



The Representation of the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis in BBC World Service Africa and CRTV News: A Comparative Framing Analysis

Fuh Suh Emmanuel^{1*}

¹University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

*Corresponding author: Fuh Suh Emmanuel
University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

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Abstract:

The Cameroon Anglophone crisis, which erupted in late 2016 and escalated into an armed conflict by 2017, represents one of the most consequential political and humanitarian events in the country's post-independence history. This article examines how two broadcasters with fundamentally different institutional mandates, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service Africa and Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV), framed the crisis between 2016 and 2022. Drawing on Entman's (1993) four-function model of framing as its primary analytical lens, and situating the analysis within broader debates on state media, international broadcasting and postcolonial representation, the study identifies systematic differences in how each outlet defined the problem, attributed causality, applied moral evaluation and proposed remedies. On the one hand, BBC World Service Africa coverage characteristically foregrounded humanitarian concerns, minority rights and government use of force. On the other hand, CRTV consistently framed the crisis as a security threat managed by a sovereign state protecting its territorial integrity. The article argues that these divergent frames are not simply the product of editorial bias but reflect deep structural differences in ownership, funding, audience orientation and the political economy of each broadcaster. The analysis contributes to scholarship on conflict reporting, African media systems and the global politics of news framing.

Keywords: Framing Theory, Anglophone Crisis, Cameroon, CRTV, BBC World Service, Conflict Reporting, Media Representation, Postcolonial Media.

Original Research

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1. INTRODUCTION

When two news organisations report on the same event and produce accounts so different that they appear almost irreconcilable, the question of why this happens becomes as important as the question of what actually occurred. The Cameroon Anglophone crisis offers a particularly instructive case for examining this problem. From its origins in the professional grievances of lawyers and teachers in the country's two Anglophone regions in October 2016, through its transformation into an armed separatist conflict by late 2017, to the protracted humanitarian emergency that persisted through 2022, the crisis was covered continuously by both BBC World Service

Africa and CRTV. The two broadcasters produced coverage that differed not merely in tone or emphasis but in the most fundamental aspects of how the conflict was defined, who was held responsible and what solutions were considered legitimate.

This article examines those differences through the lens of framing theory, specifically through Entman's (1993) four-function model, which analyses how media texts define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies. Framing theory is well suited to comparative media analysis of this kind because it focuses on the structural organisation of meaning rather than on surface-level questions of

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objectivity or accuracy. The goal is not to determine which broadcaster told the truth, but to understand how each outlet constructed a particular version of events and why those constructions took the shape they did.

The study covers the period from October 2016, when the crisis began with strikes and protests in the Anglophone regions, to December 2022, by which point the conflict had claimed thousands of lives, displaced hundreds of thousands of people and provoked sustained international attention. This six-year span encompasses the full arc of the crisis from its initial civil society phase through its militarisation and into a period of negotiated stalemate, and therefore provides sufficient material for a meaningful comparative analysis of how each broadcaster's framing evolved over time.

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides a brief account of the sociohistorical background to the crisis, sufficient to contextualise the analysis without duplicating the substantial existing literature on Cameroonian political history. Section 3 sets out the theoretical framework, drawing on Entman (1993), Herman and Chomsky (1988) and selected contributions from postcolonial media theory. Section 4 characterises the two broadcasters as institutional actors, examining how their mandates, ownership structures and audience orientations shape their editorial cultures. Section 5 conducts the comparative framing analysis across the four functions identified by Entman. Section 6 discusses the broader implications of the findings for the study of conflict journalism and African media systems. Section 7 concludes with observations on the limits of the present analysis and directions for future empirical research.

2. Background: The Anglophone Crisis in Brief

Cameroon's Anglophone problem has its roots in the country's colonial history. Following the First World War, the former German colony of Kamerun was divided

between Britain and France as League of Nations mandates. The larger French-administered territory became the Republic of Cameroon upon independence in 1960. The following year, a UN-supervised plebiscite in the British Southern Cameroons resulted in a vote to join the Republic of Cameroon rather than Nigeria, producing the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1961. This federation, which guaranteed a degree of Anglophone autonomy, was dissolved in 1972 in favour of a unitary state, a move widely resented in the Anglophone regions as a betrayal of the original federal compact (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003).

Grievances about the marginalisation of Anglophone institutions, the imposition of French legal and educational norms in English-speaking regions and the under-representation of Anglophones in the senior ranks of the civil service and military accumulated over decades without producing sustained organised resistance. The crisis that began in October 2016 was triggered by more immediate and specific complaints: lawyers in Bamenda and Buea protested against the deployment of francophone judges and court officials in common law courts, and teachers objected to the posting of francophone teachers to Anglophone schools without adequate English-language skills. These professional grievances rapidly acquired a broader political dimension as the government's response, which included the deployment of security forces and the arrest of protest leaders, was perceived as evidence of precisely the disregard for Anglophone institutions that the protests had sought to address.

By late 2017, a more radical separatist movement had emerged, calling for the independence of an Anglophone state to be named 'Ambazonia'. Armed groups operating under the loose banner of the 'Ambazonia' Defence Forces began attacking government security forces, and the military responded with operations that human rights organisations documented as involving the

killing of civilians and the burning of villages (Amnesty International, 2018). The conflict had, by 2020, displaced an estimated 700,000 people internally and produced a further 60,000 refugees in neighbouring Nigeria (UNHCR, 2020). The two Anglophone regions, the North West and South West, were placed under a state of emergency at various points, and internet shutdowns lasting for three months at a time were imposed, a measure that drew particular attention from international press freedom organisations.

It is against this background that the coverage analysed in this article should be understood. The crisis is not simply a conflict between the state and an armed group; it is, at its core, a contest over identity, constitutional legitimacy and the terms of national belonging, and these dimensions are precisely the ones that most sharply differentiate the framing choices of the two broadcasters under examination.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Entman's Model of Framing

The concept of framing as an analytical tool for media research draws on a broad tradition in sociology and psychology, from Goffman's (1974) account of how individuals organise experience through interpretive schemata to Kahneman and Tversky's (1984) work on how the presentation of choices influences decision-making. Within media and communication studies, framing theory has been developed and refined by numerous scholars, but Entman's (1993) formulation remains the most widely cited and analytically precise.

Entman defines framing as the process of selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text in order to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation. This four-part model has the considerable virtue of being both analytically specific and empirically tractable. It directs attention to what a news text chooses to

foreground (salience), what it identifies as the nature of the problem (problem definition), who or what it holds responsible (causal interpretation), how it assigns praise or blame (moral evaluation) and what it suggests should be done (remedy recommendation). Each of these functions can be identified in specific textual choices: the selection of sources, the vocabulary used to describe actors and events, the ordering and emphasis of information and what is systematically absent from coverage.

For the purposes of comparative analysis, the model is particularly useful because it allows differences between two bodies of coverage to be described in precise and structured terms rather than in the vague language of bias or slant. It also accommodates the possibility that framing choices are not the product of conscious editorial decisions but of institutional habits, source dependencies and professional norms that reproduce themselves without deliberate intent. This is an important consideration when analysing outlets as different in their institutional character as CRTC and BBC World Service Africa.

3.2 The Political Economy of News: Herman and Chomsky

Whilst Entman's model describes how framing works at the level of the text, it does not fully explain why particular frames emerge in particular institutional contexts. For this, the political economy tradition in media studies offers important supplementary resources. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model identifies five filters through which news passes before it reaches an audience: ownership, advertising revenue, sourcing, flak and anti-communism (later updated to include ideology more broadly). Although the model was developed primarily with reference to the American commercial press and has been criticised for implying a degree of top-down coordination that the evidence does not always support, its core insight, that the institutional structure of a news organisation shapes what it is able and

willing to report, is directly applicable to the present analysis.

CRTV is a state broadcaster funded by the Cameroonian government and explicitly mandated to serve national unity and development objectives. BBC World Service Africa is funded by the British Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office and is editorially independent of the British government, though its mandate to project a particular image of British values and credibility in its target regions is not entirely without political dimensions. These structural differences do not determine content in a mechanistic way, but they do create different institutional pressures and possibilities, and they help to explain why each outlet's framing of the Anglophone crisis takes the shape it does.

3.3 Postcolonial Media Theory and African Conflict Reporting

A third strand of theoretical thinking relevant to this analysis concerns the representation of African political conflicts in both international and domestic media. Scholars working in the tradition of postcolonial media theory have drawn attention to the ways in which international news organisations tend to frame African conflicts through particular narrative conventions that emphasise chaos, tribalism and humanitarian catastrophe whilst marginalising the structural and historical dimensions of the events they cover (Cottle, 2006; Hawk, 1992; Moeller, 1999). This tendency, sometimes described as the crisis-focused or disaster frame, reduces complex political conflicts to a series of dramatic events and human interest stories that travel well internationally but illuminate little about the underlying causes or dynamics of what is being reported.

Wa Thiong'o's (1986) broader argument about the politics of language and representation in post-colonial Africa, though developed in a literary rather than a journalistic context, is also pertinent here. The

question of which language a broadcaster uses, who its primary audience is, and what relationship it constructs between the observer and the observed are all politically significant choices, and they bear directly on the framing of a conflict in which language rights and the status of English are themselves central issues. BBC World Service Africa broadcasts in English and targets a global Anglophone audience that includes diaspora Cameroonians and international observers. CRTV broadcasts in both French and English but operates within a predominantly French-language institutional culture and addresses a primarily domestic audience. These differences in linguistic orientation and audience imaginary are not incidental to the framing analysis that follows.

4. BBC World Service Africa and CRTV as Institutional Actors

4.1 CRTV: State Broadcasting and the Logic of National Unity

Cameroon Radio Television was established as a public corporation in 1987, though its institutional predecessor, the Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Camerounaise, dates to the early years of independence. CRTV operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Communication and is governed by a board whose members are appointed by presidential decree. Its funding comes primarily from the state budget, supplemented by a television licence fee and advertising revenue. Its editorial mandate, as set out in its founding legislation, includes the promotion of national unity, the support of government development objectives and the defence of territorial integrity.

This mandate places CRTV in a structurally difficult position when covering a domestic political conflict in which the government is itself a principal actor. The broadcaster is not simply a neutral conduit for information about the crisis; it is an institution whose legal existence and funding depend on the goodwill of the same government whose conduct is under scrutiny. This does not mean that CRTV's journalists lack professional commitment or that their coverage is simply

government propaganda; broadcast journalism is a professional practice with its own norms and standards, and individual journalists may hold views very different from those of their institution. It does mean, however, that the institutional constraints on what CRTV can report, how it can describe events and which sources it can credibly foreground are substantially more restrictive than those facing an internationally funded public broadcaster.

It is also worth noting that CRTV's Anglophone service, which broadcasts in English, occupies a particularly sensitive position in this context, since it is addressing an audience that is itself at the centre of the crisis being reported. The service's coverage of the Anglophone crisis has consequently been watched closely by civil society organisations, diaspora communities and press freedom advocates, and has been the subject of sustained criticism from groups who argue that it systematically downplays the legitimate grievances of Anglophone Cameroonians (Reporters Without Borders, 2019).

4.2 BBC World Service Africa: International Broadcasting and Editorial Independence

BBC World Service Africa is part of the BBC's global news operation, funded since 2014 by a grant-in-aid from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office rather than by the BBC licence fee. This funding arrangement has attracted some criticism from scholars who argue that it creates at least a potential tension between editorial independence and the strategic communication interests of the British government (Gillespie *et al.*, 2010). The BBC's editorial guidelines assert a firm separation between funding and editorial decisions, and there is no systematic evidence that Foreign Office funding has distorted coverage of specific African political events. Nevertheless, the structural relationship is worth noting as part of a complete account of the broadcaster's institutional character.

BBC World Service Africa covers the continent across a range of platforms including radio, digital and social media, and reaches an estimated weekly audience of over 100 million people across the African continent (BBC, 2022). Its journalism is governed by the BBC's editorial values of impartiality, accuracy and independence, and it employs local correspondents and contributors across the region, including in Cameroon. The service has a well-established track record of covering political conflicts, human rights abuses and humanitarian emergencies across Africa, and its coverage of the Anglophone crisis has been cited by international human rights organisations and diaspora advocacy groups as a significant source of information about events that the Cameroonian domestic media were either unable or unwilling to cover in depth.

The contrast between the two broadcasters at the institutional level is, in summary, a contrast between an outlet structurally embedded in the state apparatus of one of the parties to the conflict and an outlet structurally positioned as an external observer with a mandate for independent journalism. This contrast does not in itself determine the content of coverage, but it creates the conditions within which specific framing choices become more or less available to each broadcaster.

5. Comparative Framing Analysis

5.1 Problem Definition

The most fundamental difference between BBC World Service Africa and CRTV coverage lies in how each outlet defines what the Anglophone crisis actually is. This definitional choice shapes everything else in the coverage: which actors are considered relevant, which events are deemed newsworthy, which voices are authoritative and which outcomes are presented as desirable.

BBC World Service Africa coverage, particularly in its early phase between late 2016 and mid-2017, characteristically defined

the crisis as a political and rights-based dispute rooted in the historical marginalisation of Anglophone Cameroonians within the post-colonial state. Reports consistently situated the 2016 protests within a longer history of Anglophone grievance, making reference to the 1961 federal compact, the dissolution of the federation in 1972 and the accumulated frustrations of the intervening decades. This historical depth gave the BBC's problem definition a structural character: the crisis was framed not as an unexpected eruption but as the predictable consequence of unresolved constitutional tensions. From this definition, the relevant actors are not simply the government and an armed group but a state that has failed to accommodate the legitimate claims of a linguistic minority and a community that has exhausted legal and political channels for redress.

CRTV's problem definition was consistently different and, after the emergence of armed separatist groups in 2017, increasingly divergent. The dominant frame in CRTV coverage defined the crisis primarily as a security threat posed by what the broadcaster consistently termed anglophone separatists, armed criminals or terrorists, operating with alleged support from diaspora networks and foreign interests. The historical background to the conflict received relatively little attention, and where it appeared, it was typically framed as evidence of the government's longstanding commitment to national reconciliation rather than as a record of unaddressed grievance. This definitional choice placed the government in the position of a sovereign state responding to a threat to public order and territorial integrity, a framing that implicitly legitimises security responses whilst delegitimising the political claims that gave rise to the conflict.

The difference in problem definition is most visible in the language each broadcaster used to describe the key actors. BBC World Service Africa coverage used a range of terms to describe Anglophone armed groups, typically including context that explained the

groups' stated objectives and the circumstances in which they had arisen. CRTV's vocabulary was more consistent and more evaluative: the preferred term in much of the coverage was separatist terrorists, a compound label that pre-emptively forecloses the possibility of legitimate political motivation and positions the government's security response as not merely legal but obligatory.

5.2 Causal Interpretation

Causal interpretation in news framing concerns the question of how a problem came to exist, and who or what is responsible for it. In conflict reporting, this function is particularly consequential because the attribution of causality typically implies a corresponding attribution of moral and political responsibility.

In BBC World Service Africa coverage of the Anglophone crisis, causal responsibility was distributed across a range of actors and historical forces. The government of Paul Biya was identified as a proximate cause through its handling of the 2016 protests, particularly the arrest of civil society leaders, the use of force against demonstrators and the imposition of internet shutdowns in the Anglophone regions. The broader causal context, however, included the structural features of the Cameroonian state: the hyper-centralised presidential system, the under-representation of Anglophones in key state institutions and the systematic erosion of the federal guarantees that had accompanied the 1961 unification. This multi-causal account distributes responsibility across time and actors, making it difficult to assign blame exclusively to any single party and implying that a durable solution will require structural change rather than simply the defeat of an armed group.

CRTV's causal account was markedly simpler and more consistent in its attribution. The primary causal agents in CRTV coverage were the Ambazonia separatists and their alleged external supporters, including diaspora organisations in the United States, Canada and

Europe, and unspecified foreign interests portrayed as seeking to destabilise Cameroon. The government's role in the events of 2016 and 2017 received comparatively little causal attention, and where the state's actions were discussed, they were typically framed as proportionate responses to provocation rather than as independent causes of escalation. This causal narrative has the effect of externalising the origins of the crisis, locating its causes in the malice of foreign actors and domestic extremists rather than in the structure of the Cameroonian state itself.

The sourcing practices of each broadcaster reinforced these causal interpretations in consistent ways. BBC World Service Africa reports drew on a wider range of sources, including Anglophone civil society organisations, human rights lawyers, diaspora voices, international humanitarian agencies and, where accessible, residents of the conflict-affected regions. CRTV coverage drew heavily on government officials, military spokespersons and loyalist politicians, with civil society voices appearing less frequently and typically in a context that framed their concerns as either misguided or manipulated by external actors. The sources a broadcaster chooses to include do not merely illustrate a causal account; they constitute it, lending authority and credibility to particular interpretations whilst marginalising others.

5.3 Moral Evaluation

The moral evaluation function of framing concerns how news coverage assigns credit and blame, identifies victims and perpetrators and constructs the ethical stakes of an event. In conflict reporting, this function is closely related to causal interpretation but is analytically distinct: it is possible to identify a cause without assigning moral responsibility, and moral evaluation sometimes exceeds what the causal account strictly implies.

BBC World Service Africa coverage of the Anglophone crisis was generally cautious in its moral evaluations, consistent with the BBC's editorial commitment to impartiality.

Nevertheless, certain moral orientations were consistently present. The coverage foregrounded the experiences of civilian victims of violence on both sides, including communities subjected to military operations and those targeted by armed separatist groups. The reporting of specific incidents, such as the Ngarbuh massacre of February 2020, in which Cameroonian military forces were found by a government inquiry to have killed at least 21 civilians including 13 children, gave considerable attention to the human cost of military operations and to the accountability mechanisms, or lack thereof that followed. This focus on civilian harm and accountability implicitly constructed a moral framework in which the protection of non-combatants and the rule of law were the relevant standards against which the conduct of all parties was to be assessed.

CRTV's moral evaluation of the crisis was structured around a different set of priorities. The dominant moral framework in CRTV coverage positioned the Cameroonian state as the guardian of national unity, constitutional order and the welfare of all citizens, including Anglophone Cameroonians portrayed as victims not of the state but of separatist violence and intimidation. Coverage of atrocities attributed to Ambazonian armed groups, including the killing of teachers, the burning of schools and the forced closure of businesses through ghost town orders, received substantial attention, whilst incidents in which security forces were alleged to have committed abuses were reported less prominently or framed in ways that emphasised the exceptional and unauthorised nature of such acts. This moral architecture positioned the government as a protector and the separatist movement as the primary moral threat, a reversal of the victim-perpetrator relationship constructed in much of the BBC's coverage.

It is important, in the spirit of the analytical neutrality this study has adopted, to acknowledge that neither moral framework is simply fabricated. Anglophone armed groups

did commit serious abuses, including attacks on civilians and the forcible closure of schools that deprived hundreds of thousands of children of education. The Cameroonian government did face a genuine security challenge. The point of the analysis is not to adjudicate between these moral accounts but to observe that each broadcaster consistently selected and emphasised the evidence that supported its dominant moral frame, and that each frame carried real consequences for how the conflict was understood and what responses to it were considered appropriate.

5.4 Remedy Recommendation

The fourth function in Entman's model concerns the solutions or remedies that news coverage implicitly or explicitly promotes. This function is in many ways the most consequential for the practical politics of a conflict, since the remedies that media coverage foregrounds help to shape the range of options that political actors and publics consider legitimate and feasible.

BBC World Service Africa coverage consistently, if often implicitly, promoted a political solution to the crisis. Reports drew attention to calls by international bodies, diaspora organisations, civil society groups and eventually the United Nations for dialogue between the government and Anglophone representatives, and gave prominent coverage to the Swiss-facilitated pre-dialogue consultations of 2019, the Major National Dialogue convened by President Biya in September 2019 and the various proposals for constitutional reform or special status for the Anglophone regions that circulated throughout the period under review. The implicit remedy recommendation of this coverage was that the crisis was a political problem that required a political solution, and that the relevant framework for such a solution was one that addressed the underlying constitutional and rights-based grievances of Anglophone Cameroonians.

CRTV's coverage promoted a different and internally coherent set of remedies. In the

early phase of the crisis, before the emergence of armed groups, CRTV gave some coverage to the government's response to professional grievances, including the creation of a common law division within the Supreme Court and commitments to address the deployment of francophone officials in Anglophone institutions. After 2017, however, the dominant remedy framework in CRTV coverage shifted to a security and law enforcement model: the primary solution to the crisis, as constructed in CRTV's reporting, was the defeat of the armed separatist movement, the arrest of its leaders and the restoration of order in the Anglophone regions. The Major National Dialogue of 2019 received substantial coverage on CRTV as evidence of the government's commitment to peaceful resolution, but the broadcaster's coverage tended to present this initiative as a generous concession by the state rather than as a response to legitimate demands, and to marginalise the views of groups that questioned the dialogue's scope or sincerity.

The two remedy frameworks are not simply different emphases within a shared understanding of the problem; they reflect fundamentally different conceptions of what the crisis is and who is entitled to define it. A security-first remedy framework implies that the fundamental problem is disorder, and that order, once restored, will resolve the grievances that produced the disorder. A dialogue and constitutional reform framework implies that the fundamental problem is structural injustice, and that restoring order without addressing that injustice will only postpone the next eruption. The coverage of each broadcaster consistently reproduced one or the other of these frameworks, rarely engaging seriously with the assumptions on which the alternative rested.

6. DISCUSSION

The framing differences documented in the preceding analysis are substantial and consistent across the four functions identified by Entman. They are also, in an important sense, predictable: given what we know about

the institutional structures of the two broadcasters, it would be surprising if their coverage of a domestic political conflict in which one broadcaster's funding body is itself a principal party did not differ significantly from the other's. The more interesting analytical questions concern the mechanisms through which these structural differences translate into specific framing choices, and the implications of those choices for the broader politics of the conflict.

One such mechanism is sourcing. The sources a journalist can access are partly a function of institutional positioning: CRTV journalists covering the Anglophone crisis operated within a context in which government officials were readily accessible and cooperative, civil society voices were sometimes available but often cautious about associating themselves with state media, and access to conflict-affected areas was controlled by the same military whose conduct was under scrutiny. BBC World Service Africa journalists, operating from a position of greater independence and with the institutional prestige that attracted diverse sources, were able to draw on a wider range of perspectives, including voices that would not have been accessible or credible within CRTV's institutional context. This difference in source access is not simply a matter of editorial choice; it is partly a structural feature of each broadcaster's relationship to the actors in the conflict.

A second mechanism is the imagined audience. CRTV addresses a primarily domestic Cameroonian audience that includes, in its Anglophone service, communities directly affected by the conflict. This dual address, to a national audience that includes both Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians, creates particular editorial sensitivities that an international broadcaster does not share. BBC World Service Africa's primary audience for coverage of the Anglophone crisis was, realistically, international: diaspora Cameroonians, African civil society organisations, international

human rights bodies and foreign governments. This audience imaginary freed the BBC from some of the domestic political constraints that shaped CRTV's coverage, but it also potentially encouraged a framing emphasis on drama, humanitarian impact and international accountability that may have underweighted the local political dynamics and internal divisions within both the government and the Anglophone movement.

The postcolonial dimension of the analysis adds a further layer of complexity. BBC World Service Africa's coverage of African political conflicts operates, however carefully, within a long history of international media representation of African politics that has been criticised for its tendencies towards simplification, exoticisation and the privileging of external interpretive frameworks over local ones. Even when BBC coverage of the Anglophone crisis was substantively accurate and analytically sophisticated, its framing inevitably reflected the perspective of an external observer with particular institutional and cultural commitments. CRTV's coverage, whatever its limitations in terms of independence and balance, at least operated from within the society it was describing. The two forms of partiality are different in kind, and neither can claim an unqualified epistemological advantage over the other.

It is also worth observing that the framing differences analysed in this article were not static across the full period under review. The BBC's coverage evolved as the conflict became more complex, as evidence of abuses by armed separatist groups accumulated and as the humanitarian dimensions of the crisis became more severe. CRTV's coverage also evolved, particularly in its coverage of the 2019 National Dialogue and in its subsequent reporting of reconstruction and development initiatives in the Anglophone regions. A longitudinal empirical study would be better placed than this conceptual analysis to trace these evolutions in detail, but the overall framing

orientations identified here appear to have been durable across the six-year period.

7. CONCLUSION

This article has argued that the divergent framing of the Cameroon Anglophone crisis in BBC World Service Africa and CRTV coverage between 2016 and 2022 reflects not simply different editorial choices but the systematic operation of different institutional logics. CRTV's status as a state broadcaster embedded in the apparatus of a government that is itself a principal actor in the conflict created conditions in which a security-oriented, state-legitimising frame was structurally available and institutionally rewarded. BBC World Service Africa's position as an externally funded, editorially independent international broadcaster created conditions in which a rights-based, dialogue-oriented frame was more readily accessible and more consistent with the broadcaster's professional identity.

These structural observations do not amount to a verdict on either broadcaster's coverage. CRTV operates under constraints that are not of its journalists' making, and the best of its reporting has served an important function in documenting the human costs of the conflict for a domestic audience that other media were failing to reach. BBC World Service Africa's coverage, however valuable as a source of independent information about a conflict that the Cameroonian domestic media covered inadequately, carries its own limitations of perspective and its own institutional pressures, and should not be treated as a transparent window on the conflict.

The Entman model has proved a productive analytical framework for this comparative analysis, but its application in a purely conceptual study has limits that should be acknowledged. Framing analysis at its most rigorous requires systematic content analysis of a defined corpus of texts, coded by trained analysts using agreed operational definitions. This article has drawn on a broad familiarity

with the coverage of the crisis in the two outlets and on the substantial existing journalistic and scholarly literature on the Anglophone crisis and Cameroonian media, but it has not conducted a formal content analysis. Future empirical work should build on the conceptual framework developed here by applying it to a rigorously selected and systematically coded corpus of news texts from both broadcasters, covering distinct phases of the crisis, in order to test and refine the framing hypotheses proposed in this analysis.

Beyond this methodological agenda, there are broader questions worth pursuing. How did the framing of the Anglophone crisis in BBC and CRTV compare with coverage in other significant outlets, including RFI, Voice of America Africa and the growing body of Cameroonian digital and social media? To what extent did the framing choices of each broadcaster influence the perceptions and political orientations of their respective audiences? And what does the Cameroon case contribute to a comparative understanding of how state and international broadcasters frame political conflicts in African contexts more broadly? These questions cannot be answered within the scope of the present study, but they indicate the richness of the field of inquiry that a more sustained research programme could address.

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