ABSTRACT

Before and after Hurricane Katrina struck in the fall of 2005, journalists made vital decisions to report on life and death issues. Those decisions framed news coverage in ways, among others, that depicted conflict, human-interest, and a lack of responsibility from local, state, and federal government officials. This study examines those frames through the lens of framing theory using textual analysis.

The findings show five dominant frames appear in news coverage from nightly network news broadcasts before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina. Journalists included those frames because of socialized news routines and because of what is called a “what-a-story” model. Those frames are discussed and broken down on a sentence structure level in each story.