



# Southwestern Mass Communication Journal

A journal of the Southwest Education Council for Journalism & Mass Communication  
ISSN 0891-9186 (Print); ISSN 2641-6743 (Online) | Vol. 39, No. 1

## **Capturing A Natural Disaster in Two Regions: Hurricane Ida in Four Black Newspapers**

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This research focused on how the Black Press covered Hurricane Ida in two cities – New Orleans and Philadelphia – with majority Black populations while they were covering the COVID-19 pandemic. In Louisiana, the Black Press focused on how Hurricane Ida may have compounded existing challenges among African American residents that were already lingering from the COVID-19 pandemic. In Philadelphia, in the wake of Hurricane Ida, readers of the oldest continuously published Black-owned newspaper learned of the disproportionate impact of climate change on racial minority communities. What this study reaffirms is that even in natural disaster crises, the Black Press, as an ethnic, advocacy press, fills gaps in coverage that aims to distinguish how low income, communities of color suffer more, what those disparities look like and what resources are needed to help those most in need.

*Keywords: Hurricane Ida, Black Press, natural disaster, race, New Orleans, Philadelphia*

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**W**hen Hurricane Ida, packing maximum sustained winds of 150 miles per hour, made landfall near Port Fourchon, Louisiana, its arrival coincided with the 16-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. As powerful as the storm's winds were when it came ashore August 29, 2021, it was Ida's exit days later that triggered one of the worst urban flood disasters in U.S. history in the Northeastern United States

(Livingston, 2021). Atmospheric scientists have suggested Ida's ability to maintain major hurricane strength for eight hours after landfall is reflective of what's known as the "brown ocean effect," phenomenon occurring when a tropical cyclone continues to feed over spongy land covered with enough warm water to mimic the heat energy transmitted by the ocean (Miller, 2021). The storm was blamed for more than four dozen fatalities, the majority of which were due to flooding in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

The aftermath of Hurricane Ida coincides with the publication of a pair of new studies focused on journalists and natural disasters. Dworzniak-Hoak (2022) applied the concept of emotional labor to disaster covered in her interview study of 30 local U.S. journalists who covered Hurricane Harvey, to expand the understanding of the psychological toll of news work. Meanwhile, Saldana (2022) used framing theory to explore how narratives of the Chilean government and the news media framed an 8.2 magnitude earthquake struck off the northern coast of Chile. These latest research studies reflect the apparently increasing interest among media scholars in studying news and natural disasters (Ewart & McLean, 2019; Kempton, 2020; Su, 2020; Williamson, 2019). However, little or no attempt has been made to examine the news coverage of natural disasters specifically in Black-owned media or what's traditionally known as the Black Press.

Today, nearly 200 black-owned newspapers make up the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), trade association for the Black Press. In existence since 1827 when Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm published *Freedom's Journal*, Black newspapers have existed primarily to report the news of the Black population, to give their own and other's opinions on many racially oriented matters while serving as advocates for the Black population (Wolseley, 1990). Additionally, dubbed "The New Black Press," a host of other news outlets advocate for and culturally represent Black people but are not necessarily Black-owned, are largely digital, nimble, and take an expansive view of who and what constitutes journalism (Douglas, 2020). Together, these two groups of media outlets were positioned as platforms for targeted crisis communication messages like those transmitted in the wake of a natural disaster.

Given the lack of research on how the Black Press covers natural disaster, this study was launched to fill this gap in the literature using the somewhat unusual circumstances of a natural disaster that impacted multiple local communities over a large portion of the United States, one of which 16 years earlier was impacted by what was then the costliest cyclone on record (Hurricane Katrina). Scholars documented how Katrina exposed racial disparities in disaster response, cleanup, rebuilding, reconstruction and recovery (Bullard & Wright, 2009; Squires & Hartman, 2006). In addition to several Black-owned newspapers that all covered the Katrina aftermath a decade-and-a-half ago (*New Orleans Tribune*, *Data News Weekly*, and *Louisiana Weekly*), the nation's oldest continuously published Black newspaper, *The Philadelphia Tribune* on its thrice-weekly publishing cycle (the most frequently published Black outlet) was located in a community where Hurricane Ida made a direct impact. A textual analysis was conducted of 87 news stories from the four newspapers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the earliest, broad-based studies on how news media operate in coverage natural disasters involved five research investigations between 1979 and 1984 actions in large-scale disasters. Sood et al.

(1987) based their research on the fact as early as 1973, newspaper stories of accidents and disasters were read by 39 percent of readers, more than political news or general nonlocal human-interest news. They also noted that such news was news media personnel's chance to provide a valuable service to local victims while increasing broadcast ratings and newspaper circulation (p. 29). Their study looks at the following five events: 1) Hurricane David's pass over the newly independent Eastern Caribbean island of Dominica in August 1979; 2) a severe Seattle snowstorm in January 1980 where the snow remained on the ground for several days; 3) four storms in Southern California in February 1980 that dropped 13 inches of rain causing extensive floods and mudslides; 4) A 1982-93 Joint Information Center project anticipating the great Southern California earthquake and 5) a May 1983 earthquake in Coalinga, California that caused \$31 million in damage. Sood et al.'s (1987) when a disaster is severe, when a news organization can offer a service to local victims and when a radio or TV station is broadcasting, changes in the news flow can be substantial (p. 32). Additionally, based on their observation of emergent multi-organizational networks (EMON) that comprise personnel and resources from government, quasi-governmental and private organizations, they found when the news media are covering a disaster event for a distant audience and/or for its sensational value, the news media are seen as intrusive, a nuisance and drain on resources such as time (Sood et al., 1987, p. 32).

Much of this research focused on a particular hurricane. Conducted more than two decades ago, Salwen's (1995) analysis of news sources quoted in four U.S. newspapers pertaining to Hurricane Andrew, which ravaged South Florida and sections of Louisiana in August 1992, focused on *The Miami Herald*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the *Times-Picayune* of New Orleans. Cervone (2019) conducted a case study analysis of 1995 hurricane Opal event in Okaloosa County, Florida using face-to-face interviews and oral histories about Opal. Adeola and Picou (2017) did a systematic empirical analysis of key determinants of Hurricane Katrina-induced environmental justice attitudes among severely affected survivors in both Louisiana and Mississippi three years into the recovery. Related to Katrina, another study focused on international journalists' expectations from the news media. Kalyango and Eckler (2010) found expectations for accuracy, diversity and skepticism were not met while the journalists were satisfied with investigative reporting and public dialogue. Speaking of Hurricane Katrina, Johnson et al. (2011) content analyzed the first week of network and cable television broadcasts from New Orleans after it made landfall. They found although many hurricane victims were low-income African Americans, news of looting and other activities featured disproportionate number of Whites, particularly in speaking roles.

Some researchers did comparative analyses of coverage of hurricanes or disasters. For example, Petersen (2014) compared the news coverage of Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake in Haiti in order to highlight the political work of disaster news in affirming racialized distinctions between so-called "developed" and "underdeveloped" nations. Interested in the role of media relations and TV coverage on charitable relief fundraising after a disaster, Waters (2013) content analyzed news coverage on the three major broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) and cable outlets (MSNBC, CNN, Fox News) along with data from national public polls and fundraising from top five fundraising organizations (American Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision and UNICEF). They found when comparing the 2004 Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and 2010 Haitian earthquake, when nonprofit organizations were mentioned in the news stories, donations to their relief efforts increased. Additionally, when their media spokespeople were interviewed and participated in the TV stories, they

were generally able to convey positive messages about the five organizations. A third example of comparative study focused on news frames in coverage of Hurricane Harvey, which made landfall in Texas on August 25, 2017 and Hurricane Maria that made landfall a month later on the island of Puerto in September 2017 (Kempton, 2020).

According to Duus (2012), the pattern of reaction to catastrophic disaster can be broken down into several overlapping phases: *blaming, coping, hoping, learning, and forgetting*. While the phases were developed by researchers in Japan, which is peculiarly susceptible to tragic disaster because it sits atop the intersection of four major tectonic plates is crisscrossed by hundreds of active geological fault zones and in the path of destructive seasonal typhoons, the phases can be applied to any disaster in any place. In Duus's research, during the *blaming* stage, journalists, pundits and politicians began the search for the culpable almost immediately. While it's second stage, *coping* is often the first concern in the wake of a disaster as authorities work toward the restoration of order and stability as quickly as dealing with the dead and injured (p. 179) The third phase, *dreaming* is characterized by those who would imagine something better as part of a societal great change or transformation that will make the world better than before. This *dreaming* stage is followed by the *learning* stage, which Duus (2012) acknowledged has its limits and at best can reduce but not prevent the loss of human life. In the *learning* stage, local knowledge and advanced technology come together with hopes of identifying a better strategy for how to manage disasters in the future. The final stage, *forgetting*, accounts for both natural and human disasters with the former more likely to be forgotten. "An enemy is tangible and persistent in a way that a tornado, a tsunami and an earth is not" (p.186).

### News deserts

In the last five years, much has written about so-called news deserts (Abernathy, 2020; Claussen, 2020a; Sullivan, 2020). Chief among that work are studies by Penelope Abernathy, Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics at the University of North Carolina, who since 2017 has documented the loss of local news and implications for democracy. In her 2020 report entitled "News Deserts and Ghost Newspapers," Abernathy wrote that we can measure the loss of local news in two ways: the loss of newspapers and the loss of journalists, reflected in particular by the last 15 years up to 2020 when more than one-fourth of the country's newspaper disappeared, leaving residents in thousands of communities—inner city neighborhoods, suburban towns and rural villages living in vast news deserts (Abernathy, 2020, p. 8). Elsewhere in that report, Abernathy (2020) described the country's newspaper ecosystem as a pyramid with a very large base of small papers serving communities ranging in size from a few hundred to a million or more residents. Included in the 6,570 papers that form the base are ethnic newspapers. They help residents in small and mid-sized communities understand what is going on in their community and also put into local context national issues (p. 13).

Former *Newspaper Research Journal* Editor Dane Claussen devoted two of his editor's columns to analyzing Abernathy's research. One his initial critiques was that we should not be focusing solely on whether each county has a newspaper, but how many newspapers the country should have given its unique size, gross population, population change, population density, etc. (Claussen, 2020a). In his second column, Claussen (2020b) spotlights the reminder in Abernathy's research that U.S. news consumers consist of several distinct groups—people who prefer the printed edition and are willing to

pay for it, people who prefer digital news and are not willing to pay for it, and a small group of people who tolerate digital news and are willing to pay for it (p. 396).

*Washington Post* Media Columnist Margaret Sullivan's (2020) *Ghosting the News: Local Journalism and the Crisis of American Democracy* includes reporting from places with little or no local news and how some like nonprofit news organization, local public radio are trying to fill the void. Most relevant for this study is Sullivan's mention of the difference between *New Orleans Times-Picayune* coverage of Hurricane Katrina and *The Times-Picayune's* 2005 decision to yield to a "more aggressive" competitor in Baton Rouge, the *Advocate* that took over the *Times-Picayune* name (Sullivan, 2020, p. 24)

### **The Black Press**

This study focused on outlets that make up a small part of the Black Press, defined by Wolseley (1990) with three qualifications: 1) Blacks must own and manage the publication; 2) the publication must be intended for black consumers and 3) The paper or magazine must serve, speak and fight for the black minority. While they drew little attention before World War II, by the time of the Civil Rights Movement in 1950s and 60s, these largely black weeklies ridiculed white hypocrisy, spoke out bitterly against racial injustice and covered social and religious organizations in detail (Roberts & Klibanoff, 2006). In 1932, *The Atlanta World* became a daily after first publishing twice and then three times a week, it was the flagship publication of the Scott Newspaper Syndicate (SNS) that included the *Birmingham World* and *Memphis World* (Aiello, 2018). *The Chicago Defender* went daily in 1956 and competed with white-owned newspapers and broadcast outlets in covering the "race beat" just as Civil Rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. came on the scene (Michaeli, 2016). The *Defender* ceased publication in July 2019 and shifted to a digital only publication. It joined sister publication, *Michigan Chronicle* in a conversion to digital only outlets as a growing number of digital-only start-ups, some of which were not black-owned and operated, were taking up roles once played by the Black Press.

Following a string of protests and civil unrest in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020, recognition of the so-called "new Black Press" came in a report in *Nieman Reports*. In it, Douglas (2020) spotlighted outlets such as The TRiiBE; theGrio, a video-centric site devoted to African-American perspectives; *ZORA*, a publication for women of color hosted on *Medium*; digital sports and culture site *The Undefeated*; Coronavirus News for Black Folks, a newsletter focused on the disparate impact of the pandemic on African-Americans; and *The Root*. They target Black audiences with news, information and resources for Black communities. None had a printed outlet as its core product. Meanwhile, the future of hard-copy Black-owned newspapers took centerstage in late May 2020 "Black Media Speaks" forum sponsored NAACP in which no Black print newspaper publisher was included. Earl "Butch" Graves, CEO of the 50-year-old Black Enterprise announced that the iconic black business publication started by his father, the late Earl Graves, Sr. had moved almost completely to an online publication. He noted "Print is not going to survive. It will not be here five years from now. That's a hard pill to swallow but it is a reality. So, either you re-invent or you die." (Edney, 2020)

In noticing that scholars had given almost no attention to Black news websites, Greenwell (2012) content analyzed 540 articles from three news sites geared toward African Americans: *TheGrio.com*, *The Root.com* and *theloop21.com*. Among other things, she found the sites' use of "we" and "us" was

common as all three websites tried to connect with their assumed middle-class African American audience. In contrast to the tradition Black newspapers, the Black news websites were not averse to critiquing their own. They provided a platform for more voices with the African American population to be heard. Furthermore, the Black oriented websites were photo-centric with the use of numerous photos of African American operating as a counternarrative to mainstream media (p. 127).

Based on her interviews with 30 journalists, Fayne (2020) argued that new media required journalists to reimagine what constitutes the Black Press. The definition of the Black Press that was constructed based on traditional print Black Press outlets is no longer comprehensive. While legacy Black Press outlets are still adhering to previous Black Press conceptions, digital-first outlets are expanding and redefining the medium (p. 716).

### **New Orleans, Race, and Hurricane Katrina**

Since Hurricane Katrina came ashore, at least three book-length studies have been conducted on what was arguably the biggest, most long-standing news outlet in New Orleans, the *Times-Picayune*, which has been published in some form since 1837. One of those books focused on Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Disaster in 2010. Former *Times-Picayune* staff writer Rebecca Theim (2013) detailed the effort to save daily publication of the *Times-Picayune*, which experienced “Katrina without the water” when the paper’s owner, Advance Publications in 2012 announced the conversion to a three-day-a-week publication. A year later, Alexander et al. (2014) used the *Times-Picayune* and its reduced print schedule to three days a week in 2012 as a case study of the crisis in metropolitan journalism. In addition to results of a content analysis of *Times-Picayune* stories before and after the 2012 decision to provide a digital decision, Alexander et al. (2014) made mention of both *The Louisiana Weekly* and *New Orleans Tribune* as weekly publications that were left in the market. That same year, Miller, Roberts and LaPoe (2014) published *Oil and Water: Media Lessons from Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Disaster*. In it, the story of the *Times-Picayune*’s conversion was embedded along with the stories of other local news media in “the Crescent City.” The authors focused on the quality of journalism as reflected in coverage of both Hurricane Katrina and Deepwater Horizon Disaster by both local and national media. One of the main takeaways from Miller et. al’s (2014) book was the importance of local news to communities. They wrote “local news drives preparation, endurance, resilience, and recovers. It provides a collective voice. If the main voice of a community is not silenced, but asked to whisper, too many will not hear, others will not speak” (p. 151). Beyond the changes of *Times-Picayune*, these findings about the importance of local news serve as a launching for this study of Black newspapers, most of whom were mainly local news outlets.

Elsewhere those outside of the journalism and mass communication have offered book-length treatments on the Hurricane Katrina and its link to racial inequality. In *Race, place and environmental justice after Hurricane Katrina*, Bullard and Wright (2009) argued that race plays out in natural disaster survivors’ ability to rebuild, replace infrastructure, obtain loans and locate temporary and permanent housing. This book focused on so-called “geography of vulnerability” by asking the question why some communities get left behind when disasters strike. Bullard and Wright’s (2009) came several years after Squires and Hartman (2006) published *There Is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster*. It was billed as the first comprehensive critical book on the catastrophic impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans. Among the contributors to the edited volume, Powell et al. (2006) used Katrina to call for a broadening

of how we think and talk about race as a transformative tool that could be applied to more than just rebuilding in New Orleans. They proposed a model for understanding race-class linkages how race disparities are reproduced in the United States through structural arrangements that benefit only a few (Powell et al., 2006, p. 61).

### **Crisis Communication in Stages**

In describing the nature of a crisis, Fearn-Banks (2002) lays out five stages. *Detection* is the first stage of the crisis and involves a system within an organization in which key personnel are immediately notified of a crisis. The second stage, *Crisis preparation* is necessary for dealing with crises that cannot be prevented. From a public relations perspective, regular two-way communications build relationships with key publics and thereby prevent crises lessen the blows or limit the duration. In the third stage, *Containment* refers to the effort to limit the duration of the crisis or to keep it from spreading to other areas affecting the organization. Stage four, *Recovery* involves efforts to return the company to business as usual while *Learning* is the fifth and final stage with a process of examining the crisis and determining what was lost.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Since Duus' (2012) research was developed around the pattern of reaction to catastrophic disaster based on place like Japan, which is susceptible to tragic disasters, this study's authors wondered if New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana region could be likened to Japan in its susceptibility to disaster and thus, coverage in Black Press outlets reflect that. Given the number of academic studies specifically on Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath (Adeola & Piccou, 2017; Johnson et al., 2014, Kalyango and Eckler, 2010; Petersen, 2014), this study sought to answer the following:

**R1:** How does proximity to bodies of water where hurricanes or natural disasters occur impact the way that Black Press outlets cover natural disasters?

In her research on news deserts, Abernathy (2020) described ethnic news outlets in the country's newspaper ecosystem as part of the very large base of small papers serving communities ranging in size from a few hundred to a million or more residents. With the research on news deserts in mind, the authors of this study looked at the following:

**R2:** To what extent do news deserts factor into the manner in which the Black Press covers natural disaster?

**R3:** When compared to the coverage of mainstream news outlets, to what extent is the coverage of natural disaster similar or dissimilar?

And even though a historic Black-owned publication like the *Chicago Defender* are now digital- only outlets while its sister publication, *Michigan Chronicle* continues to offer a print edition even as the "New Black Press" provided a platform for more voices with the African American population to be heard (Greenwell, 2011), the authors of this study wondered would there be a difference between a

cross-platform outlets in both Philadelphia and New Orleans in their achieving the mission of Black Press. The following question was posed:

**R4:** What evidence exists of the traditional advocacy role of the Black Press in the coverage of natural disasters?

## METHOD

A textual analysis was used to analyze the news content on Hurricane Ida. According to McKee's (2003) guide to the method, textual analysis is a data-gathering process for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are and of how they fit into the world in which they live.

To answer the aforementioned four research questions, Hurricane Ida coverage from the three African American publications in New Orleans: *The Louisiana Weekly*, *The New Orleans Data News Weekly* and *the New Orleans Tribune* was sampled along with coverage in *The Philadelphia Tribune*. The LA Weekly and the *Data News Weekly* publish on average four times a month and *the New Orleans Tribune* publishes monthly. The *Louisiana Weekly* is currently the city's oldest active Black Press publication, in print since 1925; *Data News Weekly* is over 50 years old and *The New Orleans Tribune* has published for over 35 years in the city. All three publications are family run and owned from long-time New Orleans African American families that have lived in the city over five generations. *The Philadelphia Tribune* has been publishing since 1884 when it began as a one-page weekly. Today in addition to its three national editions on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, the *Philadelphia Tribune* publishes two local editions on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

To sample articles for the three publications, the authors had access to the E-edition PDF files for each of the three New Orleans publications. The authors flipped the electronic pages of the archives from September 1, 2021 to February 28, 2022, the six-month period after Hurricane Ida which served as the study's sample period for Louisiana coverage. The authors tagged articles that mentioned Hurricane Ida, and only counted articles produced by the publication's staff or contributors, and excluded wire copy, advertorials, editorials, or articles provided through other shared content agreements. For instance, the *Louisiana Weekly* published articles contributed by the *Louisiana Illuminator* and *The Lens*, both alternative, investigative non-profit journalism organizations in the state. Those articles were eliminated for the study to fully gauge what topics the publications prioritized and dedicated their time and resources to cover in-house.

For the newspapers in Louisiana, after filtering the articles, the staff-produced articles were coded by main topic. To do so, the authors searched for the articles on the news organizations' websites and used the story tags to identify the categories assigned to different Hurricane Ida stories. The articles were sorted by their story tags to determine the most common storm stories. Articles that had multiple shared story tags were coded by the most prominent tag indicated in the story's headline or its lead paragraph so as not to double count articles. Therefore, story tags were not unique to any article but could feature as a combination of tags within one article. But for the purpose of identifying story focus each article was only assigned its most prominent tag. Story tags by publication are identified in Table 1A. A total of 70 articles were coded by story tags and entered into a Microsoft Excel sheet to create



Table 1A. The articles were examined to explore how crises were framed, connected and linked within the body of these stories.

To account for the manner of coverage in Philadelphia, stories were selected from E-editions from PDF files for each of the published editions beginning August 31 and continued through September 24, a point at which the coverage began to drop off. The dates selected were designed to capture the most examples of Hurricane Ida coverage. In the September 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> editions, there was only a single story related to Hurricane Ida. Story tags for *The Philadelphia Tribune* articles are identified in Table 2A. A total of 17 articles were coded by story tags and entered into a Microsoft Excel sheet to create Table 2A. Like the Louisiana stories, the articles in *The Philadelphia Tribune* were examined to explore how crises were framed, connected and linked with the body of coverage in the single publication.

Publication	<i>The Louisiana Weekly</i>	<i>The New Orleans Tribune</i>	<i>The New Orleans Data News Weekly</i>	N
<b>Post-storm Month:</b>				
<i>September 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FEMA (2)</li> <li>COVID-19 (3)</li> <li>local elections (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local elections (1)</li> <li>insurance claims (1)</li> <li>COVID-19 (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>storm debris (1)</li> <li>community resources (1)</li> <li>FEMA (1)</li> <li>power restoration (1)</li> </ul>	
<i>October 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evictions (1)</li> <li>community resources (4)</li> <li>local elections (1)</li> <li>Mayor Latoya Cantrell (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>storm relief (1)</li> <li>shelters (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>storm debris (1)</li> <li>community resources (3)</li> <li>local elections (1)</li> <li>city recovery (1)</li> </ul>	
<i>November 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>city infrastructure (1)</li> <li>local elections (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community resources (3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>city recovery (1)</li> <li>community resources (3)</li> <li>local elections (1)</li> </ul>	
<i>December 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>city infrastructure (1)</li> <li>local businesses (1)</li> <li>community resources (4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>storm debris (1)</li> <li>bills (1)</li> <li>storm relief (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community resources (3)</li> </ul>	
<i>January 2022</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>city council (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>storm scams (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community resources (3)</li> </ul>	
<i>February 2022</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mayor Latoya Cantrell (3)</li> <li>city council (3)</li> <li>city infrastructure (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>insurance claims (1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community resources (4)</li> </ul>	
Publication N	N = 32	N = 13	N = 25	70

\*\*Story tags are identifiers that news editors use to categorize stories that were also tagged with "Hurricane Ida."

Table 1A. Story Tags for Post-Hurricane Ida Coverage in the Black Press

The authors also coded the *The Times Picayune/The Advocate/Nola.com*'s front page Hurricane Ida stories for the most common story headlines after the storm. The mainstream newspaper's electronic paper was used to identify the most prominent front-page post-Ida story for each week and those story headlines were entered in to create Table 1B. This allowed the others to also track the types of

progressing coverage in the mainstream media at the same of the coverage identified in the African American newspapers.

Publication	<i>The Times Picayune</i> <i>Nola.com</i> <i>The Advocate</i>
<i>September 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• death toll</li> <li>• nursing home</li> <li>• St. Charles Parish</li> <li>• FEMA aid</li> <li>• Lafitte</li> <li>• Governor-state</li> <li>• Entergy</li> <li>• claims</li> </ul>
<i>October 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• power</li> <li>• storm debris</li> </ul>
<i>November 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local elections</li> <li>• coast</li> </ul>
<i>December 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• storm debris</li> </ul>
<i>January 2022</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• city council</li> </ul>
<i>February 2022</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor Latoya Cantrell</li> <li>• Mardi Gras</li> <li>• city council</li> </ul>

Table 1B. Most Prominent Hurricane Ida Headlines in The Times-Picayne/Nola.com

Publication	<i>The Philadelphia Tribune</i>	No. of articles
<i>August 31, 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Louisiana conditions</li> </ul>	1
<i>September 3, 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools impact</li> <li>• Federal response to climate change</li> <li>• Resources for help</li> <li>• Racial Minority impact</li> </ul>	4
<i>September 5, 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NE regional impact</li> <li>• Made in America event continues in spite of storm</li> <li>• Louisiana rebuilding</li> <li>• Relief for local businesses</li> </ul>	4
<i>September 7, 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• city infrastructure</li> <li>• Blacks/disaster aid</li> <li>• River trail impact</li> <li>• Federal aid to NE region</li> </ul>	4
<i>September 10, 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New building impact</li> <li>• Blacks/disaster aid</li> </ul>	2
<i>September 12, 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural aid still sought for Louisiana</li> </ul>	1
<i>September 24, 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance woes</li> </ul>	1
Publication N		17

Table 2A. Story Tags for Post Hurricane Ida Coverage in *The Philadelphia Tribune*

To provide a similar comparison to mainstream media in Philadelphia/Delaware Valley, the authors also coded articles from *The Philadelphia Daily News*, a tabloid-style newspaper that is a subsidiary of *Philadelphia Daily News, LLC*, that appeared using the “Hurricane Ida” search term in the Global Newstream database. Because of the limited number of stories on the front page of a tabloid style, stories inside the newspaper were also coded. The mainstream newspaper’s story headlines for stories published during the same time period as *The Philadelphia Tribune’s* coverage (August 31-September 24) were entered in to create Table 2B. This allowed the others to also track the types of progressing coverage in the mainstream media at the same of the coverage identified in the African American newspapers.

Publication	<i>The Philadelphia Daily News</i>	No. of articles
August 28, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood watch/preparations</li> </ul>	1
August 31, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely impact on waterways</li> </ul>	1
September 2, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tornadoes/Regional impact</li> <li>Helping Louisiana victims</li> </ul>	2
September 3, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools impact</li> <li>Potential festival impact</li> <li>Experiences local residents</li> <li>Biden promises aid</li> </ul>	4
September 5, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local residents killed</li> <li>Climate change blamed</li> <li>Ida’s path of destruction</li> <li>Vineway Express reopens</li> </ul>	4
September 7, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gloucester Co Disaster aid</li> <li>Shortage of labor in NE for cleanup</li> </ul>	2
September 9, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awaiting disaster aid</li> </ul>	1
September 11, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaster zone declared</li> </ul>	1
September 13, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure (sewer)</li> </ul>	1
September 14, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schuylkill River Trail impact</li> </ul>	1
September 17, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local temple impact</li> </ul>	2
September 19, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local museum impact</li> </ul>	1
September 22, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tips for applying for storm aid</li> </ul>	1
September 23, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lessons from Hurricane Ida</li> </ul>	1
September 26, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Louisiana seafood impact</li> </ul>	1
September 29, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philadelphia Jewish Hall of Fame impact</li> </ul>	1
Publication N		25

Table 2B. Story Tags for Post Hurricane Ida Coverage in *The Philadelphia Daily News*

## FINDINGS

A total of 87 stories, including 17 news stories in *The Philadelphia Tribune* were analyzed. Of the 17 *Philadelphia Tribune* news stories, only three were written by members of the *Tribune* reporting staff. In addition to being a member of the Associated Press, the *Tribune* also has an agreement with

National Public Radio affiliate WHYY and its online website, Billy Penn, a digital start-up that was acquired by WHYY.

While they have very different audiences, *The Philadelphia Tribune* and *Philadelphia Daily News* publish almost as frequently as one another. Except for Mondays, *The Philadelphia Tribune* is published each weekday and its coverage of the aftermath of Hurricane Ida was quite similar to the *Daily News*. The big difference was in the *Philadelphia Tribune*'s inclusion of two stories specifically addressing the storm's impact on racial minority groups. After carrying a September 3, 2021, story about the disproportionate impact of climate change on racial minority communities, the paper ran a story about a change in Federal Emergency Management Agency policy on providing aid to disaster victims whose homes or land were inherited informally without written wills. A story by the National Newspaper Publishers Association reporter Stacy Brown was followed with a shorter news brief on the same topic in the September 10<sup>th</sup> edition. These were not stories found in *Philadelphia Daily News*.

In general, both Philadelphia publications offered readers the hits and misses of the Hurricane Ida impact on the region with the *Daily News* publishing a slightly greater variety of topics. Climate change, aging city infrastructure and effect of the storm on planned activities appeared to be covered in both publications.

## DISCUSSION

News about Louisiana traveled all the way to Philadelphia, underscoring the scale of the disaster's impact in Greater New Orleans relative to that of Pennsylvania. The life of disaster coverage in Philadelphia spanned about a month, decreasing in frequency as time moved further away from disaster. In New Orleans, weekly and monthly coverage of Hurricane Ida persisted up to a six-month period following the disaster. The scale of the disaster's impact on the two metro areas were reflected in the extensive and enduring nature of the coverage that was more prolonged and pronounced in New Orleans than it was in Philadelphia. As noted, hurricanes and tropical storms remain an annual threat for Louisiana, and the state has received the majority of the physical and economic damage from this specific type of natural disaster, more so than any other state, except for Florida. And unlike Florida, the effects of the nation's worst storm disaster is still evident in New Orleans, even 16 years later. Disaster coverage therefore will endure when a specific type of disaster has become endemic to a place, and its impact becomes prolonged and its recovery protracted by compounding crises.

Mainstream media and the Black Press in both places made specific choices about allocating space and time to coverage. In New Orleans, the Black Press focused on how Hurricane Ida may have compounded existing challenges among African American residents that were already lingering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Mainstream media in Louisiana focused on the hardest hit parishes: St. Charles and Lafourche, and the state and federal responses to the crisis. Mainstream media was unable to capture the ground-level, community-by-community impacts and this gap was filled by the Black Press in New Orleans. In Philadelphia, the Black Press also focused on the specific impacts unique to African American households, while mainstream media provided a national overview of Ida's impact. When deciding on allocating resources for coverage, the Black Press focused on African American communities, while mainstream publications covered the disaster from a state or national perspective.

The Black Press was consistent in both New Orleans and Philadelphia in focusing on ways in which the community is providing resources to residents in need. This community response highlighted the resiliency within communities of color to organize, coordinate, intervene and advocate. This ranged from churches to civic organizations, Black-owned businesses and other institutions providing meals, assistance to the elderly to cover roofs with blue tarps, access to temporary shelters, cooling centers, and much more. African American organizations provided resources for residents on how to access both local and federal emergency services and mediators to help gain access to insurance providers to file damage claims. In New Orleans, the local election remained prominent in coverage as the Black Press held candidates accountable for how they would handle the recovery ranging from finding contractors for storm debris, restoring power to neighborhoods and providing insurance for residents who were being dropped from providers that had filed for bankruptcy. The framing of Ida's economic impact and its connections to the ongoing pandemic was an important aspect of the Black Press coverage because it connected the ways in which compounding crises had exacerbated hardships for already economically distressed households more than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Black Press coverage showed that families that had benefited from eviction moratoriums were being disregarded by landlords who had refused to repair or patch damaged rental properties after the storm as a way to force tenants out of distressed rental properties. The Black Press uniquely connected how a disaster's impact is disproportionate and can deliver the harshest blows to marginalized and low-income communities, that are often communities of color who lack power to advocate for their needs in a crisis. Mainstream outlets covered the broader Hurricane Ida story, but not always with the nuances of community knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

This study provided a preliminary look at how one major disaster was covered in two spaces, one that is uniquely prone to this type of disaster and another that was not typically prepared and pre-disposed to the annual impact of superstorms. This study showed that where disasters have become systemic, that coverage is prioritized, better contextualized and the recovery process remains embedded within the news cycle for much longer. In places that rarely see these types of disasters, victims unfortunately can fall off the news cycle relatively quickly and this is true for both mainstream and ethnic publications.

What this study reaffirms that even in natural disaster crises, the Black Press, as an ethnic, advocacy press, fills gaps in coverage that aims to distinguish how low income, communities of color suffer the most, what those disparities look like and what resources are needed to help those most in need. They also work to connect communities to resources and to advocate on their behalf to elected officials to provide urgent and sustained relief for marginalized residents. The Black Press often maintains this coverage with limited staff, time and resources, but its very nature and relevance to its community bolsters its commitment to this kind of journalism that their communities need most in a crisis.

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## Funding and Acknowledgements

The authors declare no funding sources or conflicts of interest.

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