“COME HELL OR HIGH WATER”: A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF LOCAL NEWSPAPER

COVERAGE OF HURRICANE KATRINA

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

“COME HELL OR HIGH WATER”: A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF LOCAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF HURRICANE KATRINA

presented by Heidi Czlapinski,

a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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<th>Associate Professor Brian Houston</th>
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To my family, friends, colleagues, and teachers,

I would not have made it this far without your support and dedication.

Thank you!
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Abstract

Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005 in what would become one of the most deadly and destructive natural disasters in United States history. Throughout the storm and in the immediate aftermath, the New Orleans Times-Picayune continued to report through the use of online publications until physical printing could resume. A content analysis was conducted to examine the coverage of community resilience in the news articles published in the first six months after Hurricane Katrina. Results indicate that the domains of community resilience were part of local newspaper coverage of Hurricane Katrina. Results also show the significance of political leaders and government response in a post-disaster environment.

Keywords: Hurricane Katrina, Resilience, Disaster news coverage, Disaster politics
“Come Hell or High Water”: A Framing Analysis of Local Newspaper Coverage of Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina, in conjunction with major flooding caused by the failure of levees in New Orleans, Louisiana, destroyed large portions of the U.S. Gulf Coast when the storm made landfall on August 29, 2005. For many of the residents who were impacted, the days, weeks, and months following the event were challenging and uncertain. The media has an important role in the dissemination of information in the aftermath of a disaster and Hurricane Katrina was no exception (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007). In the case of Hurricane Katrina, as facts and stories emerged, the way the storm was portrayed in the media affected the way the situation was discussed not only by politicians, but also by national news sources. Framing a story in a newspaper article allows for the main message of the article to become salient in the minds of the readers (Entman, 1993). Through the use of frames, the presence or absence of specific themes can be examine and explored.

Community resilience is the idea that a community can “bounce forward” or “bounce back” from a disaster (Manyena, O’Brein, O’Keefe, & Rose, 2011; Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008). Resilience is critical in order for a community to be able to come together to overcome challenges and withstand the effects of a disaster or trauma (Landau, 2007). While resilience is often discussed in post-disaster situations, it has not been frequently examined in relation to news coverage of disasters.
Newspaper coverage of natural disasters has been widely studied, particularly at a national level of publication (Houston, Pfefferbaum, & Rosenholtz, 2012) or through comparison of national and local level newspapers (Dill & Wu, 2009; Miles & Morse, 2007). However, one component of analysis that is missing from the literature is an in-depth examination of local media coverage of a disaster. This study is a content analysis of one of the largest disasters to affect the United States in recent history and is intended to provide a glimpse into the portrayal of a catastrophic natural disaster in newspapers at a local level. This study also examines media coverage of community resilience, a topic not previously studied in newspaper coverage of Hurricane Katrina.

**Literature Review**

In order to understand how this study fits into the disaster news body of research, it is necessary to examine previous research on similar topics. First, community resilience and its importance in a post-disaster community will be discussed. Second, framing theory will be explored. Finally, frames that have been used in previous disaster news coverage, as well as newspaper coverage specifically related to Hurricane Katrina, will be examined.

**Community Resilience**

Resilience is a concept that has many definitions and applications depending upon the purpose of its use. Community resilience can be defined as, “the community’s inherent capacity, hope, and faith to withstand major trauma, overcome adversity, and
to prevail, with increased resources, competence, and connectedness” (Landau, 2007, p. 352). Essentially, resilience can be seen as “bouncing back” from a disaster or “bouncing forward” to a new normal and way of life (Manyena et al., 2011; Norris et al., 2008). Ways to measure resilience and the framework of resilience itself are widely contested with some scholars suggesting that resilience, particularly social resilience, cannot be easily measured (Lorenz, 2013). A few of the ways proposed to examine resilience include: a pentagon of types of capital (Gunawardhana, Budge, & Abbeyrathna, 2013), the three capacities of social systems (Lorenz, 2013), three key processes: belief systems, organizational patterns, and communication (Walsh, 2003), or through the presence of four domains of community resilience (Norris et al., 2008).

For this study, the four domains of community resilience, as suggested by Norris and colleagues’ (2008) model will be used to examine how community resilience is discussed in local newspaper coverage of Hurricane Katrina. The four domains of community resilience according to Norris and colleagues (2008) are: economic development, social capital, communication and information, and community competence. Many of the domains have been shown to be crucial to community resilience in other studies and each domain will be discussed below.

**Economic Development.** Economic development encompasses a wide variety of components such as the need for an increase in jobs and a boost in the economy after a disaster, as well as the availability of physical resources (Norris et al., 2008). Another way economic development also shows is in the differences between survivors in different socioeconomic statuses and the equality of threat of damage between
statuses, in addition to the equality of resource distribution after the disaster (Norris et al., 2008). Healthy economic and financial institutions, in collaboration with political and social entities, are all necessary for a community to be resilient (Boettke et al., 2007). Economic diversity, including the availability of a wide variety of different jobs and careers in a community, was also found to aid in recovery and resilience post-disaster (Xiao & Drucker, 2013).

**Social Capital.** Social capital is one of the most common and important components of community resilience across the resilience literature. Norris and colleagues (2008) suggest that social capital is made up of many components including social support. Social capital is also a part of model of resilience suggested by Gunawardhana, Budge, and Abeyrathna (2013). Having high social support has been found to be associated with increased resilience in individuals after natural disasters (Harville, et al., 2010). Of the eleven resilience concepts found in a study of a community devastated by a disaster, the most common and important concepts were social networks and social support (Buikstra, et al. 2010). Social support is crucial for all affected by a disaster as suggested by previous research, however, typically women have higher social support than men (Li, Xu, He, & Wu, 2012). In addition to social capital and social support being critical for community resilience, communication is also vital.

**Information and Communication.** Norris and colleagues (2008) break down the information and communication domain of community resilience into four specific attributes. One of the attributes of communication that can be used to promote
resilience are narratives or shared stories in order to better understand what happened and to allow the creation of shared meaning (Walsh, 2007). The creation of shared stories has been shown to have a healing effect on those who tell and listen to them and are especially important in family settings (Norman, 2000; Saltzman, Pynoos, Lester, Layne, & Bearslee, 2013). Through community media, local organizations, interpersonal relationships, a sense of belonging to a community, or a combination, each of these elements plays a role in the building of communication and story telling in a community (Ball-Rokeach, Kim, & Matei, 2001; Kim & Kang, 2010). In addition to the importance of narratives, communication in general is proposed to be a central component of community resilience, and a model of communication in community resilience has been proposed for future research (Houston, Spialek, Cox, Greenwood, & First, 2015).

**Community Competence.** Community competence is also an important aspect of community resilience, as communities need to have the capacity to come together to trust and rely on each other in order to solve their problems collectively (Norris, Sherrieb, & Pfefferbaum, 2011). Community action and creativity for problem solving in social movements have been found to be important in communities facing disasters in order to provide additional information and support to those affected (Luft, 2009). Another attribute of community competence that is important, but is rarely studied, is the need for political partnerships. However, Boettke and colleagues (2007) found that disasters might foster political corruption, which in turn may harm the economy in the community as well as hamper disaster relief efforts.
Framing Theory

The way media frame stories of disasters is important to understand as this framing may influence not only what people know about a disaster, but how they behave relative to a disaster (Garfield, 2007; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Entman (1993) suggests that to create a frame means “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p. 52). Essentially this means that frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies for whatever the topic is that is being framed (Entman, 1993, p. 52). As humans, we often want a clear explanation of what has happened and what an event means; therefore it is understandable why frames are employed as a way of describing situations in order to better understand issues (Ryan & Hawdon, 2008).

Frames are typically not static and may change over time as the issue or story changes; additionally, frame changes can be used by journalists as a tactic to keep the story alive and in the press (Chyi & McCombs, 2004). Frames often begin simple and focus on the basic information about what happened. Over time, frames may become more complicated and switch from presenting basic information to focusing on more complex social aspects of a story (Li, 2007). The main function of media in a crisis situation is to frame information in an objective and unbiased manner that is clear, concise, and useful (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007).
The media often utilize frames to encourage the audience to understand a story through a specific lens (Dill & Wu, 2009). The media may be a stakeholder in a situation and have a strong voice that can influence perceptions of both the disaster and those who were affected by it (Koven, 2010). Media coverage of a disaster may influence not only views of a disaster but also impact who receives disaster aid or affect what type of help is provided (Eisensee & Stromberg, 2007). Scheufele (1999) suggests that there are two types of frames: media frames and individual frames. Media frames focus more on specific events and ways to interpret and understand the events where as individual frames are used to help individuals understand the information and concepts surrounding an issue or event (Scheufele, 1999).

One of the differences in the coverage of Hurricane Katrina versus other disasters was that many of the journalists covering the events were also living through the disaster themselves as many lost homes and possessions during the storm and its aftermath (Usher, 2009). This situation led to journalists both reporting on the story and also acting as advocates for those affected, which made their jobs as journalists more difficult in terms of remaining objective (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007; Usher, 2009). As time progressed after Hurricane Katrina, the coverage and framing of the stories changed with certain themes being more prominent at different times (Barnes et al., 2008).
Newspaper Coverage and Disaster Frames

Past research has examined the use and purpose of frames in many contexts, including coverage of natural disasters and crises. When studying frames used in coverage of natural disasters, often a difference of frames exists between national and local level newspapers (Borah, 2009). A possible reason for the differences between local and national news frames may be related to the difference between views of insiders versus outsiders of a particular situation (Pyles & Harding, 2011). One example of this can be found in a study that compared main frames of stories both at a national and a local level in newspapers and television following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Miles & Morse (2007) found that across the national and local levels of mass media, built capital and social capital were the two most covered frames. As time passed, these main frames of built and social capital increased in local newspapers and decreased at a national level (Miles & Morse, 2007). Human capital was also examined as a main frame; however, the media covered it for the same amount at both the local and national levels (Miles & Morse, 2007). Another analysis found that in disaster related stories over the span of a decade, the most common frames following a disaster were environmentally related with human interest frames being the second most common (Houston, Pfefferbaum, & Rosenholtz, 2012). This study conversely found that as time progressed after a disaster, the frames switched to human interest as the most commonly found frame and environmental frames became second (Houston, Pfefferbaum, & Rosenholtz, 2012).
Sources of information utilized in newspapers are a crucial part of disaster stories. In the two weeks after Hurricane Katrina, government officials were the sources most often quoted in stories, while those who were directly affected by Katrina were second (Dill & Wu, 2009). Government failure and storm destruction were the most common frames at the national level, with destruction being the most common frame at the local level (Dill & Wu, 2009).

Tone of stories also may vary between the local and national level. In general, local newspaper articles presented more positive frames than national newspapers did (Dill & Wu, 2009). However, disaster articles related to the government have been found to have a negative tone while those discussing accountability of individuals had a more positive tone (Barnes et al., 2008). Unfortunately, portrayal of disaster victims was often not positive. Instead of focusing on the survival and perseverance of individuals, many survivors were framed based on their race and may have been depicted as criminals for acts that were not verified such as murder, rape, looting, and shooting at police officers, especially while they were seeking refuge at the Superdome and Convention Center (Garfield, 2007).

Another aspect of disaster news coverage that can be examined are the pictures presented with news articles. Borah (2009) found that newspapers vary in the number of images printed. For example, the Washington Post printed more pictures after Hurricane Katrina than the New York Times (Borah, 2009). Images were also found to switch over time from a larger focus on racial inequality and issues with the government, to images of hope and new life that comes with rebuilding and recovery.
Crisis cartoons may also be used in order to frame and define a crisis. Cartoons have the ability to combine words and drawings in a way that can combine emotion, political opinion, and critique into one easy to digest medium (Kelley-Romano & Westgate, 2007).

While it is clear that a number of studies have examined news coverage after Hurricane Katrina focusing on topics such as racism (Dahmen & Miller, 2012), sexism (Calloway, 2010), mental health resources (Bava, Coffey, Weingarten, & Becker, 2010), and women’s voices in newspaper coverage (Calloway, 2010), there are still a number of avenues that need to be explored. One study that is especially interesting focused on newspaper coverage of Hurricane Katrina at both a national and local level. This study found that at a local level, disaster response was the main focus, while at the national level; recovery was the main focus (Barnes et al., 2008).

Previous framing studies are important to gaining a broader understanding of the structure of disaster news stories. However, what is missing and needed is a framing study that offers an in-depth look at local media coverage of disasters. Local coverage has been shown to be different than national coverage and might be a place where deeper exploration of the disaster occurs (Houston, Pfefferbaum, & Rosenholtz, 2012).

The current study examines Hurricane Katrina coverage by the New Orleans Times-Picayune newspaper in the six months after the hurricane made landfall. Hurricane Katrina is the focus of this study due to not only the destruction caused but also the catastrophic death toll as a result of the storm and the flooding caused by the failure of the levees (Seed et al., 2008). Hurricane Katrina had significant impact on the way
disasters are responded to, communicated about, and prepared for (Moynihan, 2009).

Additionally, the current study will focus on whether or not news articles about Hurricane Katrina focused on community resilience. Therefore a single research question guides this project:

**RQ 1**: How is community resilience discussed in the first six months of local Hurricane Katrina newspaper coverage?

**Method**

In order to determine how the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* newspaper discussed community resilience in the six months following Hurricane Katrina, a content analysis was conducted. In order to be included in the analysis, New Orleans *Times-Picayune* articles had to be published on or between August 29, 2005 (the date of Hurricane Katrina landfall) and February 28, 2006. Two months (August 29, 2005-September 30, 2005) of newspaper articles were downloaded from the online New Orleans *Times-Picayune* archive of Hurricane Katrina coverage. Four additional months (October 1, 2005-February 28, 2006) of articles were obtained through microfilm copies of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* daily newspapers. All microfilm articles about Hurricane Katrina during this period were read, scanned, and saved. This study only included news articles. Articles were eliminated from analysis if they were published twice or were: letters, timelines only (no article), opinion pieces, schools re-opening notices only (no article), fewer than five sentences long, scripts of speeches, sports
stories that briefly mentioned but did not focus on Hurricane Katrina, or any charts, graphs, or stand-alone statistics that did not accompany an article.

After all articles written about Hurricane Katrina during this time period were collected, they were sorted chronologically. For each week included in the study time span, two articles were randomly chosen and analyzed to determine if they mentioned or discussed community resilience. More specifically, each day of a week was assigned a number, one through seven, and a random number generator was used to determine which day or days would be sampled from each week. If the random number generator produced the same number twice for a week, two articles were selected from the same day. Then, the day an article was to be chosen from was selected via random number generator, the longest article of that day was added to the sample for analysis. The end sample consisted of 62 articles, 2 from each week as well as 10 additional articles that were randomly selected from the entire census and used initially as practice resilience coding before being re-read and coded as part of the official sample. All of the articles chosen were then read for the presence of community resilience themes and were then analyzed using Norris and colleagues’ (2008) model of community resilience. Of the 62 articles read, 16 did not touch upon any subject matter related to community resilience.

**Analysis**

To begin the content analysis, all newspaper articles for the sample were first read through in their entirety and given a code number. The domains and attributes of community resilience according to Norris et al. (2008) were marked in the
sample when they appeared and were then extracted so that they could be categorized with other examples of the same domain or attribute. The examples of domains were initially cut out of the articles and glued to a piece of paper containing other examples of the domain and the article’s code number. Due to the tedious nature of this process, shortly into the process the domains were labeled instead in the context of the article with an abbreviation for the domain next to the section that contained the reference. Many newspaper article sections were labeled as multiple community resilience domains on the first read through, but on the second read through were moved to one domain if it appeared to be dominant based on the definitions of each domain provided by Norris and colleagues (2008). After all articles were read twice, each of the domains were divided into their specific attributes so that examples of how news articles discussed each of the community resilience domains and attributes could be determined. This was accomplished by looking at each example from the domain that was previously marked and deciding which attribute it belonged to by looking at each article a third time while typing out specific examples to be used in this study. Common themes were recognized when all of the instances of a domain and its’ attributes were examined at the same time. The examples of each of the attributes selected for the results section were chosen because they exemplified the definitions of each attribute, as well as because they best summarized the other articles addressing the attribute. For example, if there were three articles about housing in an attribute and four articles about resources, then one article about housing and one about resources was chosen and described in the results section to exemplify these topics as they were discussed within the
attribute. Topics commonly discussed in news articles by journalists throughout domains were noted and key political figures who were often cited or talked about in news articles were also noted.

**Results**

Six months of Hurricane Katrina newspaper articles from the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* were reviewed and analyzed thematically. The analysis was informed and guided by Norris and colleagues’ (2008) model of community resilience. Many of the domains and attributes of resilience, as described by Norris et al. (2008), appeared throughout news coverage. The way journalists discussed these domains of resilience and specific examples from news stories are described in this section. See Table 1 for common frames.

**Economic Development**

Economic development, “encompasses those aspects of a community that establish not only the capacity of the business and industry sector but also the capacities of all the entities that depend on them and on which they depend” (Sherrieb, Norris, & Galea, 2010, p. 229). This means that in order for a community to be resilient following a disaster, businesses need to reopen and the economy needs to be restarted. Many times when economic development was discussed in news articles in this study, the news articles also addressed other community resilience domains and attributes such as community competence or social capital. In order to understand the
prominence of economic development throughout the sample, examples of each of the three attributes and general themes are discussed below.

**Fairness of risk and vulnerability to hazard.** Fairness of risk and vulnerability to hazard are described by Norris et al. (2008) as the inequality that may exist in a community when aid or resources do not match need. This attribute also addresses whether some residents may be at higher risk of hazard than others due to living in areas that are more likely to experience natural disasters. An example of this would be individuals who live in low lying areas or those who may not have access to the resources needed to evacuate. Journalists writing for the *Times-Picayune* at times separated fairness of risk and vulnerability to hazard so that they only covered one or the other in a news article. News articles often focused on particular topics such as the vulnerability of specific communities and houses, government policies to reduce a hazard unique to a specific area, or specific ways to reduce risk and hazard in individual news articles instead of mixing multiple topics in an article. One example of how a news article focused specifically on the aspect of risk is illustrated in an article about the creation of a policy in which “recommendations are aimed at protecting costal communities...from future catastrophic hurricanes and also restoring the fragile lace of wetlands that are the base of the state’s commercial fishery and also provide some hurricane protection” (Schleifstein, 2006, para. 2). This story focused on the natural vulnerability to hazard that the community faced, but it did not focus on fairness of risk.

In news articles where journalists discussed fairness of risk and vulnerability to hazard at the same time, the articles were most often written about either the decision
making process of homeowners regarding their future and the future of their homes and communities, or the rebuilding of neighborhoods as a whole in terms of risk of rebuilding and vulnerability to future hazards, both man-made and environmental. One way that journalists discussed the influence of funding and finances on the decision of homeowners to rebuild or to move away from New Orleans was through discussing what FEMA was doing for those affected. An example of this was a news article that focused on FEMA’s decision wherein “regardless of the precise level of damage (all homes) would be subject to the cost-benefit analysis (and) a FEMA determination of whether the structure is substantially damaged could play a key role in whether homeowners decide to repair to take a government buyout” (Russell & Maggi, 2006, para. 12). This example shows the focus of journalists writing for the Times-Picayune on both FEMA regulations as well as the fairness of who would be affected by regulations.

Another topic that was often discussed by journalists after Hurricane Katrina was the fairness of treatment between socioeconomic groups and how status affected which neighborhoods were rebuilt and received support. Community stakeholders during recovery were often presented as having a desire to improve the communities that were present before the storm. Canizaro, a local developer, was quoted when speaking directly to this topic:

“We want to make sure that we don’t create slums,” Canizaro said. “So at that point, we need to take a hard look and be aggressive about cleaning up the community so it is safe and good for everybody.” In some cases, he said that probably will mean that some neighborhoods are bulldozed
and the space converted into parks and other flood-protection structures, as ULI has recommended. (Meitrodt & Donze, 2005, para. 24-25)

This news article contributes to the discussion about the attempts to be fair in how recovery was handled, but also recognizes that there will be changes made in communities that may not be desirable to all those affected by the disaster.

**Level and diversity of economic resources.** Sherrieb, Norris, and Galea (2010), define level and diversity of economic resources as “the economic wealth that a country or region has available for the welfare of its citizens” (p. 229). News articles that discussed the level and diversity of available economic resources often focused on if the aid was available from the government or non-profit organizations, as well as if the resources were available at the individual, community, or state level. For example, news articles focused on economic resources available from the government for the community or on aid from non-profit organizations for individuals, but did not focus on both in the same article. Most commonly, journalists wrote about individual survivors or a family. One example of how a news article discussed the many economic resources available to a family is the story of the Davis family who were able to get “a room at the Holiday Inn Express on Bell Street downtown and a pack of donated clothes and linens from the Reliant Center,” as well as “a housing voucher... a used SUV and in a little more a month (after Hurricane Katrina) found a two- bedroom place... which FEMA will subsidize fully for one year” (Krupa, 2005, para. 42). While this news article focused on the actual resources, other journalists discussed the programs created by the
government in order to provide a wide variety of economic resources to those in need.

One example of this is a news article that discussed the way Ann Wiliamson, the Department of Social Services Secretary, talked about a program that was proposed to assist those who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. In the news article, Wiliamson is quoted as saying that the program would be “a cost-efficient means of coordinating the wide-range of services from federal, state, local private and non-profit agencies and organizations” (Anderson, 2005, para. 6). If the program were to be approved then “about $4,100 of the per-family allotment will include job training and job placement in an effort to bring citizens dispersed to other states back home, and to help stimulate the state’s economy,” (Anderson, 2005, para. 11) which would mean economic assistance at both the community and state level.

In addition to articles about the resources themselves, journalists also emphasized the importance of using resources wisely so as to prepare communities for the future. An example of this can be seen in a news article that featured a quotation from Rafael Goyeneche, president of the Metropolitan Crime Commission, who stated: “Our recovery depends on every dollar coming into this area to be used effectively and efficiently to rebuild our state and city. I can’t emphasize enough how precarious our position is” (Russell, 2005, para. 8). Through the use of this quotation in a news article, the journalist emphasized that using the resources wisely was important so that the resources would be available to those who were affected by the disaster.

**Equity of resource distribution.** Sherrieb, Norris, and Galea (2010) define equity of resource distribution as how fairly resources are distributed as determined by
differences between demographic groups. News stories about the equity of resource distribution often focused on the actual distribution of resources to survivors as well as the equality across socioeconomic statuses of programs related to housing. Journalists focused on the promises made by the government to survivors as one way to discuss distribution of resources. An example of this is in the use of a quotation by Michael Brown, director of FEMA, who said, “FEMA promised to work in Louisiana until the extraordinary relief and rebuilding effort is complete. Money is no issue” (Filosa, 2005, para. 11). Along with this promise of aid, journalists also wrote about government programs that provided all homeowners who were affected by Hurricane Katrina the same opportunities. An example of this type of opportunity can be seen in a portion of a news article that discussed “the creation of a home buyout program that would give residents the pre-Katrina value of their homes if they choose to rebuild in their old neighborhoods and later have second thoughts about the location” (Meitrodt & Donze, 2005, para. 22). This program would ensure that all homeowners were given the same resources and opportunities if they wanted to move back to the New Orleans area, but it also provided them the freedom to change their minds. Equity across socioeconomic status, or the lack of equity, is another issue that often was discussed in news stories about Hurricane Katrina. Journalists chose, however, to not always focus on the problems of inequality but instead to also discuss the new opportunities, particularly in housing, that Hurricane Katrina allowed. An example of a news story in which journalists focused on the possibility of new housing opportunities can be seen in an article that discussed a mixed income housing location:
While much of the blueprint is still theoretical, particularly details regarding lots and available capital, the plan does not shy away from bold and specific ideas. Among them: assembling land to spur at least three mixed-income residential developments of at least 1,000 units apiece; building a sprawling new park in eastern New Orleans on land now occupied by flood-ravaged homes; and centering new development on transit corridors that someday would be served by light rail. (Russell & Donze, 2005, para. 10)

This article addresses resource equity in terms of housing, the ability for residents who may not be able to afford individual transportation to have public transportation available to them, and the opportunity for those who lost their homes who may not want to rebuild to have a place to live.

Social Capital

Norris and colleagues (2008) defined social capital as “a set of adaptive capacities that can support the process of community resilience to maintain and sustain community health” (as cited in Sherrieb, Norris, & Galea, 2010, p. 233). As with economic development, social capital was often present throughout news articles in conjunction with other community resilience domains and attributes such as economic development and community competence. Social capital, as described by Norris et al. (2008), has seven attributes that will be described with examples of how journalists discussed each of them in news articles about Hurricane Katrina.
**Received social support.** Received social support refers to interactions with others, typically family or friends, who can provide social support, such as help, love, or care actually being given to the individual in need (Norris et al., 2008). Directly received social support was widely covered in news articles about Hurricane Katrina. Journalists most often discussed social support received from family, friends, and other Hurricane Katrina survivors. Received social support was important in news articles regardless of socioeconomic status of the community members. This can be seen in an article about two women running for public office who received social support from others. The writer of the news story quoted the women as saying that they “had no time to handle such personal crises, but have been helped by the support of family and friends” (Thevenot, 2006, para. 23) and one of them was “wearing a donated suit” (Thevenot, 2006, para. 24) during her campaign speech. In another example of a news article about received social support, a survivor was featured who discussed the support that had been received from others:

> People are truly looking out for us. They just extended our time in the motel for a couple more days, and after that we’ll see what happens. I feel blessed. I know we haven’t got much to go home to, but I have my family around me right now. When I get to go home, I will deal with it with it when I get there. Whatever it takes to rebuild, we will. I have faith it will work out. We’ve got a lot of kids here, and that keeps us busy. We don’t have a lot of time to mope and moan. We sat out by the pool and let them swim. And we console one another. (Lewis, 2005, para. 5)
This example shows how journalists focused not only on the physical social support received by survivors, but also the importance of time spent together providing and receiving emotional social support.

**Perceived social support.** Perceived social support is the belief that if an individual is in trouble, he or she will receive needed support from others (Norris et al., 2008). Perceived social support was addressed in news stories most often when the focus of the stories were political in nature. Throughout the sample, journalists widely used quotations from government leaders at all levels of government as their sources of information or story topic. Journalists took these quotations often when the leaders were giving speeches to large groups or providing statements with the target audience being all those affected by Hurricane Katrina. The fact that the target audience encompassed so many individuals led the quotations used by journalists to often focus on the perception of social support being given by the leaders, instead of showing if and how the leaders provided physical support to survivors. Michael Brown, Director of FEMA, was quoted by one journalist as saying “we’re here to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with you to help you rebuild Louisiana. The entire country is behind the massive effort” (Filosa, 2005, para. 12). In addition to political leaders providing perceived social support, news articles also interviewed survivors who perceived that social support would be available to them in the form of the community. One news story focused on an individual survivor who stated:

“I have confidence that help will be there. But families and neighbors are going to have to pull together. All of South Louisiana is going to have to
pull together. We’re all in the same boat. Some of us might be a little worse off than others, but we’re all together.” (Lewis, 2005, para. 14-15)

This example shows the confidence that residents affected by Hurricane Katrina had in their fellow survivors. Through discussing perceived social support, journalists were able to discuss the hope of help, as well as the perceptions of those in the situation that if help were needed, it would be available.

**Social embeddedness.** Goodman and colleagues (1998) defined social embeddedness as “the frequency and intensity of interactions” among social groups. Social embeddedness was not a focus of *Times-Picayune* journalists’ reporting in the months following Hurricane Katrina (as cited by Norris et al., 2008). Out of the sample there were only two news articles that were written in a way to suggest the presence of social embeddedness. The first example of social embeddedness was a quotation from a New Orleans resident who stated, “I’m going to go down there and work. We’re going to help rebuild this city” (Krupa, 2005, para. 43). The second news article discussing social embeddedness focused on the determination of a group of survivors to not only escape from Hurricane Katrina but also return and rebuild no matter what:

> We put all of our resources together and said, ‘We’ve got to do what we’ve got to do.’ There were eight carloads of us. They’re not saying much about what’s going on in St. Bernard, but we know it’s underwater. But if we’ve got a frame, that’s a start toward making it livable again.

(Lewis, 2005, para. 9-10)
The determination to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina was the focus of many news articles, however, the rebuilding discussion was framed more often as a sense of community or attachment to place, which will be discussed later.

**Organizational linkages and cooperation.** Organizational linkages and cooperation are relationships that are built or formed between organizations in order to work together to achieve a common goal (Norris et al., 2008). Unlike social embeddedness, organizational linkages and cooperation between organizations were widely discussed in news articles. When news articles discussed organizational linkages, the stories focused on organizations partnering with each other or individuals to rebuild, provide jobs, or meet needs of survivors. News articles about organizations coming together to support local businesses in order to help strengthen the economy were also common:

Local business groups are trying to help out. The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission has been offering weekly seminars with local accountants to coach business owners on what documents to gather to file a business interruption claim, how to reconstruct records that were lost in the storm, and how to calculate a business interruption loss. (Mowbray, 2005, para. 12)

In addition to news stories about businesses cooperating with each other at a community level, news stories also were written about links between families and nonprofit or private organizations such as churches. An example of this can be seen in a
news article written about a program started after Hurricane Katrina by local churches called ‘Adopt a Family’:

We are trying to get volunteers to come into the centers and meet with families to assess what are their immediate needs. It will be a one on one situation with the volunteer trying to help whoever is displaced get whatever he or she needs whether it is an application for unemployment, specific medications or even a ride to apply for a job. (Barkoff, 2005, para. 15)

The news article explained the program and focused on awareness of the links and resources provided through the joint cooperation of the local churches and civic groups.

**Citizen participation.** Citizen participation is defined as “the engagement of community members in formal organizations, including religious congregations, school and resident associations, neighborhood watches, and self-help groups” (Norris et al., 2008, p. 139). While news stories about citizens wanting to be involved in rebuilding and reviving their community were common, there were few news stories about citizens taking active leadership or formal roles in community meetings and local government. One news story highlighted this lack of citizen participation in a formal capacity when discussing a community meeting held by the Urban Land Institute. The news article highlighted that the “storm recovery meeting in New Orleans brought in few average New Orleanians” (Warner, 2005, para. 10). In order to bring in affected citizens, “50 displaced residents” were recruited and many times the Urban Land Institute ended up “paying their travel costs” (Warner, 2005, para. 10) because the organizer and architect
on the program, Alan Lewis, realized that, “It is essential that residents, and not just building and land-use experts craft long-term plans for the city” (Warner, 2005, para. 10). While this is just one example of a lack of citizen participation in a formal capacity, the news article included the views of the community who did not think that citizens should be involved in a group manner because of a lack of trust in formal group help.

The resident believed that:

> Individuals should take steps on their own to improve city conditions whether or not others join in. “Everything begins with I. Where is your personal accountability because the ‘we’ don’t get it.” (Warner, 2005, para. 17)

This news article shows that not all articles were written about the positives of rebuilding, but that there were opposing views and opinions expressed to journalists.

**Sense of community.** Sense of community is the connection shared by community members with similar values who work together to support each other and the community they reside in (Norris et al., 2008). Sense of community was often touched upon in news articles after Hurricane Katrina. While every community has its own unique and defining features, journalists vividly described the importance of New Orleans traditions, such as Mardi Gras, to the local culture and the sense of community in news articles. One article focused on the importance of the celebration and how it brought the community together regardless of extenuating circumstance:

> Come hell or high water, we will have Mardi Gras. It’s in the soul and the fabric and the fiber of the city and the people. People will celebrate in
one form or another. If someone said he’s going to pull a wagon with beads, that’s a form of Mardi Gras. (Pope, 2006, para. 17)

In addition to focusing on what helped create a sense of community in New Orleans as a whole, news articles reflected on how a sense of community brought together and affected smaller groups, such as faith-based communities. A news article about a local church exemplified this well when a church leader realized that regardless of current living situations, “to have anywhere from a third to a half of our congregation show up every Sunday when nobody lives in the neighborhood says a lot about the community. They are willing to pass up several churches to come home” (Meitrodt, 2006, para. 62).

The news article emphasized the importance of the sense of a community in bringing people back to a community, which is similarly addressed in articles touching upon attachment to place.

**Attachment to place.** Attachment to place is similar to sense of community, but focuses more on the emotional attachment to the community and those in the community (Norris et al., 2008). Of all the attributes of social capital, attachment to place was the most frequent theme of news articles about Hurricane Katrina. News articles often featured residents who expressed their desire to return to New Orleans. One example of this can be found in an article that focused on a resident who was temporarily displaced and living in Texas. In the news article the resident is quoted as saying, “Right now, I feel like I’m an alien in another country. I want to go back home” (Krupa, 2005, para. 6). This sentiment is echoed in another article that quoted a New Orleans resident as saying: “We are blessed people. Whatever happens, we want to stay
in New Orleans. It’s home. Unless we have to, we’re staying there and putting our lives back together” (Lewis, 2005, para. 34-35). Some news articles went a step beyond being attached to New Orleans and also discussed how the attachment to the city had changed as a result of Hurricane Katrina and reported on how the desire to rebuild was often intertwined with this sense of attachment:

“We’re going to rebuild. Everybody who’s ever lived here loves the city—really anybody that’s ever been here. You know what Katrina means? ‘Blessful cleansing.’ Maybe that’s what New Orleans needed, something to get us back to basics. This city has a lot going for it, but it’s time to wake up and start doing the right thing to start taking pride in our city instead of just enjoying it.” (Thevenot, 2005b, para. 63)

This news article emphasized how attachment to place goes beyond a sense of being attached to New Orleans and to making the city a part of personal identity.

**Information and Communication**

According to Norris and colleagues (2008), communication is “the creation of common meanings and understandings and the provision of opportunities for members to articulate needs, views, and attitudes” (p. 140) and information is shared through communication. Unlike economic development and social capital, information and communication as a community resilience domain was not widely discussed in news articles after Hurricane Katrina. While the news articles included in the sample were inherently a form of information and communication, the news articles did not often
explicitly discuss the presence or effects of information and communication within the community. A few examples have been found, but these are the exception instead of the rule.

**Narratives.** Narratives are communally created to “give the experience shared meaning and purpose” (Norris et al., 2008, 140). Of the four attributes of information and communication, narratives were often employed in news articles Hurricane Katrina. However, while journalists used narratives to tell stories, the actual concept of a narrative and the role narratives play in community resilience were not discussed. One news story alluded to the creation of narratives by residents as a way to tell their stories in describing how one resident explained that he, “like so many others in the New Orleans area, measures his fortunes in pre-K and post-K terms” (Moran, 2005, para. 1). Other than this example, one other news article also discussed the influence that television news had on a resident:

> “You try to watch something besides the news, but when you change the channel, you keep going back to the news. We listen to WWL at night and watch Channel 4 on the Internet. They show different things from the ones on TB. You can’t look away.” (Lewis, 2005, para. 29-30)

While this news article is not explicitly about narratives created by the community, it can be inferred that narratives are a part of the news coverage and would then influence the creation of future narratives.

**Responsible media.** Responsible media can educate the public and affect the dissemination of information, how information is shared, and the way those affected by
a disaster discuss their experiences, which makes it especially crucial that the information shared is accurate (Norris et al., 2008). Responsible media being responsible was not widely discussed in this sample of news articles after Hurricane Katrina. However, responsible media can be used to keep individuals and businesses in the community accountable for their actions. Media can also demand answers to issues that affect the community, in this case regarding housing demolitions, which affected many:

After Meffert announced the planned demolitions in late December, The Times-Picayune requested copies of the lists of all buildings marked with red tags and all those slated for immediate razing. But no list was released until Thursday, when the city gave the newspaper the addresses of 1,957 properties in what officials called the Red Danger List. Officials said the group was essentially a winnowed-down version of the initial 2,500 endangered properties Meffert cited earlier. The list released Thursday is available at www.nola.com, the website affiliated with The Times-Picayune. (Filosa, Russell, & Eggler, 2006, para. 16)

This news article showed that journalists did assist in the distribution of information, as they were able to listen to the public and provide the information desired so that those affected better understood what was happening.

**Skills and infrastructure.** Norris and colleagues (2008) identified communication skills and infrastructure, such as planned communication systems like hotlines and media messages, as important so that when a disaster occurs information can be spread
accurately and quickly. After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, it is not surprising that communication infrastructure such as phone lines and other centers of communication would need to be rebuilt. However, this was not a topic of news articles in the sample. While not a tangible structure, one news article did report on the use of the Internet as communication infrastructure. Kathleen Blanco, Governor of Louisiana, “indicated that she wants the state to set up a web site and call center to begin taking initial applications beginning in early March” (Russell and Maggi, 2006, para. 42). The other way in which journalists discussed communication skills and infrastructure was through looking at the breakdown of communication during the hurricane and how the communication skills and infrastructure that should have been present failed:

As the crisis continued to grow in the hectic days after the storm, the e-mails also indicated that there was some confusion on how to best get help to people who desperately needed it. “I am getting these calls too and I have buses and water but can’t get word on where and how to send,” wrote Kim Hunter Reed, Blanco’s policy director on Wednesday afternoon. (Maggi, 2005, para. 25)

This article reported on how the breakdown in communication renewed the dangerous effects that a lack of communication skills and infrastructure could have on those who were in need.

**Trusted sources of information.** In a disaster situation, individuals in a community may be more likely to believe and listen to local sources of information than outside sources because they are familiar (Norris et al., 2008). Journalists most often
used political figures and local residents as their sources of information when writing
the news stories in this sample. Journalists also recognized others, such as insurance
agents, as sources of information when covering certain topics. For example, many news
articles focused on the rebuilding of homes and communities, which often contained a
discussion of insurance as well. One example of this is an article in which Jeff Albright,
the chief executive of the Independent Agents and Brokers of Louisiana, gave a
deinition of a flood to help homeowners understand why their insurance did not cover
the damage to their homes:

A flood is defined as rising water, and it doesn’t matter why the water is
rising. If it rains faster than it can be pumped away, that’s a flood. And it
is covered under flood insurance. Rising waters, by definition, are
excluded from a homeowner’s policy. (Meitrodt, 2005, para. 16)

While journalists portrayed Jeff Albright as an expert, they also often reported on what
happened when those expected to be trusted sources either withheld or
misrepresented information. One news article focused on the effects of withheld and
misrepresented information at the federal government level. This article reported on
how information was withheld from officials in Washington so that they believed that
New Orleans “dodged the big one... when in fact 80 percent of the city was flooding”
(Albert, 2006, para. 1). The same news article also reports on the fact that Michael
Brown, Director of FEMA, “decided not to bring his appeals for Katrina relief directly to
his superiors at the Department of Homeland Security after the storm, because he
considered it a waste of time” (Albert, 2006, para. 2). This article is an example of how
those who were expected to be trusted sources of information on Hurricane Katrina were not always forthcoming with information and contributed to the mistrust of information coming from New Orleans and the media.

**Community Competence**

Community competence is defined by Norris et al. (2008) as “the networked equivalent of human agency” and “has to do with collective action and decision-making, capacities that may stem from collective efficacy and empowerment” (p. 141).

Community competence was often the subject of news stories about Hurricane Katrina. As previously mentioned, it also was often discussed in conjunction with economic development and social capital. Community competence has five attributes according to Norris and colleagues’ (2008) model of community resilience. Each attribute will be explained and examples from the sample will be provided.

**Community action.** Norris and colleagues (2008) consider community action to be “complex and challenging” (p. 141), as communities must work together to overcome challenges and improve. News articles about community action primarily focused on the community coming together to reach a common goal and to rebuild communities. One journalist listed a number of agenda items in a story about community needs:

- Establishing neighborhood centers that provide technical advice on rebuilding homes;
- using questionnaires to determine whether displaced residents plan to return, closing the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet and filling it with clean organic material;
- reopening Charity Hospital; and
providing housing and training to local workers who are willing to rehabilitate thousands of flood-damaged homes. (Warner, 2005, para. 4)

Another way that community action was explored in news articles was by looking at the way that communities worked to restore normalcy such as through the opening of schools, even before government assistance was provided. One news story told of the determination of a community to get its school back regardless of outside assistance. In the story, Lyall Barwick, an information technology administrator and school baseball coach, explained his view on how the community handled reopening the local school: “I find it almost comical that we’ve started a school here while the federal government, with all its resources, still can’t get a post office running” (Thevenot, 2005a, para. 33). Within community competence, many of the attributes overlap in news coverage, and this is an example of how the lines between community action, problem solving, and collective efficacy may not be as separate as they appear in Norris and colleagues’ (2008) model.

**Critical reflection and problem solving.** According to Norris and colleagues (2008), previous literature has emphasized the need for reflection and problem solving for communities to be resilient. Critical reflection and problem solving were often implied in news articles as journalists reported on recovery and the challenges that were faced and overcome. One quotation focused specifically on needing to reflect on choices made during rebuilding that would impact the future:

> It is important to remember that (we) will be living with the home rebuilding decisions that we make today for the next twenty years. We
need to use licensed, insured contractors to safeguard our homes and families. We also need to support the responsible businesses who will continue to be a part of our community for many years. *(The Times-Picayune, 2005, para. 6)*

Another example of the problem solving theme was in an article about a school reopening, “The first day of school was considered to be very much a day of new hope not only for the school system, but also for the city, which needs schools up and running to lure back families” *(Ritea, 2005, para. 20)*. The article continued with a quotation from Ora Watson, the district’s interim superintendent who said, “We know parents follow children and they go where their kids go. Now we’re saying ‘don’t worry’, New Orleans is breathing again” *(Ritea, 2005, para. 21)*. The story emphasized how through critical reflection and problem solving to get the school reopened, the community was also opening up the community to returning families. Many articles reflected this problem solving ability taking alternative means to reach goals by being flexible and creative.

**Flexibility and creativity.** Norris et al. *(2008)* begin their conversation about community competency by emphasizing that in order for communities to change after a trauma, they need to be flexible and creative. News articles that touched on flexibility and creativity also often contained elements of critical reflection and problem solving. Most often these news articles focused on the rebuilding of New Orleans and political decisions. News articles also often recognized problems, especially during rebuilding, and then offered a solution or a desire to find a solution to the problem that would take creativity and flexibility. One example of this can be found in an article regarding
rebuilding that used a quotation from a resident explaining the need for change in New Orleans: “They kept telling us we were living in a bowl, and now we know it doesn’t work the way they had it. We have to change things” (Lewis, 2005, para. 28). This call for change and creativity can also be seen in the way that journalists discussed housing needs and the changes in housing that needed to be creatively considered. One article, for example, focused on the challenges that residents faced and the fear that they felt that a housing development was going to be built “in which the former tenants were mostly displaced by people with more means” (Russell & Donze, 2005, para. 52). However, the article goes on to explain that once this issue was presented to the panel in charge of the area that they, “agreed to try to put those who lived in the neighborhood before Katrina atop the list of potential tenants for any new developments” (Russell & Donze, 2005, para. 52). While news articles may not use the words flexibility and creativity, often those attributes can be seen in the way that news articles report on how changes in the community come about.

**Collective efficacy and empowerment.** Collective efficacy and empowerment is defined by Norris and colleagues (2008) as trust residents have that a community has the resources and power needed to best serve the community and its interests. News articles that discussed collective efficacy and empowerment discussed ways in which the community came together in order to take charge of a situation and make changes themselves regardless of external support. One example of this is a news article that focused on the St. Bernard School Superintendent who pulled the community together to open the school system more quickly than the government could provide financial
aid. In the article, the superintendent is shown as the leader who stands up to FEMA when she realizes that the aid will not be coming quickly. She informs FEMA that the wait is “ridiculous. We’ll do it ourselves. We’ll send you the bill” (Thevenot, 2005a, para. 76). This empowerment of the principal is focused on in the article and both empowerment and collective efficacy are themes throughout the news article:

Voitier took out a $17.8 million federal disaster loan, hired an environmental cleanup company to clean out every campus at a cost of $53 million, and for $1.3 million bought 22 trailers to house a new school. She spent another $900,000 for 60 residential trailers to house her administration and staff, almost all of whom lost their homes and couldn’t seem to get trailers from FEMA (Thevenot, 2005a, para. 77)

The article also reports that the superintendent did not follow federal guidelines required for a school to be built. However, through her empowerment as a leader, the community considered her actions justifiable.

**Political partnerships.** Norris and colleagues (2008) discuss the importance of politics and citizen participation in the empowerment of a community to become resilient. Journalists quoted government sources often in news articles focused on what specifically the government, government officials, and government entities were doing for those who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. News articles that focused on political partnerships often reported on support provided through these partnerships, encouragement provided by political leaders, and the way politicians became advocates for the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Journalists often covered speeches made by
politicians to those affected by the storm, particularly when they were offering encouragement such as a quotation from Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson who declared in a speech: “I think we can bounce back from this. We have to” (Lee, 2005, para. 6).

Articles focused on political partnerships between political and local leaders but also the partnerships formed at higher levels of government and between political leaders as well. The Mayor of New Orleans Ray Nagin and President Bush were often quoted, and the relationships between the two as well as their relationships with Governor Kathleen Blanco were widely discussed. An example of this is in a news article about the relationship between Ray Nagin and President Bush from Ray Nagin’s point of view: “President Bush promised swift federal relief for New Orleans and other devastated communities. FEMA said give us a list of your needs and let me tell you, we’re giving them a hell of a list” (Nolan, 2005, para. 18-19). News articles also covered the policies that were created by the government in response to Hurricane Katrina and the results of these policies. One example of this is seen in an article that covered a meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee on Insurance in which, “Some Louisiana lawmakers said they would like the federal government to create a special appropriation to cover the difference between flood insurance and homeowner’s policy payouts” (Meitrodt, 2005, para. 10). This article discusses not only what politicians were doing to partner with those in the community but also how they were advocates as well. With an understanding of how news articles explored themes of community resilience, a discussion about the implications of these findings can occur.
Discussion

This research study examined newspaper articles published by the New Orleans Times-Picayune about Hurricane Katrina in the six months after the hurricane made landfall. By thematically analyzing the articles based on Norris and colleagues’ (2008) model of community resilience, a number of observations emerged. First, the domains and attributes of community resilience were present throughout the newspaper sample, meaning that the Times-Picayune discussed community resilience in the first six months after Hurricane Katrina. Second, not all of the domains of community resilience were presented equally or independently of each other in the sample. Third, a number of articles highlighted areas where community resilience was not shown; however, this “lack” of resilience still could be categorized into one of the four domains of community resilience. And finally, a number of common topics were focused on throughout the articles in the sample, including the desire to rebuild New Orleans and the influence of politics and the government on recovery from Hurricane Katrina. These observations will be discussed below, followed by a discussion of implications for future research.

Community Resilience Domains

This research identified that not all domains of community resilience were equally represented throughout the sample. Previous research has found that disaster news coverage often does not cover all aspects of a disaster equally. For example a content analysis has identified unequal media coverage of the four types of capital (natural, human, social, and built) following a disaster (Miles & Morse, 2007). Of the
four domains of community resilience suggested by Norris and colleagues (2008), information and communication was not widely discussed.

One reason the overall lack of discussion about communication is important is because newspapers are in and of themselves a form and source of information. Interestingly, while communication infrastructure was widely destroyed with over three million landlines and two thousand cell towers being lost in the hurricane, journalists did not address the loss of infrastructure and focused instead on the lack of communication between key individuals (Moynihan, 2009). When communication was discussed in news articles, the articles were often focused on the failures in communication that were occurring between political figures or government entities and political leaders. One research study suggests that it is possible that this breakdown in communication was occurring because politicians were getting their information from the news and basing their communication and actions on news sources such as newspapers instead of other government or official sources (Davis & French, 2008). This lack of communication illustrated the influence of political actors on all areas of relief and aid after the hurricane and that the lack of communication created additional problems for those affected. Journalists writing about the lack of communication often named the political leaders involved in the situation or gave specific examples to show where the failure to communicate happened, as well as described the direct results of the failed communication including the lack of transportation to evacuate survivors or insufficient funds to rebuild the education system.
Themes of economic development, social capital, and community competence were all found throughout the sample. When economic development was discussed, news articles often focused on the amount of aid being provided to survivors by FEMA as well as private sources. Journalists also reported on equality of risk when the topic of demolition of homes as well as plans for development to prevent damage from future hurricanes was the topic of the article. Articles often focused on social support provided by family members to survivors as well as the desire of residents to return to New Orleans and rebuild because of the strong sense of attachment and community they felt. Of the domains discussed, community competence was the most common. Articles that touched on community competence often focused on political partnerships in addition to commenting on the flexibility and creativity needed to solve problems. Articles also described the need for the community to come together to solve problems and create solutions for housing, school, and job needs.

Articles often discussed the domains of community resilience in conjunction with each other. News articles either discussed multiple domains of community resilience in the same article or combined similar attributes in the way that topics were written about. One example of this can be seen in a news article that quotes James McIntrye, a FEMA spokesman as saying “hotels are under no obligation to continue to house evacuees. Participation in the housing program is voluntary, and FEMA understands that hotels may have other business on the books” (Mowbray, 2006, para. 20). While this may not show the building of community resilience directly, it does emphasize how economic development in the form of hotel business, social capital in the form of hotels
cooperating with residents and FEMA to provide support to evacuees, and community competence in the form of flexibility to allow evacuees to stay at are covered in one quotation. Another example of multiple domains being in one quotation can be found in a news article that quotes Sean Reilly, a businessman in Baton Rouge who has worked in the state legislature, as a source. The news article states:

He said he respects her (Willard-Lewis) in the Legislature. He said he respects her vigilant protection of the people hoping to rebuild in her district but urged her and other leaders to seek the greatest good for the greatest number of New Orleanians. The bottom line, he said, is that many areas may not be safe from floods or suitable for redevelopment.

(Thevenot, 2006, para. 66)

This quotation reflected economic development in the form of equality of risk for residents, social capital in the form of social support, and community competence in the form of problem solving and political partnerships. A third example of the combination of domains was found in a news article that combined the domains of information and communication, economic development, and community competence. The news article discussed a letter written by a resident of New Orleans and the response from Governor Blanco.

We are asking that you work with the multi-family (housing) industry and help us come up with a reasonable solution for owners to regain possession of their units,” Esponge wrote the governor. Esponge said she has not heard back from Blanco. (Scott & Thomas, 2005, para. 15-16)
In this news article, communication was shown to be lacking, economic development in the form of building homes was discussed, and community competence in the form of political partnership was asked for. The article reflects these three domains in a cohesive manner that shows how they influence and affect one another.

Norris et al. (2008) support this finding of community resilience domains and attributes being combined as their model recognizes that the domains of community resilience are not entirely separate from each other and do have possible areas of overlap. Sherrieb, Norris, and Galea (2010) suggest that there is interconnectedness between domains, especially between social capital and economic development. Steiner and Markantoni (2013) also found there to be “interdependence” between elements of community resilience and that social and economic elements are especially important to examine at all levels of a community.

The Dichotomy of Resilience and Vulnerability

A second major finding is that not all news articles contained elements of community resilience, which is perhaps to be expected based on the fact that the sample only examined the first six months after Hurricane Katrina made landfall. According to the phases of disaster reactions, it may take a year before reconstruction truly begins (http://emergency.cdc.gov). Townshend, Auosoga, Kulid, and Fan (2015) found elements of strong social cohesion until shortly before disillusionment, which occurred in the communities being studied shortly before the one year anniversary of the disasters. This would mean that it is possible for communities to come together in
order to solve problems and work toward resilience before the year mark, but the positivity may not be stable throughout the recovery process.

In the current study, many news articles reported on the problems that were associated with the hurricane or the ways in which recovery was not occurring. When discussions took place surrounding the “lack” of resilience, the topics that were discussed could be categorized into one of the domains or attributes of community resilience. This shows that what is considered necessary for resilience such as social capital or community competence is important because the lack of these features in a community are noticed and may lead to additional problems. Gotham and Campanella (2011) suggest that this phenomenon can be explained through looking at resilience versus vulnerability. Vulnerabilities are the areas in which hazards exist that impact a community is ability to recover or make it vulnerable to a disaster in the first place (Gotham & Campanella, 2011). Vulnerabilities contain similar concepts as resilience, and while they are not interchangeable, they are both present in a community, and changes in vulnerabilities can lead to resilience (Gotham & Campanella, 2011). Through finding ways to report on vulnerabilities in news articles more positively, it may be possible to create a conversation surrounding the disaster that would stimulate resilience more quickly.

**Rebuilding and the Effects of Politics and Political Leaders**

A third major finding is that throughout the sample, regardless of the way news articles reported on the domains of community resilience and the domains that were
focused on, there were several common topics; in particular, the desire to rebuild New Orleans, and the impact of politics and the government on the recovery process. Journalists focused on housing and rebuilding throughout the domains of community resilience but especially when economic development, social capital, and community competence were discussed. According to Kimberly Geaghan of the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), 74% of homeowners in New Orleans at the time of Hurricane Katrina experienced damage to their homes. Rebuilding plans are often not part of disaster preparedness plans at a local or national level, which leads to confusion as to how to rebuild and who should be providing aid after a disaster occurs (Bates, 2006). This can be clearly seen throughout the sample as journalists discussed the financial, physical, and emotional aspects of recovery associated with trying to rebuild New Orleans or find housing post-Katrina. These news articles typically focused on either the stories of individuals and families who were in need of housing or on the response of the government to the need for housing assistance and insurance assistance.

The most commonly discussed topics in news articles were political leaders and the actions of the government. News articles focused on politics at all levels of government, from local to national, and the responses of the leaders at each of those levels. Many articles reported on what the government was doing to help those affected by Katrina as well as the mistakes that were made. The model of community resilience created by Norris and colleagues (2008) includes political partnerships as part of their model; however, the news articles show that political leaders may not always contribute positively to recovery. After Hurricane Katrina, a number of government leaders and
agencies did not effectively perform their role in the disaster and blamed others for the problems that occurred (Gallagher, Fontenot, & Boyle, 2007). Articles about politicians and their actions were not often positive, especially when miscommunication, lack of communication, blaming others for failures, and the tensions between political leaders were discussed (Boin, ‘T Hart, McConnell, & Preston, 2010). Research suggests, “blaming for disasters arises out of seeking a satisfactory explanation for something which cannot be accounted for conventionally” (Bucher, 1957, p.467). The negative coverage of FEMA and political leaders in news articles would not contribute to community resilience, which raises questions as to possible effects of this negative coverage on the community and should be explored in future disaster news situations. The presence of blame in news articles and its prominence throughout society is clearly seen. However, the effect of blame on community resilience, or disaster recovery specifically, has not been widely researched (Wyatt, 2012). It will be crucial in future research to look at the effects of blame placed between political leaders, the government, and others in the community in order to understand if community resilience is negatively impacted. If blame is found to negatively impact resilience, it will be vital to community recovery to change the way blame is placed, framed, and discussed in disaster news coverage.

The focus on these two main topics leads to two key implications. First, Hurricane Katrina was unique in the nature of the displacement experienced by New Orleans and Gulf Coast residents. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), over 400,000 residents were displaced from their homes as a result of the hurricane and the failure of the levees. Residents were displaced for an extended period of time and the
United States, as a country, has never seen displacement of this magnitude due to a natural disaster in its history (Bernstein, 2011). The extreme nature of Katrina explains why it was so widely covered by the media and it is likely that housing would not be focused on as heavily in the context of other storms in the future unless similar levels of displacement occurred again.

Second, the focus on politics in post-Katrina coverage is indicative of the importance of politics to community resilience in a post-disaster environment and is important in a wider scope than just after Hurricane Katrina. The influence of race and how political leaders influence their constituents’ perceptions of their leadership ability began being studied after Hurricane Katrina (Lay, 2008). In terms of published scholarship, Hurricane Katrina appears to be at least partially responsible for scholars beginning to recognize the importance of politics in a post-disaster situation. Boettke and colleagues (2007) found that politics and political influences affected institutions before, during, and after Katrina and affected their ability to recover. In the news coverage of Katrina, political leaders were often the subjects of media coverage whether they were being criticized for their actions or used as sources by journalists. It is likely that political leaders would be important in the dialogue surrounding most large natural disasters, not just after Hurricane Katrina, especially because of the distribution of federal aid and the need for FEMA.
Future Research

A number of areas that warrant additional research emerge from this analysis. First, the impact of the government and government leaders on citizens can be seen in daily life as legislation is passed and is implemented. However, the effects of political decisions and leaders have not been studied as closely in the context of a natural disaster. By examining how politicians react to the disaster in the media, the way they discuss the situation with those in power as well as the media, and what actions were taken to give assistance in terms of federal relief given or sought, the effect of political leaders on a community trying to recover can be better understood. Studying the influence of political leaders on disaster-affected communities, especially through the ways they are portrayed in the news, may also provide political leaders a better understanding of how they influence the lives of their constituents and the resilience in the community. In addition to looking at the politicians themselves, examining the actions of government agencies and the way their responses were portrayed in the news and influenced survivors is another important area that should be explored in order to determine if community resilience is affected.

Second, future research should look at the way the news reports on disaster information and communication. There was an overall lack of coverage of communication infrastructure and communication throughout the sample unless the discussion focused on communication failures of politicians. Better understanding of why communication was not discussed in the media may help emphasize the importance of accurate and quick communication provided by the news in a disaster.
situation so as to avoid the same communication and political mistakes that hampered the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort. Assigning blame for the event to nature and further complications or recovery problems to politicians in news articles is common after natural disaster situations; however, the effects of the blame are widely unknown (Salwen, 1995).

Finally, additional research should examine the influence of news articles and more specifically the content of the news stories on community resilience. As news stories change depending on the stage of the disaster, the terminology used, and the way topics are discussed by journalists may have an impact on the way those affected discuss the disaster with others as well as how they view their community. By understanding the way these news articles affect survivors, journalists can learn to create content that may enhance and encourage community resilience. This study focuses on one specific event, however, transferability of common resilience frames and disaster frames to other natural disaster events are likely and should be examined in future research.

**Conclusion**

This study examines how community resilience was reported on in local newspaper articles about a major U.S. disaster. It examined news articles published in the *Times-Picayune* in the six months after Hurricane Katrina made landfall. All newspaper articles from this time period were collected and a random sample was chosen so that a content analysis could be conducted. The study found that community
resilience, as conceptualized by Norris and colleagues (2008), was reflected in published news articles. To understand the impact these findings have in the current research on this topic as well as the potential influence on future research, the study will be reviewed.

First, a literature review was conducted in order to set the framework for the study. Community resilience was defined according to previous research and Norris and colleagues’ (2008) domains and attributes of community resilience were explained. These domains and attributes of community resilience would then be used to guide the analysis and help determine how community resilience was discussed in the sample. Framing theory, which theorizes that journalists create frames in order to make a topic more salient to the audience, was then explored as the theory that anchors this research (Entman, 1993). Once the theory was explained, previous research on disaster news articles, specifically previous frames found in disaster news articles were described. An interesting point that was discovered in the research was that frames in disaster stories change depending on whether it is a national or local level newspaper doing the reporting. Previous research written specifically on Hurricane Katrina news coverage was also discussed and resilience was found to be absent from previous studies. Therefore, one research questions was presented with the purposed of discovering how community resilience, if it was discussed at all in news articles in the six months post-Katrina, was presented by journalists in their articles.

In order to do this, a content analysis was conducted. News articles were obtained through the use of the New Orleans Times-Picayune online Hurricane Katrina
database as well as from microfilm copies of the daily publications. Once selected, each article was read and examined for the presence of the domains and attributes of community resilience. When community resilience was discussed in the news articles, the examples were pulled out so that themes across domains and attributes could be seen and specific examples of each attribute could be presented as an exemplar of how journalists may choose to write about resilience.

Results were then presented through breaking down and defining each of the four domains of community resilience as well as their individual attributes. Each domain and attribute was defined according to Norris and colleagues’ (2008) model and examples of each were taken directly from the sample. Domains and attributes that were the most prominent were clearly seen as well as common themes such as the housing situation caused by mass displacement and the influence of politics were also made salient.

Next, a discussion about the implications of the results occurred. First, it was discovered that not all of the domains and attributes were presented equally throughout the sample. The domain of communication and information was not widely discussed, however the other three domains were quite common. It was also discovered that many domains and attributes were not presented as separate entities but instead combined by journalists. Second, there were many news articles where community resilience was not discussed, however, the areas that showed a lack of resilience still could be classified into one of the domains and attributes of community resilience. Third, two common topics of news articles were discussed regardless of domain and
attribute. The desire to rebuild New Orleans and the effects of political leaders and
government actions on the recovery process were widely discussed throughout the
sample.

Finally, suggestions for future research were made and the study was concluded.
Three suggestions were made for those studying disaster news or community resilience
in the future. First, the impact of the government and government leaders on
communities after natural disasters needs to be better understood so that political
leaders understand the effects of their actions on those in need. Second, a call was
made to further study the effects of a lack of communication in general and the lack of
discussion of communication in news articles on the community served by the
newspaper. Finally, the effects of news coverage directly on community resilience needs
to be measured and studied so that a better understanding of how news articles could
be used to promote community resilience, or specific domains or attributes of
resilience, will be better understood and utilized by journalists in disaster situations.
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<th>Domain</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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| Social Capital      | Attachment to Place        | • “Right now, I feel like I’m an alien in another country. I want to go back home” (Krupa, 2005, para. 6)  
• “We are blessed people. Whatever happens, we want to stay in New Orleans. It’s home. Unless we have to, we’re staying there and putting our lives back together” (Lewis, 2005, para. 34-35).  
• “We’re going to rebuild. Everybody who’s ever lived here loves the city- really anybody that’s ever been here. You know what Katrina means? ‘Blessful cleansing.’ Maybe that’s what New Orleans needed, something to get us back to basics. This city has a lot going for it, but it’s time to wake up and start doing the right thing to start taking pride in our city instead of just enjoying it” (Thevenot, 2005b, para. 63). |
| Community Competence| Political Partnerships     | • Councilwoman Jackie Clarkson encouraged residents, “I think we can bounce back from this. We have to” (Lee, 2005, para. 6).  
• President Bush promised swift federal relief for New Orleans and other devastated communities. FEMA said give us a list of your needs and let me tell you, we’re giving them a hell of a list” (Nolan, 2005, para. 18-19).  
• “Some Louisiana lawmakers said they would like the federal government to create a special appropriation to cover the difference between flood insurance
and homeowner’s policy payouts” (Meitrod, 2005, para. 10).

**Social Capital**

**Received Social Support**

- Two women who were running for public office after Hurricane Katrina “had no time to handle such personal crises (in reference to losing clothing and belongings in Katrina), but have been helped by the support of family and friends (Thevenot, 2006, para. 23).
- “People are truly looking out for us. They just extended our time in the motel for a couple more days, and after that we’ll see what happens. I feel blessed. I know we haven’t got much to go home to, but I have my family around me right now. When I get to go home, I will deal with it with it when I get there. Whatever it takes to rebuild, we will. I have faith it will work out. We’ve got a lot of kids here, and that keeps us busy. We don’t have a lot of time to mope and moan. We sat out by the pool and let them swim. And we console one another (Lewis, 2005, para. 5).

**Community Competence**

**Critical Reflection and Problem Solving**

- It is important to remember that (we) will be living with the home rebuilding decisions that we make today for the next twenty years. We need to use licensed, insured contractors to safeguard our homes and families. We also need to support the responsible businesses who will continue to be a part of our community for many years. *(The Times-Picayune, 2005, para. 6)*
- It was recognized that opening schools would help bring people back to the affected area. “The first day of school was considered to be
very much a day of new hope not only for the school system, but also for the city, which needs schools up and running to lure back families” (Ritea, 2005, para. 20). “We know parents follow children and they go where their kids go. Now we’re saying ‘don’t worry’, New Orleans is breathing again” (Ritea, 2005, para. 21).

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<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Level and Diversity of Economic Resources</th>
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<td>• The Davis family received “a room at the Holiday Inn Express on Bell Street downtown and a pack of donated clothes and linens from the Reliant Center, a housing voucher... a used SUV and in a little more a month (after Hurricane Katrina) found a two-bedroom place... which FEMA will subsidize fully for one year” (Krupa, 2005, para. 42).</td>
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<td>• The Department of Social Services Secretary proposed a program that would provide a number of different resources at the community and state levels. “About $4,100 of the per-family allotment will include job training and job placement in an effort to bring citizens dispersed to other states back home, and to help stimulate the state’s economy” (Anderson, 2005, para. 11).</td>
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<td>• Individuals were warned to make economic decisions wisely. “Our recovery depends on every dollar coming into this area to be used effectively and efficiently to rebuild our state and city. I can’t emphasize enough how precarious our position is” (Russell, 2005, para. 8).</td>
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