personal cloud services.
- **Structure:** separate folders for corpus, MAXQDA projects, R scripts, AI prompts and outputs, and results, with a README describing how to reproduce every result.
- **Version control:** scripts, codebook and prompts under git. Codebook versions are frozen before each reliability test and each machine-coding run.
- **Sharing:** the corpus index (IDs, addresses, dates, metadata and codes) can be shared openly. The archived full texts are copyrighted and are shared only as permitted (Section 13).

7. Quantitative content analysis

Quantitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018; Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014) codes every item in tier 1 for manifest features. It answers RQ1 and supplies the distributions against which the qualitative findings are read.

7.1 Variables

The codebook (separate document, version 1.0) defines six blocks of variables.

Block	Content	Theoretical source	Unit
A	Metadata: outlet, sponsor, date, event cluster, origin (own or wire), genre	—	Item
B1	News factors, including sponsor-state reference and personification	Galtung & Ruge (1965), re-specified	Item
B2	Main and secondary issue	—	Item
B3	Actors: type, role, evaluation, label at first mention	Entman (1993)	Actor within item
B4	Sources: type, origin, mode, gender	Sourcing research; MacBride (1980)	Source within item
B5	Framing functions: problem, cause, attribution mode, evaluation, remedy	Entman (1993)	Item
B6	Peace and war journalism indices	Galtung (1998); Lynch & McGoldrick (2005)	Item

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Two variables carry the framework's main innovations. **Sponsor-state reference** (B1.5) records whether the outlet's own state is absent, mentioned, central, or absent where plausibly relevant. **Attribution mode** (B5.3) records whether blame is stated by the outlet, stated by a source and endorsed, stated and contested, or only implied.

7.2 Coding process

Coders are trained on a pilot set of 20 items not included in the reliability sample. Coding follows a fixed order: read once without coding; code metadata; code item-level variables; code actors and sources one by one. Uncertain cases receive code 99 and a memo. Coders meet weekly to discuss memos; agreed changes produce a new codebook version.

7.3 Analysis

Analysis proceeds in four steps, all scripted in R.

1. **Descriptive profiles** of each outlet: event clusters, genres, origin, news factors, sources and frames.
2. **Selection tests (RQ1, P1, P3).** Chi-square tests and Cramér's V for event cluster by outlet. Logistic regression of sponsor-state reference (B1.5 = 2 vs other) on outlet, genre and valence, to test whether self-reference is linked to positive valence.
3. **Attribution tests (RQ2, P2, P4).** Compare dispersion of topic codes with dispersion of attribution codes across outlets (for example by entropy or Cramér's V). Interaction of origin (wire vs own) with outlet on attribution.
4. **Voice and certainty (RQ3, P6, P7).** Share of East African non-official sources by outlet; attribution mode by outlet group, controlling for genre.

With an expected corpus in the hundreds and six outlets, tests are interpreted with effect sizes and confidence intervals, not significance alone. Multilevel models with items nested in outlets are considered if the corpus is large enough.

8. Critical discourse analysis

The CDA strand explains the patterns that content analysis counts. It works on the tier 3 subsample (48–72 items) and uses three approaches. They are not treated as rivals. Each reads at a different level, and together they cover discourse, text and proposition.

8.1 Three strands, three levels

Strand	Level	Core question	Main analytical categories
Foucauldian (Foucault, 1972, 1980)	Discursive formation, across items	What can be said as true, by whom, and what is made normal?	Regime of truth, rules of exclusion, subject positions, normalization, legitimation
Fairclough and Wodak (Fairclough, 1992; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016)	Text and discursive practice	How is power built into linguistic choices and their reuse?	Agency, modality, evaluative lexis; nomination, predication, argumentation (topoi), perspectivization, intensification; intertextuality

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Strand	Level	Core question	Main analytical categories
van Dijk (1988, 1998)	Proposition	What is asserted, implied and presupposed, and for whom?	Macropropositions, local semantics, ideological square, polarization

8.2 Procedure

Each subsample item is coded in a fixed sequence, from fine to broad.

1. **Segment coding (Fairclough and Wodak).** Coders mark the shortest span that carries a feature: agency in key clauses, modality, evaluative lexis, the five discursive strategies, and topoi. Nominations and predications for each main actor are recorded verbatim for later lexical analysis.
2. **Proposition extraction (van Dijk).** Headline, lead and marked segments are rewritten as propositions (agent, predicate, object), each classified as asserted, implied, presupposed or attributed. Propositions are placed in the ideological square relative to an in-group defined from the text itself.
3. **Discourse coding (Foucault).** At item level, coders record the authorizing voice, excluded groups, subject positions offered to East Africans, what is normalized and how legitimacy is conferred or withdrawn. A short discourse memo states what the item treats as true, who may say it and what must be assumed.
4. **Frame assignment.** The item's dominant frame is assigned from the evidence of all three layers (Section 11).

8.3 Same-event reading

CDA is most productive in event episodes. For each episode, the items from different outlets are read side by side. The analyst traces **intertextual chains**: how a single source report (for example a UN statement or a wire story) is taken up, reworded, re-sourced and re-attributed across outlets. Differences in nomination, agency and presupposition across the chain are the most direct evidence of framing.

8.4 Corpus-level interpretation

The Foucauldian analysis is completed across items. After coding, items are grouped into discursive formations: recurring combinations of truth regime, subject positions and normalizations. Four formations are expected and tested, not assumed: humanitarian-institutional, sovereigntist, geopolitical-resistance and developmental-partnership. Their distribution across outlets and months is then examined with the content analysis data.

8.5 Rigor in interpretive work

CDA has been criticized for selective reading (Widdowson, 2004; Breeze, 2011). The design answers this in four ways: the subsample is drawn by documented rules, not chosen for illustration; every interpretive claim is anchored in a marked segment; two analysts code independently before consensus, and their disagreements are logged; and readings are tested against corpus-wide patterns in R (Section 9).

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9. Computational text analysis

Computational analysis serves two purposes. Before coding, it points close reading to where vocabulary differs most. After coding, it tests whether patterns found in the subsample hold across the corpus. It never replaces interpretation.

9.1 Tools

All analysis runs in R, using quanteda for tokens, document-feature matrices and dictionaries (Benoit et al., 2018), quanteda.textstats for keyness and collocations, and the tidyverse for data handling and plots. Scripts are numbered, commented and kept under version control.

9.2 Procedures

Procedure	Question	Link to other strands
Keyword in context	How do outlets label the same actor (for example regime, government, militia, rebels, forces)?	Tests nomination (C2) and actor labels (B3.4)
Keyness (chi-square)	Which words are distinctive for each outlet against the rest?	Guides subsample selection; tests CDA readings
Collocations	Which evaluative words cluster around which actors?	Tests predication (C2)
Actor dictionary	How often is each foreign power named, by outlet and month?	Tests sponsor-state reference (B1.5) and displaced framing (P5)
Hedging and evidentiality dictionary	How often do outlets mark uncertainty ("reportedly", "alleged", "according to")?	Tests competing certainties (P7)
Attention series	How does coverage of each cluster rise and fall over time?	Supports diachronic analysis (Section 11)

9.3 Validity of dictionaries

Dictionaries are built from the codebook and the pilot reading, then validated. For each dictionary category, a random sample of 50 matches is checked in context by a human coder. Precision below 0.80 leads to revision of the term list. Ambiguous short forms (for example "US") are disambiguated with context rules or removed. All revisions are recorded in the script.

9.4 Unit and normalization

Counts are normalized per 1,000 tokens and reported per item and per outlet-month. Because outlets differ in article length and genre mix, comparisons control for genre where possible. Wire-based items are flagged so that analyses can be run with and without them, which directly tests the thin contra-flow proposition (P4).

10. AI-assisted coding and its validation

Large language models can apply a codebook to text quickly and, for some tasks, with agreement comparable to trained human coders (Gilardi, Alizadeh & Kubli, 2023). They also make confident errors, vary between runs and leave no audit trail of their own. The design therefore treats Claude as a **third coder that must earn admission**, variable by variable, against the same standard as human coders.

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10.1 Roles permitted and excluded

Permitted	Excluded
Drafting and stress-testing code definitions, with human decision	Final coding of discourse layers (Foucault, Fairclough and Wodak, van Dijk) without human confirmation
Coding metadata and validated content analysis variables at scale	Supplying quotations for publication
Suggesting candidate segments and propositions for human review	Any coding with an unlogged prompt or codebook version
Writing and debugging R and Python code	Decisions on sampling or inclusion

10.2 Validation protocol

1. **Freeze** the codebook and write a coding prompt that contains the definitions, rules and output schema. Freeze the prompt with a version number.
2. **Benchmark.** Two human coders code the validation set (10–15 % of tier 1, at least 60 items, stratified by outlet) independently, then reach consensus. The consensus codes are the benchmark.
3. **Machine coding.** Claude codes the same set through the API, using structured output that follows a fixed JSON schema, so every code arrives in a predictable format with a short justification and a self-reported confidence.
4. **Stability.** The set is coded twice by the model on separate days. Variables where the two runs disagree on more than 10 % of items are excluded.
5. **Agreement.** Krippendorff's alpha is computed per variable between Claude and the human benchmark, alongside the human–human alpha.
6. **Admission rule.** A variable is admitted for machine coding if Claude's alpha with the benchmark is at least .80 and not lower than the human–human alpha minus .05. Otherwise it stays with human coders, or the definition is revised and the full protocol is repeated.
7. **Deployment and audit.** Admitted variables are coded for the rest of the corpus. Humans review all items the model flags as low confidence, plus a random 10 % audit sample. If audit agreement falls below .80, deployment stops and the variable reverts to human coding.

10.3 Logging

Every run is logged with model identifier, date, prompt version, codebook version, input IDs and raw outputs. Logs are stored with the project and summarized in a methods appendix. This makes the machine coding reproducible in procedure, even though model outputs are not deterministic.

10.4 Reporting

The methods section of each publication will state which variables were machine-coded, the alpha values that admitted them, the audit results and the model used. Variables coded by humans and by the model are not mixed within one analysis unless their agreement has been shown.

11. Integration: frame synthesis, joint displays and change over time

Integration is where the design earns its complexity. It happens at three points: in the frame, in joint displays, and over time.

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11.1 Frame synthesis

Frames are assigned only after all layers are coded, and only on evidence from them. Each of Entman's four functions is linked to specific codes in every layer: problem definition to issue codes, normalization and nomination; causal interpretation to attribution codes, regime of truth, agency and implied propositions; moral evaluation to actor evaluation, legitimation, predication and the ideological square; remedy to remedy codes, subject positions, topoi and presuppositions. A dominant frame must be supported by at least three of the four functions. Frame strength and the presence of contested frames are coded separately.

This turns frame assignment into a documented inference. A reader can trace any frame back to the segments and propositions that support it.

11.2 Joint displays

Results are integrated in **joint displays** (Guetterman, Fetters & Creswell, 2015): tables or figures that place quantitative and qualitative findings side by side for the same unit. Three displays are planned.

Display	Rows	Quantitative columns	Qualitative columns
Outlet profile	Six outlets	Event share, sponsor reference, African voice share, peace and war index	Dominant formation, typical in-group, characteristic topoi
Event episode	Outlets within one episode	Attribution codes, certainty, sources	Nomination of key actors, implied propositions, intertextual changes
Proposition test	P1–P7	Test statistic and effect size	Illustrative segment and counter-example

Each display records whether the strands **converge**, **complement** or **diverge**. Divergence is reported, not smoothed over. It often points to the most interesting findings.

11.3 Change over time

The diachronic analysis is event-driven. It does not claim long-term trends in a five-month window. It asks three things.

- **Attention:** how coverage of each cluster rises and falls by outlet, by week and month.
- **Frame stability:** whether an outlet's dominant frame for a cluster holds once the event passes the threshold (Galtung and Ruge's continuity), or shifts as the event develops.
- **Frame convergence:** whether outlets' frames for the same event move closer together or further apart over time.

Frame stability is measured as the share of an outlet's items in a cluster carrying its modal frame, per month. Convergence is measured as the change in dispersion of frames across outlets within each cluster. Both are reported with the number of items behind each value, because small cells are expected.

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12. Reliability, validity and reflexivity

12.1 Reliability

Component	Procedure	Standard
Content analysis	Two coders independently code 10–15 % of tier 1 (at least 60 items, stratified by outlet); Krippendorff's alpha per variable (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007)	α ≥ .80; .667–.80 for tentative conclusions only; below .667 revise and retest
CDA segment codes	MAXQDA intercoder agreement at segment level on 12 items (two per outlet)	≥ 80 % agreement; disagreements discussed and logged
CDA interpretive codes and frames	Independent coding, then consensus; disagreement log	Recurring disputes trigger codebook revision
AI-assisted coding	Protocol in Section 10	α ≥ .80 against the human benchmark; ongoing audit

Reliability is retested after any codebook revision that affects a tested variable.

12.2 Validity

- **Construct validity.** Each variable is derived from a named theoretical source (codebook, Appendix C), and every frame is linked to its evidence. Face validity is checked by two external reviewers with expertise in East African media.
- **Convergent validity.** Key constructs are measured in more than one way: sponsor-state reference by human code and by dictionary count; certainty by attribution mode and by hedging frequency; nomination by CDA coding and by keyword in context. Agreement between measures is reported.
- **Sampling validity.** Missing items are analyzed for patterns by outlet and topic. Results for cells with substantial missingness are flagged.
- **Interpretive validity.** Readings are anchored in marked segments, checked against counter-examples found by search across the corpus, and challenged in team review.

12.3 Reflexivity

Critical discourse analysis is explicitly normative, and so is this project. Its framework draws on the NWICO tradition and on peace journalism. Two risks follow. The first is reading Western outlets as neutral and contra-flow outlets as propagandistic, or the reverse. The second is finding in the texts what the theory expects.

The design responds in four ways. All six outlets are coded with the same codebook by coders who do not know the propositions in detail during the reliability phase. Disconfirmation conditions are stated for every proposition. Divergence between strands is reported. And analysts keep a reflexive memo noting moments where their own expectations shaped a reading. The team's normative commitments and professional ties to the region are stated in each publication.

13. Ethics and legal considerations

The study analyzes published media texts and involves no human participants. It still raises four issues. Each will be cleared with UiA's research administration before data collection starts.

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13.1 Copyright

The archived articles are copyrighted. They are stored only in the access-controlled project area and used only for analysis. Full texts are not redistributed, published or shared outside the team. Publications quote short passages for the purpose of criticism and analysis, with full attribution. The open data release consists of the corpus index (IDs, addresses, dates, metadata and codes), which lets others retrieve the texts themselves.

13.2 Personal data

News articles name public figures, and sometimes private individuals: eyewitnesses, victims, local officials. Names in stored texts are personal data under the GDPR. The project will assess with UiA's data protection officer whether a notification to Sikt is required, and will apply data minimization: no separate register of named persons, no coding of private individuals by name, and pseudonymization of private individuals in any quoted material.

13.3 AI services

Sending archived texts to an external AI service is a form of data processing and of copying. Before any machine coding, the project will confirm that the service and its terms are approved under UiA's rules for AI tools, that inputs are not used to train models, and that a suitable data processing agreement is in place. Only the texts needed for coding are sent, without added personal data.

13.4 Sanctioned and restricted sources

RT is subject to EU restrictions on broadcasting and distribution. The project accesses RT content for scholarly analysis only, does not redistribute it, and does not circumvent technical access restrictions. The legal position will be confirmed with UiA before collection. The same principle applies to any page whose owner disallows automated access.

13.5 Research integrity

The study takes no position for or against any government, outlet or party to the conflicts studied. It analyzes how events are represented, not which representation is true, except where facts are well established by multiple independent sources. Findings about state outlets are presented with the same evidentiary standard as findings about CNN and Al Jazeera.

14. Limitations

1. **Encoding without decoding.** The study analyzes what outlets offer, not how audiences read it. Claims about communicative sovereignty and epistemological resilience concern the supply side only. A reception study in Kenya and Ethiopia is the natural next stage.
2. **Websites, not platforms.** Much of these outlets' African reach runs through YouTube, Facebook, TikTok and X. Website text may differ from platform content in emphasis and format. Platform content is outside the present scope.
3. **English only.** Outlets' French, Arabic, Swahili and Amharic services may frame events differently for different audiences.
4. **Short window.** Five months allows event-driven analysis of change, not long-term trends.

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5. **Access gaps.** Sanctions, redirects and robots rules may leave gaps that cluster in particular outlets. Missingness is analyzed and reported, but cannot be fully corrected.
6. **Reference group.** CNN and Al Jazeera are an imperfect reference. Neither is neutral, and Al Jazeera is itself state-funded. The design treats them as comparison points, not as a standard of objectivity.
7. **No African outlets.** Without East African outlets in the sample, the study shows how the region is narrated by others, not how it narrates itself. Adding outlets such as the *Nation* (Kenya), *The Citizen* (Tanzania) or *Addis Standard* (Ethiopia) would test the framework's claims about voice directly.
8. **Model dependence.** AI-assisted coding results depend on the model version. A later model may code differently. Logging and the admission protocol limit, but do not remove, this dependence.

15. Conclusion

This design tests whether a multipolar news order gives East Africa more voice or only more narrators. Its answer will rest on three kinds of evidence, each from the method best suited to it. Counts come from content analysis and computation. Meanings come from three strands of critical discourse analysis. Change comes from the diachronic tracking of attention and frames.

The same-event logic is the design's backbone. By holding the event constant, it separates what outlets choose to cover from how they cover it. That distinction is the heart of the framework's central claim: that rival centers converge in selection and diverge in attribution.

The design also offers a template for using AI in content analysis without lowering the standard. The model is admitted as a coder only where it matches trained humans, every run is logged, and interpretation remains human. Galtung and Ruge's study showed that foreign news follows rules. Sixty years on, this design asks whose rules, and at what cost to the people being covered.

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