

The media Coverage of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans

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Quick Facts

1836 Deaths

Massive Property
Damage

Human Suffering
on Mass Scale



Ethical Question

Is it ethical for the media outlets to comprise their objectively or show ambivalence or oblivion towards being politically correct?

Context of the Case

- A disaster in New Orleans
- No Connections
- The media outlets are only source for information
- The language used the media outlets is controversial

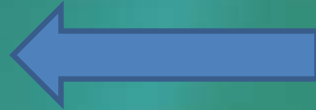
Refugee

- According to Oxford Dictionary, refugee means: The person who has been forced to leave his or her country because of war or because they are being persecuted.

However:

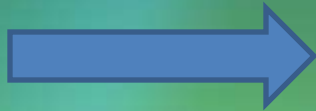
- Some dictionaries say refugee and evacuee are similar "synonym".

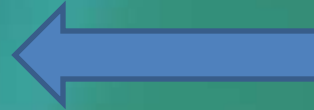




Looters taking advantage of the crisis

People in need finding food

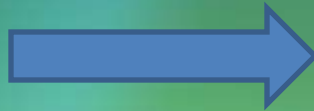




Thief?



Victims?



Statistics

Sommers et al. (2006) examined Google News search:

- 15 days
- 3870 stories
- 2830 stories used “evacuee”
- 1040 stories used “refugee”
- 2.7 to 1

Statistics

Nunberg (2005) studied Nexis wire service

- 7 days
- % 56 of the articles used “evacuee”
- % 44 of the articles used “refugee”
- 1.3 to 1

Also, Nunberg found:

- “Refugee” appeared within a distance of 10 words of “poor” and “Black”

Situational Analysis

Pros

- This indicates power of Media that informs and educates people & shapes public perception
- It enforced rescue agencies to grasp criticalness of threat & urgency of the situation

Cons

- Media portrayed African Americans as criminals
- Media's irresponsible & biased coverage resulted in devastating impact
- Such biased representation of media portrayed New Orleans as a crime zone

Stakeholders



Whole Society

- It affected perceptions of all regarding African Americans

Journalists

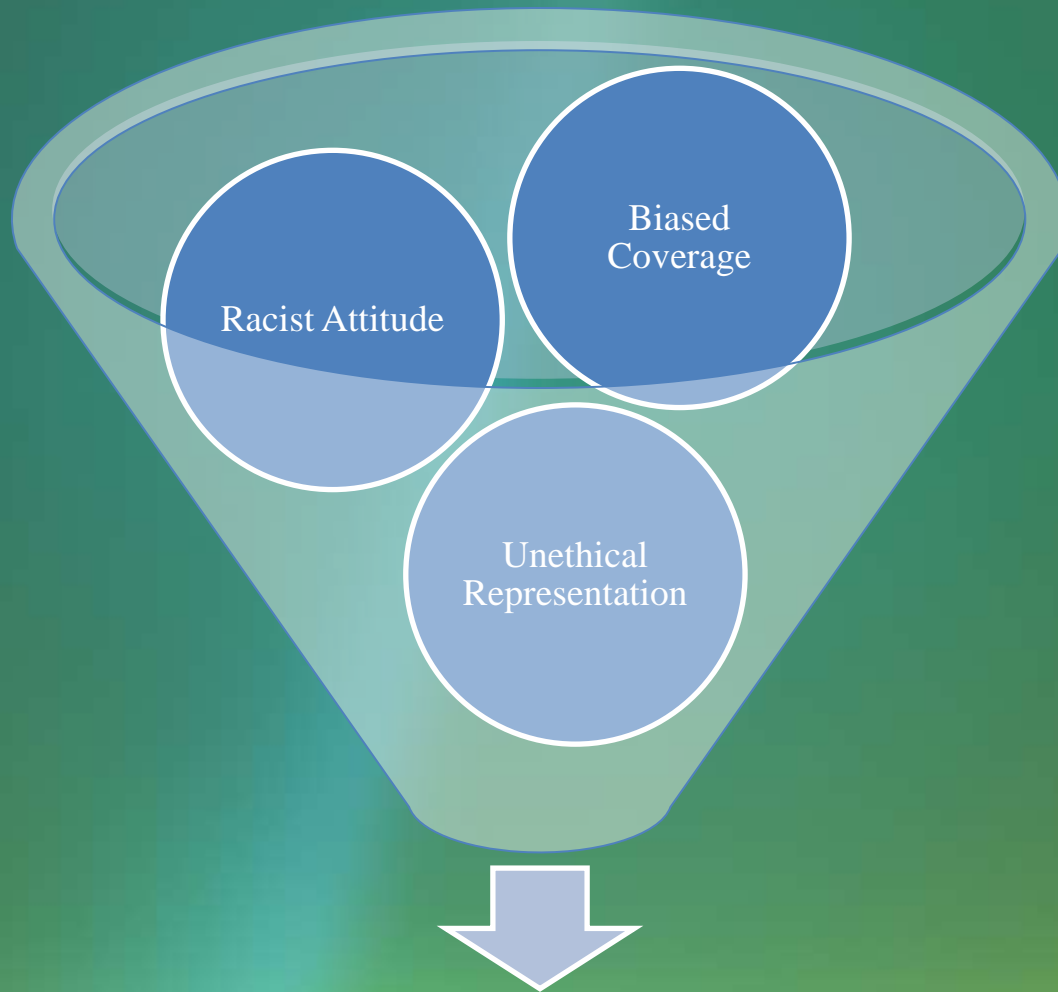
- Lesson-learning experience

African Americans

- They were portrayed as criminals and not victims
- They find problems in finding employment

Final Decision

- Evidence is not conclusive regarding racial bias but it is strong enough to consider the possibility of racism within media and its reinforcement of stereotypes.
- There are no doubts that the media does not only inform public but it also shapes perceptions of the public.



New Orleans as a Prison city rather
than a Disaster stricken city

Personal
Stereotypes

Media shapes
public
perception

Moral & Ethical
Responsibilities
towards Society

Responsibility
towards
Shareholders

Widespread
Racism



Q & A Session

What?

Why?

How?

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