

# Influence of Foreign Media Bias in Shaping Perceptions of the Sudan Armed Forces- Rapid Support Forces Conflict in Khartoum, Sudan

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8100083>

Received: 23 September 2024; Accepted: 07 October 2024; Published: 05 November 2024

## ABSTRACT

Intra-state conflicts in Africa in the post-Cold War period have been complex with far reaching consequences. The civil conflicts have at the same time influenced and shaped global and regional dynamics. In April 2019 the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) jointly overthrew the regime of Sudan President Omar al-Bashir. In January 2023 a power struggle ensued over control of the Sudan State between the SAF and the RSF leading to a military confrontation. The foreign media was at the forefront in reporting the civil conflict to the international audience. Foreign media reporting is a powerful agent in shaping conflict perceptions through framing, agenda-setting and the dissemination of information. This study examined the influence of foreign media bias in shaping perceptions of the SAF-RSF conflict in Khartoum, Sudan. Two theories namely; framing and agenda setting theories informed this study. The framing theory explained how foreign media framed the SAF-RSF conflict, how these frames were received and the influence in shaping perceptions of the conflict. The Agenda-setting theory on the other hand offered a valuable framework for analyzing media influence on the perception of the SAF-RSF conflict. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The study target population consisted of individuals who were exposed to foreign media reporting and had the potential to form perceptions about African conflicts. The research targeted the general population or residents residing within four cities in Kenya (Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nakuru). Using the Cochran formula, the total sample size was 384 respondents. The study also targeted international media houses located in or operating from Kenya. Primary data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Secondary data was gathered from a range of sources including scholarly articles, books, reports, and online resources. The data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to outline and interpret the main features. The findings revealed that framing and agenda-setting and bias in foreign media reporting significantly influenced and shaped perceptions of the conflict between the SAF and RSF.

**Key Words:** Conflict, Agenda setting, Framing, Perception

## INTRODUCTION

International conflicts, often involving multiple nations or regions, are complex phenomena that significantly impact global dynamics and have far-reaching consequences. These conflicts can arise from a myriad of sources, including political, ethnic, religious, territorial, ideological, or economic differences, as noted by Zartman & Zartman (2019). The complexity of these conflicts often reflects the intricate interplay of historical, socio-political, and economic factors that can influence the course of nations and international relations. The perception and response to these conflicts by individuals, societies, and the global community are shaped significantly by media coverage.

Franco & Ortiz (2020) observe that the media is a powerful tool for communication and information dissemination that plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and narratives surrounding conflicts. The way media frames a conflict can lead to varying interpretations and responses from different audiences, influencing everything from public opinion to policy-making. The framing of conflicts in the media often highlights the broader implications for regional security and international intervention. The portrayal can sometimes lead to a narrow focus on violence and suffering, overshadowing deeper systemic issues such as governance challenges or economic inequalities.

In April 2019 the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) jointly overthrew the regime of Sudan President Omar al-Bashir. In January 2023 a power struggle ensued over control of the Sudan State between the SAF and the RSF leading to a military confrontation. The ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is primarily an internal power struggle within the state rather than an international conflict. This distinction is crucial as it shapes how the conflict is reported and perceived globally.

The media's role in framing this conflict, often highlighting issues of power, control, and human rights violations, can significantly influence international perceptions and diplomatic responses (Chuol, 2023; Plaut & Klein, 2019). The portrayal of the SAF-RSF conflict in foreign media can either amplify certain narratives or obscure the nuances of the internal dynamics at play. This selective focus can impact international diplomacy, aid, and intervention strategies, often with significant consequences for the parties involved.

The conflict between SAF and RSF in Sudan presents unique challenges for media reporting. Unlike interstate conflicts, this intrastate conflict involves complex dynamics of internal power struggles, ethnic and regional divisions, and varying political interests. Foreign media reporting on this conflict must navigate these complexities, providing nuanced and accurate portrayals that consider the conflict's internal nature and the broader geopolitical context. The challenge lies in ensuring that the coverage does not oversimplify or misrepresent the situation, which could lead to skewed perceptions and policy responses. Accurate and comprehensive reporting is essential for fostering a well-informed international community that can engage constructively in conflict resolution efforts.

Zartman & Zartman (2019) and Väyrynen (2023) have extensively studied international conflicts and their global implications. They provide valuable insights into the dynamics and consequences of such situations. Their work has highlighted the far-reaching effects that conflicts can have on global security, economic stability, and human rights. Additionally, scholars like Agwanda & Asal (2020) and Altare et al. (2020) have focused specifically on conflicts within Sudan and the broader African region, offering detailed analyses of the historical, political, and social contexts that shape these conflicts. These studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of the causes and impacts of regional conflicts, as well as the challenges faced by local populations and governments.

The global media's reporting on conflicts, including the SAF-RSF conflict in Sudan, plays a critical role in shaping international perceptions and influencing policy responses. Understanding how media coverage frames these conflicts, especially those within a state, is essential for comprehending the broader implications for peace-building and conflict resolution. As foreign media continues to cover such conflicts, it is vital to critically assess the accuracy, fairness, and completeness of the narratives presented to the global audience. The media's portrayal of these conflicts not only informs public opinion but also shapes the international community's approach to conflict resolution and humanitarian intervention. This underscores the importance of promoting responsible journalism and encouraging media literacy among audiences worldwide.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The ongoing conflict between the SAF and the RSF in Khartoum poses a significant threat to regional stability, human rights, and Sudan's political landscape. This conflict, characterized by its complexity and the involvement of various actors with differing agendas, continues to evolve, presenting numerous challenges for both local and international communities. The manner in which media outlets report on the conflict can influence public opinion, shape diplomatic engagements, and even affect the provision of humanitarian aid. However, this reporting is often fraught with challenges, including access limitations, potential biases, and the complexities of accurately depicting a conflict that is both internal and multifaceted.

Despite the extensive body of research, there is a notable gap in the literature concerning the specific impact of foreign media on the perception of the SAF-RSF conflict. While existing studies have explored general media framing, agenda-setting, and the use of language in conflict reporting, there is a lack of focused analysis on how these elements influence international understanding and empathy towards the SAF-RSF conflict. The complexity of the SAF-RSF conflict, with its internal power struggles, ethnic and regional divisions, and

various political interests, requires a nuanced approach to reporting. The details of media representation, including the choice of narratives, emphasis on particular aspects of the conflict, and portrayal of different actors, can significantly affect how global audiences perceive the situation.

The lack of comprehensive research on how international media narratives shape public perception and policy responses, especially in the context of an ongoing and evolving conflict, highlights the need for this study. This research aimed to fill the gap by examining the impact of foreign media coverage on the perception of the SAF-RSF conflict, considering the challenges faced by journalists and the limitations of media outlets in conflict reporting. The study sought to uncover the narratives that different media outlets portrayed about the conflict and assess their implications for public perception and policy-making. This analysis provides valuable insights into the role of media in shaping global understanding of complex conflicts and contributes to more informed and responsible journalism practices.

### **Objective of The Study**

The overall objective of the study was to examine the influence of foreign media reporting on Africa conflict perception, specifically focusing on the conflict between the SAF and the RSF in Khartoum, Sudan

### **Research Questions**

How do the framing techniques used by foreign media impact the perception of the conflict between the SAF and RSF in Khartoum, Sudan?

What role does bias, including cultural, political, and ideological factors, play in shaping perceptions of the SAF-RSF conflict in Khartoum, Sudan, as influenced by foreign media reporting?

### **Justification of the Study**

Comprehending how foreign media reports on the SAF-RSF conflict can reveal biases, framing techniques, and the overall portrayal of African conflicts, which often affects international relations and foreign policy decisions. Secondly, media coverage, through the language and rhetoric applied, can influence the conflict's trajectory by shaping narratives that either support or undermine peace efforts within the local and regional dynamics. Misrepresentation or biased reporting can exacerbate tensions, influence the morale of conflicting parties, and affect peacebuilding efforts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Valdez et al. (2020) explored public sentiment on social media concerning mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings highlighted how prolonged use of social media could have a detrimental effect on mental health, with the platform serving as a tool for managing emotional isolation while potentially increasing sadness over time. This research offers significant insights into the evolution of social media sentiment amid a health crisis. Despite its contributions, Valdez et al.'s study does not delve into how foreign media biases might influence public perceptions of conflicts. The analysis focuses solely on health crises and sentiment rather than on media biases and their effects on conflict perception. This gap leaves unaddressed how media biases might alter views on conflicts such as the SAF-RSF conflict in Sudan. This current study aimed to build on this foundation by investigating how foreign media biases shape perceptions of the SAF-RSF conflict, highlighting the differences in media portrayal across various global regions.

Wilson et al (2020) examined political polarization in the United States, emphasizing the roles of political elites, partisan media, and social media. Their research illustrated how institutional polarization exacerbates misunderstandings about political divisions, contributing to both affective and ideological polarization. This study provides a thorough analysis of how these elements interact within the U.S. political landscape, shedding light on the internal dynamics of polarization and its implications for public opinion and electoral behavior. While this research significantly contributes to understanding political polarization in the U.S., it does not address how such polarization might influence perceptions of conflicts beyond American borders. Specifically,

the study does not explore the impact of polarization and media biases on the perception of international conflicts, such as the SAF-RSF conflict in Sudan. This creates a gap in understanding how similar dynamics might affect conflict perception in different geopolitical settings.

This study addressed this gap by focusing on how media biases and polarization shape perceptions of the SAF-RSF conflict in Sudan. Comparing the mechanisms of polarization and media influence in the U.S. with those in the Sudanese context offered a broader analysis of how these dynamics impact conflict perception. This comparative approach provided insights into how political polarization and media biases might manifest and affect international conflict perception, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of media influence in global conflicts.

Scheidel et al. (2020) investigated grassroots environmentalism and mobilization tactics across various global contexts, highlighting the significant role of environmental defenders in advancing sustainability and social justice. Their research emphasized how marginalized communities often lead peaceful protests to address ecological and social issues, demonstrating the effectiveness of bottom-up mobilization in promoting environmental and social goals. This study sheds light on the global impact of grassroots environmental movements and their strategies for achieving their objectives.

However, Scheidel et al.'s research does not explore the influence of foreign media reporting on the public perception of environmental activism, particularly in conflict zones. The focus remains on grassroots efforts and mobilization without considering how media portrayals can shape and influence international perceptions of these struggles. This gap is significant given the role of media in framing and influencing public understanding of complex issues, including environmental activism in conflict settings. The current study addressed this gap by examining how foreign media reporting portrays environmental defenders within conflict zones, such as the SAF-RSF conflict in Sudan. It explores the ways in which media narratives impact international perceptions of these conflicts and the struggles faced by environmental activists. Analyzing media portrayals and their effects on support for environmental and humanitarian causes, this research provided valuable insights into the broader implications of media influence on public perception in conflict-affected regions.

Kearns et al (2019) explored how media coverage of terrorist acts in the United States varies based on the perpetrator's background. Their findings reveal that attacks carried out by Muslims received disproportionately more attention compared to those by other groups, indicating a potential bias in media reporting. This skewed coverage can distort public perception, highlighting the influence of media biases on the portrayal of terrorism. Their study underscores the need to understand how such biases can impact public views on different types of incidents. Despite the insights provided into U.S.-based terrorism, Kearns et al do not extend to how similar biases might affect the perception of conflicts in other regions. Specifically, their focus on American incidents leaves a gap in understanding how media biases influence international conflicts, such as the SAF-RSF conflict in Sudan. This limitation emphasizes the need for further examination of how media reporting biases might manifest outside the U.S., especially in diverse geopolitical and cultural settings.

The current research addressed this gap by investigating how foreign media coverage of African conflicts, including the SAF-RSF conflict, is influenced by biases akin to those identified in U.S. terrorism coverage. It aimed to understand how such media biases shape the perception of conflicts in Sudan and other similar settings. This broader perspective provided valuable insights into the role of media influence in shaping public opinion across diverse cultural and geo-political landscapes.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Two theories namely; agenda setting and framing theories informed this study. Agenda-Setting theory proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) examines how media influences public priorities and the importance placed on various issues. In the context of conflict reporting, the theory posits that the media's choice of which conflicts to emphasize and how they are depicted affects public understanding and perception of those conflicts (Baum & Zhukov, 2019). The Agenda-Setting theory offered a valuable framework for analyzing media influence on the perception of the SAF-RSF conflict.

Framing theory proposed by Goffman (1974) focuses on how the media constructs and presents information to influence public perception. Framing has a significant impact on how the public sees and comprehends events by emphasizing certain parts and downplaying others (Davies & True, 2015). Framing techniques include the use of specific language, metaphors, and symbols to shape public opinion. Media frames evoke emotional responses and influence public opinion by presenting conflicts in particular ways (Moy, Tewksbury, & Rinke, 2016). The framing theory explained how foreign media framed the SAF-RSF conflict, how these frames were received and the influence in shaping perceptions of the conflict.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both cross-sectional survey research and qualitative data collection to comprehensively examine the influence of foreign media reporting on perceptions of conflict in Africa. In addition to the quantitative survey, qualitative data collection methods were incorporated to gain deeper insights into the context and intricacies of media reporting. The study target population consisted of individuals who were exposed to foreign media reporting and had the potential to form perceptions about African conflicts. The research targeted the general population or residents residing within four cities in Kenya (Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nakuru). A sample size of 384 respondents was randomly selected using the Cochran formula. The study also purposively selected international media houses located in or operating from Kenya. The main research instruments for primary data collection comprised questionnaires and Key informant interviews and documentary analysis. Secondary data was gathered from a range of sources including scholarly articles, books, reports, and online resources. The data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to outline and interpret the main features.

The study sample consisted of 66.7% male participants and 33.3% female participants indicating a higher representation of males in the sample. Majority of respondents held a degree, with 55.5% of participants classified in this category. Additionally, 23.4% of the respondents had obtained diplomas, while 21.1% held postgraduate degrees. This distribution indicates a well-educated sample, with a substantial proportion of individuals having advanced qualifications beyond the undergraduate level. The majority of participants, 47.7%, fell within the age range of 35 to 59 years. Only 9.3% of the respondents were 60 years of age or older. This distribution highlights that the sample predominantly comprises individuals in their prime working years, with a notable concentration in the mid-age range.

## The Role of Foreign Media Bias in Shaping Perceptions of the SAF-RSF Conflict in Khartoum, Sudan

### Global Media Bias

Global media bias was assessed using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, focusing on several critical aspects of media reporting. This included evaluating the difficulties inherent in maintaining balance and objectivity, the impact of selection and emphasis on information, and the biased framing of key actors and events. Additionally, the analysis considered how visuals are employed to shape audience perceptions. By addressing these elements, the study aimed to uncover the extent to which global media reporting may deviate from impartiality and objectivity, thus highlighting the challenges faced in achieving fair and balanced coverage. This approach emphasizes the importance of scrutinizing media practices to understand their potential biases and influence on public perception.

**Table 1.1 Global Media Bias**

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Standard deviation
The media can be biased in their reporting, which can lead to inaccurate or incomplete coverage.	4.9%	9.6%	6.5%	44.8%	33.7%	3.93	1.110

Balance and objectivity can be difficult to achieve in reporting.	9.8%	9.6%	35.0%	24.9%	20.2%	3.36	1.195
Selection and emphasis of information can lead to incorrect, inaccurate, incomplete, misleading, misrepresented, or otherwise skewed reporting.	9.6%	35.5%	10.1%	21.2%	22.8%	3.11	1.374
Framing of key actors and events can be biased.	3.4%	6.2%	6.0%	59.8%	24.1%	3.96	0.926
Visuals can be used to influence the audience's perception of events	5.2%	14.0%	4.9%	51.3%	24.1%	3.76	1.125
Overall mean						3.624	1.146

Source: Researcher (2024)

The study found that the statement "Framing of key actors and events can be biased" had the highest mean of 3.96 and a standard-deviation of 0.926. The statement "Selection and emphasis of information can lead to incorrect, inaccurate, incomplete, misleading, misrepresented, or otherwise skewed reporting" had the lowest mean-of -3.11 and a standard-deviation of 1.374.

### Perception of African Conflicts

The section on Perception of African Conflicts examined how public perceptions of conflicts, including the Sudan conflict, affect various aspects such as government criticism, public activism, and support for diplomatic resolutions. This analysis is crucial in understanding how perceptions, particularly from a Kenyan perspective, influence these areas. The study highlighted how media coverage and portrayal of conflicts can shape public opinions and actions, thereby affecting policy responses and engagement in diplomatic efforts. Exploring these dynamics, the study offers insight into the broader implications of media influence on public and governmental responses to African conflicts.

Table 1.2 Perception of African Conflicts

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Standard deviation
The media can be biased in their reporting, leading to inaccurate or incomplete coverage.	6.2%	35.5%	6.5%	24.9%	26.4%	3.30	1.354
Balance and objectivity can be difficult to achieve in reporting.	5.2%	14.8%	21.2%	33.4%	24.9%	3.58	1.164
Selection and emphasis of information can lead to incorrect, inaccurate, incomplete, misleading, misrepresented, or otherwise skewed reporting.	6.0%	23.3%	10.6%	40.7%	18.9%	3.43	1.207

Framing of crucial actors and events can be biased.	6.0%	22.8%	14.0%	31.9%	24.9%	3.47	1.253
Visuals can be used to influence the audience's perception of events	5.7%	31.9%	11.4%	26.9%	23.6%	3.31	1.295
Overall mean						<b>3.418</b>	<b>1.2546</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

The statement "Balance and objectivity can be difficult to achieve in reporting" had the highest mean (3.58), suggesting that respondents believe achieving balanced reporting on African conflicts is challenging. The lowest mean (3.30) was for "The media can be biased in their reporting," indicating less agreement on the extent of media bias. The overall mean of 3.42 reflects a moderate perception of reporting challenges and bias.

### Correlation Analysis

This section explains the correlation between framing, global media language, global media bias, and perception of African conflicts. We assessed the relationship between variables, their strength, direction, magnitude, and significance. This section used the Pearson correlation to evaluate this relationship.

Table 1.3 Pearson Correlation

		Framing and Agenda-setting	Language and Rhetoric	Perspectives and Bias	Perception of African Conflicts
Framing and agenda-setting	Pearson Correlation	1	.671	.537	.556
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384
Language and Rhetoric	Pearson Correlation	.671	1	.519	.605
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384
Perspectives and bias	Pearson Correlation	.537	.519	1	.643
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	384	384	384	384
Perception of African Conflicts	Pearson Correlation	.556	.605	.643	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	384	384	384	384

Source: Researcher (2024)

The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation of 67.1% between framing and foreign media language, indicating a significant relationship where media framing is closely associated with the language used in foreign media. A moderate correlation of 53.7% was observed between framing and global media bias, suggesting a notable, but less pronounced, link. Additionally, there was a positive correlation of 55.6% between perception of African conflicts and framing, highlighting a meaningful connection where perceptions of conflicts are influenced by media framing.

## Regression Analysis

In this section, multiple regression analyses of framing, global media language, and global media bias were discussed. By conducting multiple regression analysis, the study was able to assess the unique contribution of each independent variable (framing, global media language, and global media bias) to the dependent variable of public perception. This analysis helped discern which factor has the strongest impact and whether there are interactive effects among them.

**Table 1.4 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.723 <sup>a</sup>	.522	.519	.743

Source: Researcher (2024)

The multiple regression analysis evaluated the impact of framing, global media language, and global media bias on public perception of African conflicts. The analysis yielded an R-value of 0.723 and an R<sup>2</sup> of 0.522, demonstrating a strong predictive capability for the dependent variable, perception of African conflicts.

**Table ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Significance
1	Regression	229.435	3	76.478	138.513	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	209.812	380	.552		
	Total	439.247	383			

Source: Researcher (2024)

The ANOVA results, with an F-value of 138.513 and a p-value less than 0.0005, confirm that the regression model fits the data exceptionally well. The coefficients revealed that all predictors framing, language, and perspectives positively affect perceptions of conflicts, with language and rhetoric exerting the most significant impact. This analysis underscores the substantial influence of media framing, language, and bias on shaping public perceptions of conflicts.

**Table 1.5 Coefficients Table**

Model <sup>a</sup>		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.016	.178		-.091	.928
	Framing and Agenda-setting	.152	.058	.131	2.615	.009
	Language and Rhetoric	.333	.055	.301	6.095	.000
	Perspectives and Bias	.479	.050	.416	9.575	.000

Source: Researcher (2024)

The resulting model is as shown in the following equation;

$$\text{Perception of Conflict} = -0.016 + 0.152x_1 + 0.333x_2 + 0.0479x_3$$



Unstandardized coefficients indicate how much the dependent variable varies with an independent variable when all other independent variables are constant. The unstandardized coefficient for framing and agenda-setting is 0.152. This means that for each influence on the event to focus, there is a change in perception of African conflicts by 0.152. Language and Rhetoric, represented by 0.333, positively influence the perception of African conflicts. Also, perspectives and biases positively influence the perception of African conflicts. As such, one inaccurate reporting is likely to increase the perception of African conflicts by 0.479.

Multiple regressions were run to predict the perception of conflict from framing and agenda-setting, language and rhetoric, and perspectives and bias. These variables are statistically significant and can predict the perception of conflict,  $F(3, 380) = 138.513$ ,  $p < .0005$ ,  $R^2 = 0.522$ . Since the  $p$ -value is  $< 0.05$ , the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that the variables are statistically significant.

The findings indicated that language and rhetoric significantly affect these perceptions, with biased reporting exacerbating existing biases and stereotypes. The study underscored how perspectives and bias could distort views of the conflict, potentially reinforcing negative perceptions of one side and obstructing a balanced understanding. To address these challenges, it is essential for foreign media outlets to focus on transparency, objectivity, and ethical reporting practices. By prioritizing these principles, media can mitigate bias and provide more accurate and balanced coverage of the SAF-RSF conflict in Khartoum.

This study noted that bias influences the perception of conflict between the SAF and the RSF in Khartoum, Sudan. Foreign media biases significantly influence conflict perception regarding the SAF and RSF. Biased reporting often manifests in negative framing, demonization, and selective emphasis on certain aspects of the conflict. Biased reporting not only misrepresents the realities of the conflict but also perpetuates stereotypes, undermines peace-building efforts, and exacerbates social divisions.

This study corroborated with the findings by Spinde (2021) that highlights that the way media presents events can greatly influence societal beliefs and perceptions. Media organizations often report news with inherent biases, which can manifest through selective language or omission of details. Additionally, individual biases in perception can be affected by a reader's personal background.

This study differs from other studies which focus on social media sentiments. The study by Valdez et al. (2020) focused on social media sentiments concerning US mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this study, social media news positively and negatively affected people during isolation. Some participants in the study felt that it helped them deal with the emotional effects of being socially isolated over a long period, while others thought that it had a deleterious impact on mental health. There was bias in the reports posted on social media. Thus, it differs from the current study's ultimate goal of determining the influence of bias in shaping the perception of the conflict between the SAF and the RSF in Khartoum, Sudan.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that foreign media significantly impacts how people perceive the conflict between the SAF and the RSF in Khartoum, Sudan. It was found that how foreign media portrays conflict can make it seem worse or better. One crucial thing is framing. The study found that how media outlets frame the conflict can make it seem more tense or reinforce existing power imbalances. It also showed that different armed groups might be talked about differently, which indicates that there are more significant political reasons behind how they're portrayed.

Another critical factor is the language used by foreign media. The study found that their words can change how people see the conflict. For example, using words like "brutality" and "human rights abuses" can make people think the RSF is terrible, while sometimes the SAF is shown more positively. This makes the conflict seem more superficial and can make people believe the wrong things. The study concluded that bias, or having unfair opinions, plays a significant role in how people see the conflict. Biased reporting can make one side look worse than it is which isn't fair. This can also make it harder to make peace.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the study's findings and incorporating insights from secondary data it is recommended that Media outlets should focus on promoting transparency and objectivity in their reporting processes. Additionally, fact-checking should be a priority to uphold the accuracy of information, while avoiding biased language that could reinforce stereotypes or distort perceptions. These measures, supported by secondary data and aligning with the study's findings, will enhance the reliability and objectivity of media coverage on conflicts.

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