

Coverage of Katrina in Local, Regional, National Newspapers

by Roxanne K. Dill and H. Denis Wu

Topics and frames, which focused on life, property and information needs, were similar at local and regional levels. National newspapers addressed broader reaching concerns.

On Aug. 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina thrashed the Gulf Coast as one of the deadliest hurricanes in U.S. history. Katrina resulted in thousands of deaths and \$75 billion in damages¹ producing memorable stories of heroic rescue and heartbreaking accounts of death, disease and distress. The media reported murders and rapes in crowded New Orleans shelters as desperate evacuees waited for help. When residents were finally brought to safety, investigators discovered that many reports included exaggerated rumors.² A bipartisan Congressional committee determined that erroneous reporting hampered relief efforts, influenced decisions on where to direct resources and increased the need for additional security.³

Many pointed to failed media coverage as a significant problem; however, different media seemed to have provided vastly different stories. Did local, regional and national newspapers frame events differently during the days immediately following the storm? What topics were presented at the different levels? These questions were the impetus behind this study. Research comparing national, regional and local coverage of a disaster is limited. Wenger and Friedman examined the treatment of disaster myths by local and national media following Hurricane Alicia.⁴ Others have studied media preferences, behaviors and frames in covering crises;⁵ however, no studies have compared topics, frames and sources selected by local, regional and national newspapers in covering a disaster.

Dill is an instructor in the Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University, and Wu is an associate professor in the College of Communication at Boston University.

This study examined front-page newspaper content during the two weeks following the storm to reveal whether topics, frames, sources and assignment of blame for damage and suffering varied. Our analyses also included interviews with management and reporters to determine the extent to which their experiences and insights were concurrent with the stories. Such an examination aimed at comprehensively uncovering how newspapers record a monumental event in relation to the direct impact on their readers.

Literature Review

The media are a crucial avenue through which crisis information is transmitted.⁶ When prearranged communication networks fail, officials are forced to turn to the media to coordinate their responses.⁷ The media are also a vital link between victims and the authorities who try to help them.⁸ Consequently, news reports may be the only credible information source for the general public during a disaster event.⁹ The media bring before the public those issues involving accountability for official response to the disaster, rebuilding of the devastated community and dialogue on preventing such disasters in the future.¹⁰ Wenger and Quarantelli state that disasters present a problem of adjustment for the media because news organizations are structured to cover routine events.¹¹ Waxman suggests there is actually a shortage of news during disasters; consequently, everything related to disaster makes its way into print, bypassing the usual gatekeepers without thorough processing.¹²

While community officials provide most of the news in a crisis, citizens often become sources. In newscast of Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta earthquake, the majority of "faces" belonged to average citizens.¹³ Salwen found that "unaffiliated individuals" were quoted most often during Hurricane Andrew, refuting the belief that government and industry receive the lion's share of coverage.¹⁴ Two potential problems may arise—the pressure to produce answers may lead public officials to speculate about causes or even minimize dangers to allay public fears. Additionally, the media add to difficulties in mitigation and response activities by presenting a distorted and inaccurate picture of those affected by the disaster and by overemphasizing the non-social and chaotic aspects of the situation.¹⁵

Past literature indicates that images of disaster are often inaccurate or exaggerated.¹⁶ Wenger observed that reports of looting are common during times of disaster even when police assert otherwise.¹⁷ Wenger and Friedman found that both local and national media accounts reinforced and perpetuated disaster myths in coverage following Hurricane Alicia.¹⁸ The media's promulgation of myths may result in misallocation of resources and demands made on emergency officials.¹⁹ However, Quarantelli found that most people affected by a disaster act responsibly and care for their neighbors.²⁰ They seldom engage in criminal behavior. Rather, the nearer the threat is perceived to be or the more there have been disruptions, the more persons will respond to meeting the needs of others,

often actively initiating search and rescue efforts.²¹ According to Wenger, crime rates usually drop during and after a disaster.²²

A news frame was defined as “a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is,” thus directing readers’ attention, influencing decision makers and setting debate on policy for crises.²³ The potential differences in frames used by local, regional and national media could affect society’s understanding of the disaster. Local newspapers were

found more likely than national newspapers to quote “unaffiliated” individuals.²⁴

The increased autonomy of field reporters during disasters may contribute to marked differences in directions in news content.²⁵ Local reporters are more directly affected by disasters and have direct knowledge of the most reliable sources for hard-to-find news. It is also reasonable to speculate that local media, which have been most heavily impacted by a disaster, will direct all their resources to covering the events that follow. Finally, Quarantelli argues that local mass media systems consider disasters in their own community as “their” disasters.²⁶ It is quite possible that local framing would be

considerably different from that of national counterparts whose editors and readers are not emotionally, financially and socially vested in the community affected by the disaster.

One of the most important influences on content of a particular medium is the content of other media. Through a process called intermedia agenda setting, elite media often set the news agenda for others. Danielian and Reese found a noted influence of *The New York Times* on other media and a general influence of print media on their broadcast counterparts.²⁷ Shoemaker and Reese suggest the further influence of individual media workers on each other, the influence of media routines and individual media organization goals on daily news content and the influence of groups from outside the media organization.²⁸ However, the existing literature does not delve into intermedia influence during disasters.

All newspapers turned to government officials as sources most often and next to evacuees or persons affected by the hurricane.

Research Questions

Based on the aforementioned literature, the present study focuses on the following research questions:

RQ1:

What news topics were the focus of local, regional and national newspapers during the two weeks following Hurricane Katrina?

RQ2:

Did local, regional and national newspapers frame events differently during the days immediately following the storm?

RQ3:

What types of sources were cited in the stories covered by different newspapers?

RQ4:

Who was most often assigned blame for the events following Katrina by local, regional and national newspapers?

RQ5:

What did the news people who covered Katrina say about their experience?

Method

Content analysis and in-depth interview were used in this study. Included in the content-analytical sample are the front pages of six newspapers that were chosen based on geographic considerations. Two are national newspapers, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and two are local newspapers, *The New Orleans Times-Picayune* and *Biloxi Sun Herald*. Both New Orleans and Biloxi were evacuated, but each city's newspaper continued publication online and later printed copies with the help of neighboring publishers. The two regional newspapers examined were *The Advocate* of Baton Rouge, La. and *The Clarion-Ledger* of Jackson, Miss. Baton Rouge and Jackson are state capitals and served as command centers for rescue and relief operations.

The sample period was two weeks, from Aug. 29, 2005, the day Katrina made landfall, until Sept. 11, 2005. A total of 263 front-page articles were examined. The study was limited to Page 1 articles because they are considered more important and also the quantity of these stories seems more manageable than that of all relevant stories. Coders recorded the components, including the date, placement, geographic focus, dateline of the article and size in paragraphs,

and whether the writer was a staff member, wire service or other. The coder read each article in its entirety and determined up to six major topics covered. The topics included: informational—where to find food, water, etc.—weather, flooding, evacuee distress, economic impact, property damage, rescue and recovery, governmental failure, crime, death and disease, evacuee diaspora, rebuilding and reconstruction, military and police activity, race relations and positive outcomes.

The coder selected the primary frame of the article. Often, the frame was obvious in overt information, such as the headline, subhead and lead paragraph. At other times the frame could be determined only after reading the entire story. In some articles, no frame was identifiable. A preliminary study of post-Katrina news articles revealed some common frames, which were included in the coding sheet: unimaginable destruction, evacuee distress, racial inequality, economic consequences, governmental failure, fear atmosphere, long rebuilding process and uncertain future of evacuees. The frame of “information is necessary for preparation and recovery” was added when it became apparent that a substantial coverage in the regional newspapers dealt with such information as statistics about the impending storm and available public services. Also included in the coding were sources: official, evacuee or person affected, expert, rescue worker, police/military spokesman, community/civic leader, media sources and rumor.

As delays in relief and rescue exacerbated evacuee distress—particularly in New Orleans—the subject of blame was frequently addressed. The coder checked all that applied in the category of blame, which included President George W. Bush, Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, FEMA, Homeland Security, non-profit organizations, the evacuees themselves, Hurricane Katrina, broken levees, bureaucracy, or federal, state or local governments. Finally, the valence of the story was determined—where it was positive, negative, mixed/neutral or undetermined.

The coding sheet was pilot-tested and adjusted with the initial findings. The first author was the primary coder; a second coder evaluated 11 percent of the articles. Using the Holsti method, overall the intercoder reliability was 80 percent. Reliability for sources was 89 percent; blame, 66 percent; topics, 79 percent; geographic focus, 86 percent; byline, 93 percent; types of authority, 74 percent; frame, 73 percent, and valence, 90 percent. Categories with lower intercoder reliability are those in which up to five answers were permitted, such as blame, topics and frame.

Also included in the research were telephone interviews with 16 reporters as well as newsroom managers of these six newspapers. The study aimed at gathering these veterans’ input so as to learn more about their task, the obstacle they faced and the lessons learned. Another reason for of these interviews was to determine newsroom management styles and other issues that might have contributed to decisions regarding news content. A larger number of managers and reporters who covered Katrina were tapped from each newspaper. The in-

interviewees, whose names and titles were in the next section, included managers and reporters from each of the six newspapers.

Findings

The stories about Katrina were prominent across the newspapers. The closer the newspaper was to the epicenter, the more contents were provided. The six newspapers placed the hurricane or its consequences as the lead story on nearly every front page examined. Only the death of Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist and the nomination of his successor, John Roberts, vied with Katrina for front-page status. Most stories—90 percent—were written by staff reporters. As would be expected, New Orleans was the most common geographic focus, representing 40 percent of all stories examined. Mississippi was the focus in 31 percent of the total articles from the six newspapers. Fifty-seven percent of the 125 articles with datelines featured New Orleans. Biloxi appeared second most often, but only in 4 percent of the articles.

Types of Sources

Of the 787 times in which a type of source was identified, government officials—elected or appointed—were cited in 29 percent of instances; evacuees or persons affected by the storm, 19 percent; business expert or spokesman and police/military spokesman, both 10 percent; media sources and rescue/relief worker, eight percent, respectively. Interestingly, in three percent of the instances, rumor served as a source of news—it was cited as a source more often in local newspapers (five percent) than regional or national counterparts.

All newspapers turned to government officials as sources most often and next to evacuees or persons affected by the hurricane. While local newspapers used both aforementioned sources, they also relied heavily on police/military sources and other media (both 12 percent). Of the three groups of newspapers, regional ones used government officials the most (32 percent). Regional newspapers also used sources from business experts and police/military spokespersons substantially (both 11 percent). Local and regional newspapers cited rescue workers more often than national newspapers; whereas, national newspapers used more academic sources.

Topics Presented

“Evacuee distress” was the most frequently occurring topic during the two weeks following Katrina (13 percent), followed by death/injury/illness, 12 percent; rescue/relief operations, 10 percent; criminal activity and property damage, both 10 percent; and government failure, 8 percent. [See Table 1] Occurring at 5 percent or less were economic topics, positively slanted articles, flooding, rebuilding and reconstruction, and military or police activity. Conflict among government officials and racial discrimination were topics in approximately 2 percent of articles.

When examined across the local, regional and national newspapers, the highlighted topics are slightly different. Death/injury was the most common topic locally and regionally. In local newspapers, rescue/relief and evacuee distress were the second most commonly covered topics (both 12 percent), followed by property damage (11 percent) and criminal activity (10 percent). Regionally, property damage (13 percent) was the second most common topic, followed by informational news (12 percent). National newspapers focused most often on evacuee distress (16 percent) and, second, criminal activity (12 percent) and government failure (11 percent).

Predominant Frames

In articles where a frame was present, government failure and the unimaginable destruction were most predominant at nearly 20 percent each. [See Table 2] Two other story frames focused on the situation of evacuees: uncertain future (9 percent) and distress (8 percent). Equally featured frames are related to long rebuilding process and unpredictable economic consequences of the region.

It is interesting that the local, regional and national newspapers framed Katrina rather differently. For the local and regional newspapers, the destruction frame was emphasized in their stories—21 percent and 26 percent, respectively. Whereas, the government failure frame was prominently used by national newspapers (28 percent). Even though the local and regional newspapers also reported with the government failure frame, they also resorted to other angles in looking at the storm. For example, the local newspapers tried to boost morale by bringing out the positive side (14 percent) of the aftermath. The regional newspapers, whose readers were not as affected as those of the local counterparts, devoted more space on the frames of reconstruction (13 percent) and recovery (10 percent). Likewise, the national newspapers reported the catastrophe with the frame of economic consequences (12 percent).

Attribution of Blame

Instances of blame were attributed in 461 cases. Hurricane Katrina was blamed in 29 percent of cases, followed by the federal government, 15 percent;

Table 1
Most Prominent Topics Presented

Topic	n	%
Evacuee distress	111	12.8
Death/injury/illness (or potential)	101	11.6
Rescue/relief operations	89	10.3
Criminal activity (or threat)	88	10.1
Property damage	84	9.7
Government failure	66	7.6
Informational	58	6.7
Economic	47	5.4
Articles with positive slant	42	4.8
Flooding	41	4.7
Rebuilding and reconstruction	33	3.8
Military/police activity	29	3.3
Other	23	2.7
Weather	22	2.5
Conflict among government officials	19	2.2
Race and/or discrimination based race	9	1.0
Diaspora of evacuees	5	.6
Total topics coded	867	100.0

broken levees, 12 percent; FEMA, 10 percent, and state government, 9 percent. Not all articles assigned blame; however, some contained as many as five sources to blame for the calamity and distress. The local newspapers appeared to place more blame on governments than did the national and regional counterparts. The broken levees were also another source of blame in local coverage (13 percent). The national coverage differed from local and regional counterparts in blaming federal government (17 percent) and FEMA (12 percent) more often. Although the numbers were not statistically significant, both President Bush and overall bureaucracy also were criticized more.

Table 2
Most Prominent Frames Presented

<i>Frame</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Government failure is the cause of evacuee distress	53	19.9
Hurricane results in unimaginable destruction	53	19.9
Future of evacuees is uncertain	25	9.4
Rebuilding/reconstruction to be a long process	22	8.3
Delays cause evacuee distress	21	7.9
Katrina has economic effect/to result in economic changes	20	7.5
Those affected by storm respond positively to circumstances	18	6.8
Information necessary for preparation and recovery	17	6.4
Evacuees create atmosphere of criminal activity and fear	13	4.9
Others give unselfishly to help those affected by storm	12	4.5
Racial inequality and prejudice results in evacuee distress	6	2.3
Other	6	2.3
Total articles with predominant frames	273	100.0

Interviews

One common thread ran throughout the responses of management and reporters at all six newspapers examined in this study: the coverage of Katrina was more physically, emotionally and logistically arduous than was any other assignment they had been given during their newspaper careers. Their input was put into the following three categories.

Lack of Reliable Information

Information was abundant, but reliable information was hard to find. "The usual structures of authority were there, so it was not difficult to get information, but it was difficult to get accurate information," said *Times-Picayune* Managing Editor Peter Kovacs.²⁹ He continued:

In many cases it's like the man on his roof in Chalmette. Is he telling a rumor, or is he a truth teller? We'd quote him by name, but the normal journalistic standard would be to call the sheriff. . . . But the sheriff was on his roof.³⁰

The Advocate of Baton Rouge also struggled to find accurate information. "We didn't print any of those wild stories about people lining up to rape people in the Dome and nurses forming circles around patients. We didn't do a lot of that rumor mongering. A lot of that was coming from the electronic folks who had a different news cycle," Managing Editor Carl Redman said.³¹

The Advocate news management also carefully considered the types of photos selected for Page 1 to avoid sensationalism. Photo Department Manager John Ballance explained that it is not the newspaper's policy to run the photo of a dead body.³²

With a lack of available authority sources, reporters did not follow more traditional methods. Kovacs said:

*I think you had to invent a model in which you quoted people saying what was going on. If the mayor and police chief say something is going on, that generally opens the door for you to believe it has really happened. I feel like I understand how the Salem witch hunt happened.*³³

Communication Problems

All reporters said downed cell phone towers created massive communication problems where text messaging was often the most reliable form of conversation. However, the lack of good communication produced creative reporting unhindered by the agendas of other media organizations. John DeSantis of *The New York Times* said most reporters, once inside New Orleans, did not have contact with usual outside media sources available through television, radio and other newspapers. He continued:

*It is an interesting vacuum that you tend to operate in without the benefit of knowing what the morning's newscasts were. What you were relying on was what you were hearing and feeling . . . and constructing a story from that. We didn't have a script, really.*³⁴

Robert Pierre of *The Washington Post* said their reporters used their own eyes and ears. "We were also just roving, just trying to figure out what was happening on the street."³⁵

DeSantis explained:

*Part of what we were doing was tracking down rumors. If there was anything relating to stuff that could end up in print, we really, really grilled people—more than you would ordinarily grill civilians. We heard the same rumors from place to place to place. It was almost like tracking down an urban legend on the Internet.*³⁶

Pierre and others faced the same problem. "There was such a lack of control of the situation," Pierre said.³⁷

The government did not have good information. The police chief did not have good information. All of these people were giving bad information. Everybody was giving bad information. I think that was one of the biggest problems everyone encountered. There were very few people who had good information."³⁸

Still, Pierre said, "It still was the obligation of those who reported what (New Orleans Mayor) Nagin or others said that wasn't true—to go back and check it. That's the job of the news organization."³⁹

Rumors from Biloxi were filtered through to the national media but not reported by *The Sun Herald*. In one instance, the newspaper's executives were anxious because national outlets had been reporting that 40 people had been killed in one Biloxi apartment complex alone, and their newspaper had not written about it.

"Well, there was only one way to check anything you wanted to find out," reporter Anita Lee said. "You had to go there. So, I got in my car and went. This was a rumor," she said. "It was reported over and over in the national news, but we never reported that because we knew it wasn't true."⁴⁰

Debra Skipper, *The Clarion-Ledger's* assistant managing editor, said rumors of looting also circulated along coastal Mississippi. One such case occurred in Bay St. Louis, along the Mississippi coast. When *Ledger* reporters arrived, they learned that rumors of looting at one Wal-Mart were not true. "In fact, the manager had basically opened the doors and said, 'Take what you need.'"⁴¹

Meeting Audience Needs

"Our main mission was to tell our readers and the people of New Orleans, most of whom weren't around here to know what was going on," said Kovacs of *The Times-Picayune*.⁴² To accommodate a scattered readership, the newspaper posted photos of flooded New Orleans neighborhoods on line. "The photos probably got more hits than anything else. It's because everyone looked at all the photos to look for something that they would recognize."

Calls from New Orleans-area residents stranded on rooftops were entered onto the newspaper's web log with the location of the call, giving readers an idea of the extent of the flooding.

For two weeks after the storm, *The Sun Herald* was distributed free of charge, often trucked from Georgia, where it was being printed, to Biloxi.

"We sent reporters out with stacks of newspapers and handed them out," said Blake Kaplan, assistant city editor. "Our business is selling newspapers, but this was an extraordinary circumstance which called for extraordinary decision making." At one point, *The Sun Herald* had its largest press run in its history—as many as 80,000 copies—nearly double its daily pre-Katrina printing. "I think it has strengthened our relationship with the community," Kaplan said.⁴³

Regional newspapers felt the increased burden of providing information. Linda Lightfoot, managing editor of *The Advocate*, said.

From the outset we knew that we had an all-encompassing story because we are the seat of government where the information was flowing. We also had so many of the evacuees. While we always covered the important events in New Orleans, we had to do much more coverage of New Orleans because many more of our readers now were from there.⁴⁴

At one point, *The Advocate's* circulation was up by an average of 10,000 to 12,000 copies per day, an increase of about 13 percent, City Editor Carl Redman explained.⁴⁵ *The Advocate's* advertising space also increased as national, regional and local advertisers such as insurance companies bought space to communicate with their displaced customers.

National newspapers were twice as likely as local and regional newspapers to present topics that dealt with the broader impact of Katrina. Pierre said *Post* editors considered the larger questions, those dealing with the hurricane's effect on the country: "What would it look like if we lost an American city? What was the government response? Was there a sufficient government response?" He and other reporters chose to tell the human story in a number of ways: "What did the exodus from a city look like? How was this affecting other cities across the region? How did it affect our city (Washington, D.C.)?"⁴⁶

Discussion

This study set out to ask whether newspapers reported differently during the two weeks after the storm. The concept of intermedia agenda setting seems challenged by the result of this study, which did not appear to exert its usual influence on Katrina coverage. Local and regional newspapers did not take their cues from the elite media and instead anticipated the needs of their audiences. Local newspapers dealt with issues most important to their readers—death, injury or illness and property damage. Most important of all, local newspapers presented information such as where to find help and loved ones, what businesses were open and how to receive disaster aid. Local reporters and management said they saw their relationship with readers change to one of increased dependence.

Regionally, rebuilding/reconstruction and economic factors were prominent topics. Because they were close to but not seriously affected by the storm, regional newspapers were in a better position than were local newspapers to focus on rebuilding and reconstruction. The situation after Katrina also required that regional newspapers assume the burden of supplying accurate, constant information for evacuees. Being located in their state's capitals provided these regional newspapers with ready access to officials who had the most up-to-date information on relief and recovery. National newspapers differed markedly from local and regional newspapers. Evacuee distress was most frequently discussed followed by criminal activity and government failure. Death, injury and illness followed government failure and criminal activity as national topics

of importance. Economic considerations and conflict among officials were also important nationally where readers would have had the advantage of distance from the storm's effects.

This study also sought to examine whether frames defining Katrina were different at each level. It found that the closer the newspaper was to devastating effects of Katrina, the more likely it would be to frame around life, limb and property. Local and regional newspapers most often framed stories in light of the unimaginable disaster. While newspapers at these two levels did not present the frame of government failure as often as did the national counterparts, articles discussing evacuee distress and property damage often carried the tenor of having been caused by weaknesses in government response. Regional newspapers were more than twice as likely as local newspapers and three times more likely than national newspapers to present the frame of a long rebuilding and recovery. The necessity of information was also a predominant regional frame; staffers interviewed experienced hefty increases in readership and a need for information by evacuees and rescue workers who now lived in their circulation area.

This study also looked at source selection, and citizen voices turned out to be the most predominant source choice at all levels. Newspapers consulted various government authorities in 38 percent of cases. The remaining 62 percent included persons affected by the storm, academic and business experts, rescue and relief workers, other media outlets, community leaders and even rumors. Regional newspapers cited government officials in one-third of cases; local newspapers cited officials in 28 percent of cases. Interestingly, national newspapers got their information from government sources less often than did all others, in only one-fourth of the cases. At all three levels, state officials provided information more often than did their local and federal counterparts. Katrina shifted the usual news source structure by presenting a circumstance where government authorities were only a part of the mass of people who had become instant experts through personal experience.

In contrast to literature on sourcing, evacuees were the second most common sources at all three levels and the most frequently cited citizen sources. Several factors could explain this phenomenon. First, reporters said one of their greatest challenges was finding accurate information. Communication was difficult at best and officials after did not have accurate information. Evacuees and those affected by the storm were readily available sources of information and, sadly, easy to locate. Finally, "rumor" personified another source cited at all levels, particularly locally.

Nearly one week after Katrina made landfall, fingers began to point. Blame was assigned to everyone from God to the Salvation Army to bureaucracy. The closer the newspaper was to the concentrated pockets of suffering, the more Katrina and broken levees were blamed for the results. Articles in newspapers at all three levels also blamed the federal government second most often, with national newspapers more likely than others to blame Washington, D.C. Because

of their focus on Washington, articles in national newspapers blamed FEMA, the President and bureaucracy more often than did regional and local newspapers. At the same time, local and regional newspaper articles were more likely to place blame on their own local and state governments.

The interviews shed some light on how journalists were involved in the newsgathering process during a large-scale disaster. Unfortunately, journalists covering Katrina learned afterward they were as susceptible to believing disaster myths as was anyone else. In the future, this knowledge could prevent the coverage of inaccurate information that might delay rescue efforts and contribute to further distress. Most important, regardless of the perceived or anticipated content of other media outlets, newspaper journalists are invariably wedded to their audiences, especially when the need for information is greatest. Katrina revealed that the needs of their readers were pre-eminent in the selection of news topics by reporters and editors. The closer the newspaper was to the epicenter of destruction, the more it assumed the role of spokesperson for the voiceless thousands who had no public arena in which to be heard.

This study is limited in its selection of medium; the inclusion of broadcast and Internet media would provide a more comprehensive picture of post-Katrina coverage and intermedia agenda setting. Also, because of time restraints, this study only looked at Page 1 of all six newspapers. An investigation of the newspapers in their entirety would yield much richer findings. A study of a broader time frame would indicate whether and/or when intermedia agenda setting began among newspapers covering Katrina. Finally, as with most content-analytical studies, a major limitation lies in the coding that contributed to lower intercoder reliability in several items.

Notes

1. Russel Kelson, "Hurricane Katrina Statistics," Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management, Crisis and Emergency Management Newsletter Website, The George Washington University, October 2005. <<http://www.seas.gwu.edu/emse232/october200512.html>> (2 August 2006).

2. Brian Thevenot and Gordon Russell, "Rumors of Death Greatly Exaggerated: Widely Reported Attacks False or Unsubstantiated." *The Times-Picayune*, 26 September 2005 <[http://www.nola.com/newslogs/tporleans/index.ssf?/mtlogs/nola_tporleans/archives/2005_\(Weblog_of_the_Times_Picayune\)09_26.html#082732](http://www.nola.com/newslogs/tporleans/index.ssf?/mtlogs/nola_tporleans/archives/2005_(Weblog_of_the_Times_Picayune)09_26.html#082732)> (10 August 2006).

3. U.S. House of Representatives, "A Failure of Initiative: Final Report of the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina, 15 February 2006 <<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>> (5 May 2006).

4. Dennis Wenger and Barbara Friedman, "Local and National Media Coverage of Disasters: A Content Analysis of the Print Media's Treatment of Disaster Myths," Preliminary Paper No. 99, Newark, Del., The Disaster Research Center (1986).

5. Victor Argothy, "Framing Volunteerism in a Consensus Crisis: Mass Media Coverage of Volunteers in the 9/11 Response," Preliminary Paper #335, University of Delaware Disaster Research Center, 2003; Chris Piotrowski and Terry R. Armstrong, "Mass Media Preferences in Disaster: A Study of Hurricane Danny," *Social Behavior and Personality* 26, no. 4 (1998): 341-346; E.L. Quarantelli, "The Mass Media in Disasters in the United States," The University of Delaware Disaster Research Center, Preliminary Paper No. 15, 1990; and Dennis Wenger and E.L. Quarantelli, "Local Mass Media Operations, Problems and Products in Disasters," Report Series No. 19, Disaster Research

Center, University of Delaware. Final report provided to the National Science Foundation entitled, "Mass Media Systems and Community Hazards and Disasters, 1989.

6. Chris Piotrowski and Terry R. Armstrong, "Mass Media Preferences in Disaster," 343.

7. Dennis Wenger, "Mass Media and Disasters," Preliminary Paper No. 98, Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware (1985): 19.

8. Joseph Scanlon, "The Search for Non-Existent Facts in the Reporting of Disasters," *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 53, no. 2 (1998): 45-53.

9. Rahul Sood, Geoffrey Stockdale, and Everett M. Rogers, "How the News Media Operate in Natural Disasters," *Journal of Communication* 37, no. 3 (1987): 27-41.

10. Osamu Hiroi, Shunji Mikami and Kakuko Miyata, "A Study of Mass Media Reporting in Emergencies," *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 3, no. 1 (1985): 21-49.

11. Wenger and Quarantelli, "Local Mass Media Operations," 5.

12. Jerry J. Waxman, "Local Broadcast Gatekeeping During Natural Disasters," *Journalism Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (1973): 751-758.

13. Lynne Masel Walters and Susanna Hornig, "Faces in the News: Network Television News Coverage of Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta Earthquake," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 36, no. 2 (1993): 227. Jerry J. Waxman, "Local Broadcast Gatekeeping during Natural Disasters."

14. Michael B. Salwen, "News of Hurricane Andrew: The agenda of sources and the sources' agendas," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (1995): 835.

15. Doris A. Graber, *Mass Media & American Politics* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002).

16. E.L. Quarantelli and Russell R. Dynes, "Property norms and looting: Their patterns in community crises," *Phylon* 31, no. 2 (1970): 168-182.

17. Wenger, "Mass Media and Disasters."

18. Wenger and Friedman, "Local and National Media Coverage of Disaster: A Content Analysis of the Print Media's Treatment of Disaster Myths," 23.

19. Wenger, "Mass Media and Disasters."

20. E.L. Quarantelli, "Lessons from research: Findings of mass communication system behavior in the pre, trans, and postimpact periods of disasters," Preliminary Paper No. 160 (University of Delaware Disaster Research Center, 1991). Written version of a more abbreviated oral presentation made at the seminar Crisis in the Media, Emergency Planning College, York, England, Jan. 30, 1991.

21. E.L. Quarantelli, "The social science study of disasters and mass communications," Preliminary Paper No. 116 (University of Delaware Disaster Research Center, 1987).

22. Wenger, "Mass Media and Disasters."

23. Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, Jr., *Communication Theories* (Boston: Longman, 2001): 277. Thomas A. Birkland, "Natural disasters as focusing events: Policy communities and political response." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 14, no. 2 (1986): 221-243.

24. Jane D. Brown, Carl R. Bybee, Stanley T. Wearden and Dulcie Murdock Straughan, "Invisible power: Newspaper news sources and the limits of diversity," *Journalism Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (1987): 45-54.

25. Wenger and Quarantelli, "Local Mass Media Operations: Problems and Products in Disasters."

26. Quarantelli, "The Mass Media in Disasters in the United States," 2.

27. Stephen D. Reese and Lucig H. Danielian, "Intermedia Influence and the Drug Issue: Converging on Cocaine," in *Communication Campaigns about Drugs: Government, Media, and the Public*, ed. Pamela J. Shoemaker, (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1989), 29-45.

28. Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content* (New York: Longman, 1991).

29. Peter Kovacs, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Aug. 1, 2006.

30. Kovacs, interview.

31. Carl Redman, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Aug. 22, 2006.
 32. John Ballance, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Sept. 1, 2006.
 33. Kovacs, interview.
 34. John DeSantis, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Sept. 13, 2006.
 35. Robert Pierre, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Aug. 13, 2006.
 36. DeSantis, interview.
 37. Pierre, interview.
 38. Pierre, interview.
 39. Pierre, interview.
 40. Anita Lee, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Sept. 6, 2006.
 41. Debra Skipper, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Sept. 15, 2006.
 42. Kovacs, interview.
 43. Blake Kaplan, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Sept. 8, 2006.
 44. Linda Lightfoot, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Aug. 8, 2006.
 45. Carl Redman, telephone interview by Roxanne Dill, Baton Rouge, La., Aug. 22, 2006.
 46. Pierre, interview.
-

Copyright of Newspaper Research Journal is the property of Newspaper Research Journal and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.