

STARS AS SAVIORS: EXAMINING NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE OF CELEBRITY AID
AFTER HURRICANE DORIAN IN THE BAHAMAS

by

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Abstract

It is known that natural disasters amplify economic and social realities, exposing the vulnerability that many island nations face. Although journalists report on such disasters, at some point the news coverage may shift focus from the disaster event and its impact to which celebrities are offering aid. This study investigates how celebrities were framed by journalists during the relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas in 2019. Drawing on framing theory and a qualitative textual analysis of 50 online articles published in English-language media outlets, a key news frame was identified: Celebrity Response, which emphasizes celebrity representation in a news story as the solution to the issue or problem. The study suggests that this frame reflects neocolonialist ideological patterns within the news media stories of Hurricane Dorian celebrity-initiated relief. The textual analysis also shows that four key framing mechanisms were used by journalists to construct the frame: dramatic language, which reveals how a text can impact the meaning of a news story; celebrity-centric headlines, which show how an important component in the news story structure can translate celebrity relevance as paramount in post-disaster relief; social media as validation, where social media references are used as content to validate the celebrity as a source; and source elevation, where the celebrity is granted higher placement and meaning in the news story as opposed to those experiencing the impact. The findings of this study help understand the interdependence between the ‘who’ that is impacted and the ‘who’ that is elevated in the journalism structure, exposing both a Western and neocolonialist perspective when it comes to natural disaster news reporting about post-disaster relief efforts in a developing nation. Implications for journalism studies and journalism practice are discussed.

Lay Summary

This thesis examines how celebrities were framed by journalists during the relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas. Through a textual analysis of news stories, the study identified a celebrity-based news frame projecting the celebrity as the solution to disaster relief. This study also identified the means through which the frame was created, revealing an underbelly of neocolonialist symbolic elements embedded in the news discourse about celebrity disaster relief. One of those means was embedding celebrities' social media posts as a method of source verification, as opposed to retrieving the information via traditional journalistic means. This thesis contributes to framing theory and helps understand how journalists portray celebrities in disaster relief news stories outside the jurisdiction of these two groups. The thesis also raises critical questions about how post-colonial countries are represented in the digital news media in times of crisis.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Alex Amethea Missick.

A University of British Columbia student license of the NVivo Pro software was used to complete the coding process.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, the most resilient person I know. I do not know where I would be without her love and belief in my education. I am forever grateful to this true Androsian woman that used her instincts and survival skills to save my younger siblings at a time when hundreds of lives were being taken and swept out to sea in Hurricane Dorian's path.

1 Introduction: From Hurricane Dorian to Celebrity Aid

In 2019, Hurricane Dorian slithered through The Bahamas as one of the most powerful weather events recorded in the Atlantic Ocean (Ezer, 2020). The Category 5 hurricane left thousands homeless, hundreds dead, and a \$3.4 billion bill of destruction (Bello et al., 2020). Meanwhile, scores of journalists, both local and foreign to The Bahamas, flocked to the most impacted islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama, sharing news of the storm's aftermath. As the humanitarian efforts emerged, some of the news media's coverage of Hurricane Dorian shifted from the impacted locals and land to which foreign celebrities were offering aid and how much of it. News headlines about celebrities initiating disaster relief varied from *"These are the celebrities who supported The Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian"* (Rogo, 2019) to *"Ludacris, Chef José Andrés and others who are helping the victims of Hurricane Dorian"* (Elkins, 2019).

The news media's interest was no longer rooted in telling the stories of inequality, displaced families, destruction, and the broader issue of climate change, but there was now a reliance on an elite-focused narrative to move the disaster relief story forward. This change in news reports about who experienced the initial impact to who is offering relief is perhaps due to the audience where the news media is being consumed (America), driving the news story that is most relevant to the audience's everyday lives (McCombs, 2002) based on their own constructed reality of the impacted country. Within the first month after Hurricane Dorian left The Bahamas, more than 30 entertainment and sports celebrities were introduced into the disaster relief news narrative. Their introduction allowed the news media to personify the celebrity as a hero. As Kitch (2000) suggested, journalism's role in deeming a celebrity as a newsworthy character and state of being is an intricate process because it justifies the appeal of celebrities in the public discourse. As a result, the celebrity's role in journalism manifests in the public appeal of

celebrity, orchestrated by the celebrity's relationship with the news media, thus elevating the celebrity's "cultural authority" (p. 190).

Communication research indicates that celebrities offer human representation and newsworthiness to a narrative in order to keep up with the changing public sphere (Dubied & Hanitzsch, 2013; Lalonde, 2008). Chouliaraki (2019) described the celebrity placement in the disaster relief narrative as "politics of pity based on a theatrical conception of action" (p. 19). As Chazal and Pocrnic (2016) argued, it is essentially the "western global elites and those with the capacity to engage with digital technologies which hold the privilege of the morally superior, global savior" (p. 106). Therefore, the news media participate in the mass distribution of news stories and images of post-disaster suffering and destruction, which in turn introduce the susceptibility of emotion and action towards the West (Chouliaraki, 2019), constructing a Western savior narrative through the celebrity.

Ultimately, the journalist may find themselves having to communicate a disaster event through a celebrity, therefore deeming the disaster static and dependent upon a prominent narrative to bring it to life, allowing the disaster to have a voice (Bell, 2017). This dependence by journalists on celebrity's influence to communicate disaster relief efforts reveals a fundamental gap in the salience of the '*who*' that is impacted and the '*who*' that should be speaking in the basic journalism structure when it comes to natural disaster news reporting about relief efforts in post-colonial environments. Journalism studies have neglected the influence of celebrity culture on the news media during crises. Scholarly literature is limited in understanding how celebrity culture can dictate its representation of relief in the news media discourse based on the ideological structures that may exist within the journalistic storytelling and the geological location of the disaster. It is within this context that this study seeks to uncover how journalists

framed celebrities' relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian and the devices used to frame news stories about these efforts.

1.1 Study purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine how celebrities were framed by journalists during relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian. This hurricane is the most recent Category 5 hurricane to impact The Bahamas and had coastal implications on the eastern United States as well as Atlantic Canada (National Weather Service, 2019).

Based on a qualitative textual analysis of 50 English-language articles that were published online by Western media outlets during the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, I identified the frame used by journalists in their coverage of celebrities' relief efforts in The Bahamas. I also examined the means used by journalists to construct the frame. Drawing on Reese (2001), frames are understood in this study as “organizing principles that are socially shared” and “work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (p. 11). As Gamson (1989) suggested, “a frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue” (p. 157). Frames possess not only a power to dictate the structure of the information contained in news, but also an ability to create meaning out of facts (Entman, 1993; Tankard, 2001). Contributing to that power are framing devices or framing mechanisms (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Tankard, 2001). Drawing on Pan and Kosicki (1993), framing devices related to news discourse (syntactical, script, rhetorical, and thematic structures) can also help reveal frames in the text, along with the inclusion or omission of keywords, phrases, sources, and background information. In this study, I suggest that social media content can also be used in aiding the development of news frames.

By revealing how celebrities were framed by journalists during relief efforts in The Bahamas post-Hurricane Dorian, this thesis makes two main theoretical contributions. First, it introduces what I term *Celebrity Response Frame*, which portrays the celebrity as the dominant solution in a disaster relief news story and can be reinforced by the ideological components relevant to the story context. Specifically, in the examined context, I found that neocolonial perspectives were amplified throughout the text, reflecting Western values and elite culture based on journalists' stereotypical perceptions of the region and people impacted by the disaster.

Second, the thesis identifies the combination of means through which the celebrity-based frame is constructed, and celebrity culture is granted informational precedence and power to attract and persuade (Harvey, 2017). The means I identified include both traditional means, such as the choice of headlines, and a newer means – embedding social media posts in news stories. These contributions help understand how celebrity culture is brought into journalism in times of disaster.

1.2 Justification

Disasters do not exist outside of their initial point of destruction unless publicized by the news media (Benthall, 1993). Therefore, for many people, the first point of knowledge about a disaster is the news media. Journalists have the power to construct the social meaning behind that disaster's existence through the media framing of events. In a nation where celebrities are elevated, journalism can mold attitudes surrounding celebrity culture, attracting attention through the collective use of words and content, which ultimately become more important in the story (Barkin, 2016; Entman, 1991). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how journalists frame celebrity's involvement in disaster relief. Journalism studies are underdeveloped in terms of examining journalism's relationship with celebrity culture during times of crisis. Specifically,

previous media studies about celebrity-involved relief after a disaster (e.g., Cloud, 2014; Driessens et al., 2012) have not adequately explained how journalists construct the role of a celebrity in the news story and the silence of those impacted by the disaster.

The present study addresses this gap and helps understand the projection of silence and ongoing colonial dispossession of post-colonial, non-Western voices in journalism due to the growth of celebrity journalism within the natural disaster news discourse. The news coverage of celebrities offering disaster relief presents a “narrative of mutual congratulations between the ‘public’ and the heroic figure of the celebrity” (Lim & Moufahim, 2015, p. 526) and neglects the people directly impacted. This reinforces the effects of prejudices and racial discrimination that dominated colonialist ideology and may very well still impact the locals’ perceptions of themselves and those that come to their shores (Palmer, 1994). This study allows for a better understanding of how framing grants different news sources a blueprint to be elevated in different ways surrounding the disaster relief discourse.

This topic is worthy of exploration because The Bahamas is unique not only in its geographical proximity to America but also in its colonial legacy via the allure of tourism, as much of the Caribbean itself is “a place of second chance for the colonizer” (Strachan, 2002, p. 37). Further, American influence has always been abundant in the Caribbean. Drawing on Lewis (1968), it is important to understand the implications of race in U.S. media. America’s history of racial segregation, coupled with much of the American public’s inability to experience a variety of people of African descent, resulted in a dependence of Whites on African American images that were produced and reflected by the media. Therefore, non-persons of color depended profoundly on “cultural material, especially media images, for cataloging blacks” (Entman & Rokecki, 2007, p. 49).

As technology has advanced for the immediate and expanded reach of information, news media have utilized the internet as a way to maintain themselves as an authoritative source, allowing persons to gain knowledge about different people, cultures, countries, and events around the globe. However, news media grant celebrities a psychologically cyber-sanctioned reach, allowing the celebrity to simultaneously maintain their heightened identity and influence in the part of the world they call home and the part experiencing the crisis, while automatically reassigning the “Other” identity to those in the country where the disaster event occurred. When this happens, we can discover how framing can dictate news stories about disasters and celebrity-initiated relief. This study is important because it shows how journalists in a technologically media-driven world leverage social media content as a means of source validation from publicly supported personalities and media systems that can affect the very journalistic values they are subscribed to uphold.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis contains five parts. After the introduction on these pages (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature and sets out the theoretical argument. It explains the principal theory of media framing, identifying how the framing mechanisms used in a news story development work together to define a news frame. It explains the important notion of the black experience in disasters and its connection to post-colonial countries. It also explains how disasters become news and are covered in news, as well as the journalistic coverage of celebrities and their role in disaster relief efforts. Based on the existing literature, a research question along with accompanying sub-questions are presented.

Chapter 3 describes and explains the research method employed in this study: qualitative textual analysis. This chapter also provides information about the selection of key search terms,

selection of news outlets in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K, and how news articles were analyzed. In addition, this chapter addresses the researcher's positionality and its connection to the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. It introduces a new frame and identifies how the frame and framing mechanisms of meaning intersect. It also reveals a projection of neocolonialist ideologies, as well as journalists' use of technological means as validations to tell the news stories about post-Hurricane Dorian relief.

Chapter 5 provides a review and discussion of the study findings, along with social implications and theoretical contributions, specifically as they relate to researchers turning their focus beyond how frames are structured and into the deeper social meanings that frames can unfold. It offers suggestions for journalism studies and practice, as well as study limitations and directions for future research.

2 Theoretical Background: Journalism, Celebrities, and Race in

Times of Disaster

2.1 Statement of the problem

The problem I am confronting in this study is how to best understand the ways in which celebrities offering post-disaster relief are covered by Western news media. The problem involves understanding how celebrities are framed via their involvement in post-disaster relief and what elements are used to construct the perception of celebrities' relief actions in post-disaster news stories. The main purpose of this chapter is to uncover what the existing body of literature reveals about journalism and its connection to celebrity culture as it relates to disaster relief. Journalism plays a key role in how audiences understand the issues of the world. Following a disaster, news coverage morphs into a speculum where "the site is now a sight" (Strachan, 2002, p. 112) that propels the journalists' task to construct the aftermath of the disaster story in a new way, directing the audiences' gaze towards the flesh and bone representational projection of their societies' perceived values – a celebrity.

Keeping this ability of the news media in mind, I investigate how journalists framed celebrity relief news stories following Hurricane Dorian's impact on The Bahamas, and the mechanisms used to construct and produce those news narratives. To achieve this, I am theoretically guided by the concept of *framing* (Entman 1993, Reese, 2001), and I explore the various components of *framing mechanisms* (Tankard, 2001), *framing devices* (Gamson, 1992), and *signifying elements* (Pan & Kosicki, 1993) that emphasize the ability of the news media to construct meaning through relevant issues and events, and are involved in revealing underlying interpretive meanings within the structure provided by the news frame.

Based on literature about disasters in the news, I examine how disasters become news and are covered by journalists. I suggest there are a particular set of routine components that need to be in place before journalists allow access of the news story to the celebrity, thereby embedding the celebrity into the overall lifecycle of the disaster event. As Hurricane Dorian is the focal event covered in this research, I review the scholarly literature surrounding the weather phenomenon. The literature maps out the course of events that resulted in Western news coverage. I then discuss celebrities' relief efforts in journalism and how celebrities are defined in journalism, suggesting that the news media present the celebrity as an authority within a disaster event. I examine how the Black experience during disasters is communicated in journalism and its connection to how colonial countries are covered in Western news media. Key elements that are addressed are the neocolonial ideals prevalent in the coverage of countries like The Bahamas, which have dualling social complexities such as a colonial past and slavery of Africans. At the end of the literature review, I provide research questions to help unpack and understand how Western news media frame celebrity disaster relief in post-colonial countries.

2.2 How disasters become news

Journalists are trained to communicate world events and the intricacies of how they unfold. According to Tuchman (1978), news at its core is a “social institution” (p. 4) that allows journalists to set in motion institutional techniques and practices to interpret events on behalf of the public. A disaster, natural or human-initiated, is a “social event” (Quarantelli, 1992, p. 1). This is due to the resulting repercussions of the disaster, based on the “pre-, trans-, and post-impact activities of individuals and communities” (p. 1).

Thus, a disaster is warranted in news media coverage. News media, particularly visual media, prefer an event over a process (Franks 2013, p. 90). In deciding which events should be

covered and how prominently, journalists consider their social significance and deviance (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006). Events with a high level of perceived deviance, a high level of perceived social importance, or both, are likely to become news. Although it is not required to have both, the combination grants greater newsworthiness (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006, p. 7-8).

When an issue or event is important to society, various cultural constructs can determine its level of importance to a community. According to Shoemaker et al. (1991), social salience can be identified as the extent to which an event is important to a country or impacts it. The researchers further suggested that for an event to be considered as having social salience, the country experiencing the event requires a number of definitive cultural, economic, or political indicators, such as U.S. exports to the foreign country, the presence of U.S. military in the foreign country, and religious similarities shared with the U.S. Then, the event can be considered news.

Deviance, on the other hand, is a social construct that is reliant on the integrations of humans as both performer and public, as it is their behaviors and evaluative interpretation of events that preserve the “phenomenon of deviance” (Pfuhl & Henry, 1993, p. 1). Therefore, when journalists select an event using deviance as the elemental rationale for its selection as news, they utilize viable social signals of news such as discord or the unconventional, which provide a different outlook from the day-to-day human existence (Shoemaker & Cohen 2006, p. 7-8).

Disasters can be perceived as deviant and thus newsworthy events for journalists. These events are more likely to be elevated in the news cycle, as Gans (1979) argued, particularly when they are relevant to American values and interests, have incredibly high death tolls, and are geographically close to the U.S., and when “Americans become seriously involved in helping the victims” (p. 36).

2.3 How disasters are covered by journalists

While meteorological studies have provided seasonal attributions and elemental conditions for the timing of some disaster events, natural disasters can happen at any moment. Due to the spontaneity of natural disasters, they are considered non-routine when it comes to the journalistic news workflow. Tuchman (1978) distinguished routine news as the daily planned events newsrooms encounter, such as property ground breakings or press conferences, whereas non-routine news would be unexpected events like an earthquake or major accident. However, the stages in which disasters are covered are routinized due to the structure and storytelling nature of journalism itself. Therefore, because the non-routine event is subject to routinized coverage, there must be structure to how the disaster is covered.

As Downs (1972) suggested, this “issue attention cycle” (p. 38) occurs in five stages: the pre-problem stage, the alarmed discovery stage, realizing the cost of significant progress, the gradual decline of intense public interest, and post-problem stage. Explained from the perspective of disaster relief: the disaster event has formed but is not an immediate threat to the West; the storm is transforming the elements of wind, water and land, moving them and altering their normal state (the pre-problem stage). Homes are lost, the dead are unearthed, and the living are displaced. News reports are now about what can be done to solve the problems that the hurricane created via humanitarian aid and disaster relief (the alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm stage). Once the initial monetary disaster assessment has been made and figures have been released (realizing the cost of significant progress stage), the audience’s attention to the disaster impact becomes fatigued as the audience is no longer interested because the disaster no longer has a connection to or directly impacts their everyday lives (the gradual decline of public interest stage). Finally, the issue has been replaced by something else as public concern moves on and coverage of all relief efforts ends (the post-problem stage). This structure, in turn, increasingly

makes the news media representation of a disaster to be that of a commodity ready for export to consumers, because news even of the most distressing events overlaps with entertainment (Benthall, 2008). Nesbitt-Larking (2007) argued that news media prefer the unanticipated theatrics that are both cataclysmic and antagonistic in an event, but must also include celebrities from influential countries, thus choosing news stories that are “based upon stock characters and stereotypical situations” (p. 344). As Harrison (1999) noted, news coverage after the disaster has passed becomes a “fascination, a mirror in which the community looks to see itself as others see it” (p. 104). Smith (1992) suggested that “journalism’s hunger for symbols” (p. 2) compels journalists to structure their news story elements around symbols that are available and familiar rather than first deciding what the deeper story is and finding the relevant supporting symbols.

Previous studies have found that the level of attention news media grant to disasters is not based on the scale of the disaster event, but other varying factors, including how those directly impacted are portrayed as criminals or victims (social deviants vs. suffering), cultural salience and geographic proximity to America, and whether the event can be explained in the simplest of formats (process vs. event) (Franks, 2006, 2013; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006; Singer et al., 1991). In telling a disaster story, journalists’ selections of what happened through the disaster event and what mattered after, also depend upon a variety of news values (e.g., Harcup & O’Neill, 2001, 2016). Harcup and O’Neill (2001) identified a number of news values, such as relevance, surprise, celebrity, entertainment, within mainstream journalism. Harcup and O’Neill (2016) offered a revised listing from their previous study of news values. Although additional news values, such as shareability via social media, were introduced, celebrity and power elite remained as part of the news value set. This suggests that the elements of power, celebrity, and social media shareability are considered important criteria for news selection in the current media environment.

As I later demonstrate, they are also important in the framing process of celebrity-initiated relief after Hurricane Dorian. Eisensee and Stromberg (2007) discussed how U. S. relief depended on whether a disaster occurred at the same time as other newsworthy events unrelated to need. Eisensee and Stromberg (2007) found that disaster relief responded the same way to the number of persons impacted and killed, while news coverage responded more to the number of persons killed (p. 722). Additionally, Eisensee and Stromberg (2007) discovered that the effect of the news media on relief was greater for disasters when the disaster was marginal in the news decision, because disasters are also more likely to be marginal in the relief decision in the sense of receiving relief if and only if they receive news coverage. Therefore, the greater the scale of news coverage based on sensationalist factors (e.g., death and destruction), the greater chance that post-disaster relief will be provided to the impacted community.

2.4 Hurricane Dorian

Hurricanes are unique weather phenomena as they are “one of the most dangerous and unpredictable of all natural forces at work on our planet” (Neely, 2019, p. 768), granting them a unique position in the earth’s atmosphere. Yet, these storms require a combination of ideal atmospheric conditions to produce a violent alliance, on a grand scale, of wind and rain “processes to grow, mature and die” (Neely, 2019, p. 768).

This study focuses on Hurricane Dorian, a Category 5 hurricane that occurred in The Bahamas in 2019 and severely impacted the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco, the nation’s second and third largest economic contributors. Hurricane Dorian left thousands homeless, hundreds missing or feared dead, and \$3.4 billion (USD) in damages (Bello et al., 2020).

Hurricane Dorian was a rarity among disasters. It was the fourth named storm in the 2019 Atlantic hurricane season, becoming a Category 5 hurricane with maximum winds of 185 mph

and making landfall at Elbow Cay, Great Abaco, September 1, 2019 (National Weather Service, 2019). The National Weather Service named Dorian as “the strongest hurricane in modern records to make landfall in the Bahamas” (Avila et al., 2020, p. 3). According to a report by the National Hurricane Center (2020), an estimated 74 persons died in Dorian’s path through The Bahamas, with 63 deaths occurring in Abaco alone, and 11 in Grand Bahama (Avila et al., 2020).

The origin of the tragedy did not start far away from the U.S., as the tropical archipelago is just 50 miles off the Florida coast, according to The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism. Yet, Hurricane Dorian’s initial impact on the U.S. came with the storm releasing and distributing 21 tornados throughout North and South Carolina (Avila et al., 2020).

Although Hurricane Dorian was a fairly non-routine phenomenon based on its size and scale in disaster discourse, the scholarly literature has paid limited attention to the human impact the storm left behind and that many are still grappling with today. The current academic literature surrounding Hurricane Dorian addresses a number of issues, including medical and environmental infrastructure failures (e.g., Ezer, 2020; Greig et al., 2020; Randolph & Lafferty, 2019; Shultz et al., 2020), environmental impacts, (e.g., Vosper et al., 2020), and social behaviors (e.g., Mongold et al., 2020; Yum, 2020). Vosper et al. (2020) found in their analysis of rainfall in six Caribbean countries under three global warming scenarios, that the analysis of Hurricane impacts is granted much less attention in the Caribbean region, and the majority of research focuses on the U.S. However, the literature surrounding relief efforts is limited and does not address the relief efforts or implications by celebrities after Hurricane Dorian.

There are numerous news articles surrounding the aftermath of the disaster, reporting how different celebrities professed to supply aid and documented their good works for the people of The Bahamas. Once it was safe to travel to The Bahamas, media professionals from the U.S. landed on Bahamian soil in the hardest-hit islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama to interview

locals and Bahamian officials about the aftermath of the storm. However, once journalists exhausted those interviews, their attention shifted to the relief efforts of organizations, neighboring countries, and celebrities.

Once Hurricane Dorian had moved on from The Bahamas, U.S. news media had a new storyline: celebrities and what they were contributing to the storm's aftermath via disaster relief. Journalism and celebrity culture have long shared a leechlike entanglement that has degenerated journalism practice. Both journalism and celebrity culture communicate a shift in the public discourse by amplifying the different structures of engagement made important by the citizens of that country (Marshall, 2005). De Waal (2008) suggested the celebrity participating in disaster relief efforts provides a "bridge between a (Western) audience and a faraway tragedy" (p. 44).

2.5 Celebrity-inspired journalism

Visibility is the one superpower that the news media have allowed the celebrity to infiltrate, creating the illusion that the celebrity is more complex than tangible (Ponce, 2002). The infiltration of celebrity into journalism is not a new phenomenon or notion. Dating back to the early twenty-first century, Synder (2003) revealed what would appear to be the normal saturation of a trio of ideas, including "images of wars, natural disasters, and celebrities," however, "of the three, it is the celebrities' presence that expresses a defining characteristic of our time" (Snyder, 2003, p. 440). According to Richey (2016), celebrities attain "power based on their ability to reach audiences – building authority, legitimacy and influence" (p. 10). The phenomenon of celebrity is always shadowing a basic but fanciful storyline that can be utilized in a number of instances (Lalonde, 2008). Those instances have allowed the development of celebrity coverage and images in journalism in order to serve the interests of news organizations (Williamson, 2016).

Russill and Lavin (2011), for instance, discussed this sort of interest development in relation to a template being disrupted. During Hurricane Katrina news coverage, this was regarded as a “‘Weather Channel’ template, with a de-politicized focus on the visual and affective dimensions of crisis” (Johnson et al., 2011, p. 19). However, this template did not last after Hurricane Katrina as journalists were no longer interested in producing stories around the usual aftershocks of a disaster, such as missing animals and pets, damage to property, individual pain and suffering, and heroism from those in the business of the preservation of life, all together abandoning the normal customs of reporting a crisis as news (Johnson et al., 2011). As Williamson (2016) can confer, the development and spread of celebrity-based subject matter contributed to decisions made in the news narrative, resulting in drastic implications for public information.

During his investigation, Marshall (2005) confirmed that celebrity-inspired journalism has become so routine and embedded into the substance of the craft, that identifying where this style of information dissemination began is virtually impossible (Marshall, 2005, p. 19). The routine relationship between journalism and celebrity has revealed uneven dependencies as there are particular assurances that journalism has on what is considered valuable in news. Marshall (2005) claimed that the status of the celebrity ultimately clarifies the determination of news value and is deduced from the level of fame the celebrity has, establishing the celebrity’s newsworthiness. This is where, according to Marshall (2005), other news events suffer as they may not possess the ability to secure and ensure high interest levels to adequately attract an audience (Marshall, 2005, p. 23).

Bonner, Farley, Marshall, and Turner (1999) found that across media outlets and forms, news media editors and producers catered to the “audiences’ interest in celebrity moments,” and “such an interest requires a system to serve it” (Bonner et al., 1999, p. 67). Lalonde (2008)

argued that this kind of interdependence between celebrity and journalism is the result of the link between celebrity theory and media theory “since it is through mass media that celebrity reaches a broad audience” (p. 1). By reporting about celebrity-initiated aid after a disaster, journalists provide the public with a “false impression of proximity” (Alberoni, 2007, p. 5) not only to the disaster, but also to the celebrity’s role in crisis relief. The ability of the news media to construct public perception allows celebrities to establish influence as “emotional sovereigns” carrying out the will of the public (Richey & Ponte, 2008, p. 719), thus cementing their role in the disaster relief news discourse.

2.6 The role of celebrities in disaster relief

Studies surrounding celebrity culture and the media via their role in humanitarian efforts during times of disaster are limited. Journalism studies have neglected the power celebrities have attained through the attention journalism has afforded them, resulting in a gap in the literature around celebrity influence in media and news stories during disaster relief efforts.

Dana L. Cloud (2014) discussed the meaning of tragedy through the lens of American celebrity culture. Cloud (2014) focused on the coverage of the 2010 Haiti earthquake on the Oprah Winfrey Show, where celebrities were depicted as “shock absorbers” (p. 54). Cloud (2014) found that the efforts of celebrities did not completely personalize or politicize responses to natural disasters. Instead, their role recognized the shock of neoliberal catastrophes, personalizing the disaster and “cushioning its impact for audiences” (p. 54). In addition, focusing on one celebrity, Cloud (2014) noted how Rihanna’s “emphasis on passive giving across geographical distance confirms the celebrity function of mediating distant suffering for Western consumers of entertainment” (p. 53).

This function is prevalent in relation to the news coverage of celebrities with images of themselves embedded in the disaster areas, amongst debris and victims. Goodman and Barnes (2011) discussed how the celebrity identity of a person is put into practice, and reviewed work in science studies to understand the complexities of celebrity in what would be deemed as Third World environments. The celebrity gains their power through and by the media as celebrities are allowed to “exercise their elevated public voices about issues” (Goodman & Barnes, 2011, p. 71) and thus seemingly overnight, become the figurative spokespersons of charitable foundations (Goodman & Barnes, 2011). Additionally, Goodman and Barnes’ (2011) research suggests that the news media are instrumental in the development of the celebrity creating a narrative, allowing the celebrity to continue to act as “the voice of the oppressed and down-trodden Other for a global, very often female, consuming audience” (Goodman & Barnes, 2011, p. 71). Yet, disasters are fundamentally the core of hard news, susceptible to deficient news media and information handling (Harrison, 1999), and softened by the infiltration of celebrities into the narrative. The introduction of the celebrity into the crisis news story results in issues with reporting on the deeper stories about the aftermath of the disaster, thus impacting the underlying truth about the disaster and those who rely on it – the victims (Harrison, 1999).

Jennifer Anne Lalonde (2008) examined the interrelationship between celebrity and disaster theory in order to assess the extent to which celebrities had access to media information about Hurricane Katrina. Lalonde (2008) used ethnographic content analysis to analyze the interaction between celebrity and Hurricane Katrina through a series of newspaper articles, magazines, and websites. Lalonde (2008) insisted that through the magnification of celebrity in news narratives, there is an intense need and continuous cycle from the public for an ideal of

grandeur that has “caused them to create so many imitation heroes for themselves” (Lalonde, 2008, p. 41).

2.7 Celebrities’ relief efforts in journalism

Since the 1920s and 30s, journalism has been captured by the routines of modernizing news media and the infiltration of celebrity, shaping news coverage of the then newly discovered kinds of charitable endeavors that wealthy Americans began to pursue (Ponce de Leon, 2002, p. 163). According to Bell and Ficociello (2017), who examined various major disasters that maintained the attention of popular culture, hurricanes have been present in the Caribbean for a long time without real attention from the news media, yet the “only time we hear about them is when people become involved and disasters evolve into media events” (p. 3). Therefore, it was not unusual for journalists across a variety of news media platforms and outlets to all have converged in The Bahamas to cover celebrity disaster relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian. As Usher (2020) explained, there are not many institutions that share a communal mentality like journalism because “if a story is important to a news outlet, it piques the interest of others and is often republished without further verification” (p. 2).

Rojek (2012) suggested that celebrities are an undeniable force in “stimulating media activity and drawing crowds” (p. 58). The interest in celebrity undoubtedly provides optimal conditions as “the portrayal of authority by the media affects public opinion” (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007, p. 29). According to Harvey (2017), a celebrity’s ability to compel or compensate may rest more in “language, technology and public access” (p. 140). Anderson (2005) discovered a similar pattern with news coverage during the 2004 tsunami that impacted island communities in Thailand, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Sri-Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Seychelles, Somalia, and Tanzania. Anderson’s research used a feminist theoretical framework

and focused on gender in disaster management and its impact on natural risk reduction. Anderson used gender analysis to understand social relations and power distribution in disaster management. Anderson (2005) suggested that attention to the tsunami was elevated due to prevalence of celebrities and the foreign elite being attracted to or associated with the impacted areas. Due to this increased coverage, within a week of the event, Anderson (2005) explained that the news media highlighted narratives focused on individual experiences and published the news reports to bolster foreign concern about relief efforts.

As Littlefield and Quenette (2007) suggested, the news media provide various forms of information through a variety of platforms, thus granting the media the potential to assume the role of guide for the public's scrutiny of the responses to a crisis by authorities. Therefore, the public has the option to evaluate and ultimately believe what is presented as familiar to them based on the information the news media provide. Littlefield and Quenette (2007) used a conceptual framework with Hurricane Katrina as a case study to highlight the role of media in society and in language, the characterization of legitimate authority, and how the news media shape perceptions of reality. Littlefield and Quenette's (2007) method involved close reading of data and the use of cluster criticism to discover how the news media characterized those in authority when it came to crisis leadership. Their findings suggest it is critical that the news media understand their various roles during a crisis. Inconsistent angles presented early on in the disaster narrative may result in the public prematurely placing blame and in negatively implicating those in authority (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007), leaving room for the celebrity to assume an authoritative role.

Kapoor (2012) argued that celebrities increasingly have powerful input with significant global policy issues, including emergency relief. Kapoor (2012), through an ideology critique, discussed various types of contemporary celebrity humanitarianism used to uncover what Kapoor

believed to be absolute mystification and rejection of neo-politics. As Kapoor (2012) suggested, these unelected individuals have mostly adopted core functions of the state and government of the countries they are entering and offering aid. The news media have perhaps allowed celebrities to become public figures of authority, thus influencing how policy in regard to disaster relief is mobilized and communicated in news. Kapoor (2012) identified this as a significant problem because celebrity humanitarianism is tainted with various egotistical interests as “celebrities are ‘doing the right thing’, not for the Third World Other, but in order for capitalist liberal democracies to thrive” (p. 5).

Thus, the news media give celebrities a platform to lay claim to natural disasters through a “here’s what only I can do” framework. As Goodman and Barnes (2011) pointed out, celebrities now elevate the status of issues of interest through the news media. This results in the news media now having to rely on a narrative to move the story forward, thus granting the celebrity authority in the disaster relief narrative. Therefore, to grant the disaster event additional access to the attention of the public, the news media now have to rely on the celebrity to stand in front of the disaster narrative, as the news event is “dependent on the ontological status, becomes static and dependent upon a narrative to bring it to life—to allow the disaster event to express itself” (Bell & Ficociello, 2017, p. 30).

Additionally, the news media often focus on the severity of damage caused by a disaster and not the resources for recovery, which could be achieved by providing testimonials from survivors and other stories of recovery and relief (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007). Therefore, when those stories of disaster relief do get told, the celebrity remains the focal point of the relief narrative as a direct result of their elevated status in the news value system. By allowing this, the news media have granted the celebrity the ability to lay claim to the disaster and remain at the forefront of humanitarian efforts. In fact, Lalonde (2008) argued that this interdependent

relationship between the media and the celebrity allows the celebrity to take on the role of claims-maker during various stages of the disaster relief event. Strictly speaking, with their influential status created by the media, celebrities can now use the news media to elevate narratives about the disaster and what they have contributed to the event (Lalonde, 2008).

Importantly, journalists can choose how to frame news stories that connect the celebrity and the disaster event. This gives the journalist power to textually limit the conversation and shape the audiences' understanding of the disaster event.

2.8 Media framing and its importance

Those who have never experienced a natural disaster are likely to learn about its workings and impacts from the news media. For the purposes of this study, discovering how the media help its audiences learn about and understand a disaster, begins with a discussion around the theoretical grounds of framing. Framing is a valuable tool in the construction of news. Reese (2001) defined frames as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (p. 11). Similarly, Goffman (1974) defined framing as a “schema of interpretation” (p. 21) that provides context for understanding information. Gitlin (1980) identified news media frames as an unavoidable basis of organization for journalists to report on the world and for audiences to gain intended or unintended understanding, functioning therefore “as principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 6). Frames are therefore a crucial component because they highlight questions and concepts that were not addressed previously, granting the researcher the opportunity to better understand and examine ideological concepts (Reese, 2007). Therefore, journalists use framing to

condense events and issues, as well as to provide meaning to audience members and maintain their interest in and towards the news narrative that is being constructed.

While all the above-mentioned definitions inform the thesis, this research adopts Reese's (2001) definition of framing because it recognizes the historical relevance frames play in the construction of social meaning in news media across cultures. To identify frames and how they are constructed, this study is also guided by Entman's (1993) approach to framing and draws on approaches to framing devices based on research by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), Pan and Kosicki (1993), and Tankard (2001).

According to Entman (1993), frames "promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (p. 52). Entman (1993) further proposed that frames present in the news media can be identified within the journalistic body of work by the "presence of absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements" (p. 52). These identification mechanisms or framing devices do not stand alone but are used together in what Gamson and Modigliani (1989) described as a "media package" that consists of "symbols that suggest the core frame" (p. 3).

According to Pan and Kosicki, (1993), these "signifying elements" (p. 59) or framing devices, when structured in a particular way, can function as a guided psychological framework where the news story can be perceived. Pan and Kosicki (1993) suggested that structural dimensions in news discourse can be separated into four categories: syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure (p. 59). For example, a headline would be considered a syntactical structure as it provides important cues to the reader about what the overall news article will be about and what they should pay attention to. Headlines are considered "relevance optimizers" (Dor, 2003, p. 696) and can operate as powerful framing devices to use in

the development of a news story, immediately followed by the lead (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Therefore, signifying elements are “structurally located lexical choice of codes” (p. 59) and function as “framing devices” that can be used by journalists to create and organize news stories that are culturally relevant and relatable (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Tankard (2001) suggested that framing has the powerful ability to characterize the conditions of an issue unbeknownst to the audience. Tankard (2001) focused his research on how an issue or event is portrayed in the news, as opposed to which issues are covered in a news story. Additionally, Tankard (2001) identified a number of framing specifics or mechanisms in a “list of frames approach” (p. 100-101) for identifying frames, including headlines, selection of quotes and sources, and pull quotes, among others.

While these framing mechanisms allow for more in-depth framing analysis, de Vreese (2005) argued that frames also need to be identified via different topics and cultural situations. de Vreese (2005) suggested that issue-specific news frames are “pertinent only to specific topics or events” (p. 54) whereas generic frames are not constrained by themes, allowing the frame to be identified via various topics and contexts. Iyengar and Simon (1993) suggested that episodic framing, which falls under issue-specific frames, “encourages reasoning by resemblance – people settle upon causes and treatments that fit the observed problem” (p. 379). For the purposes of this research, the observed problem is the decimation of a community by a disaster that is reported on by news media that historically silenced a majority population of African descent but give voice to the foreign celebrity for what is distributed by the news media as the final chapter in the disaster relief narrative.

Narratives are the anecdotes of life unfolding, and as Kramer (2000) argued, narratives have the ability to engage an audience. According to Kramer (2000), in an age where life is fast

paced and technology makes work and play faster, humans are still captivated by “stories in which people’s lives and decision-making are vividly portrayed” (p. 5).

Toolan (2001) suggested that a narrative is a recognized progression of “non-randomly connected events, typically involving, as the experiencing agonist, human or quasi-humans, or other sentient beings, from whose experiences we humans can learn” (p. 8). Roeh (1989) argued that news possesses narrative qualities and is “a way of giving form to experience” (p. 166).

Shahin (2015) suggested that journalists routinely select which issues to cover and how to cover them. Through a comparative framing analysis of two similar religions publications, Shanin (2015) found complexities within the Muslim community as racially diverse segments constructed “America” differently. Shanin (2015) argued that as it relates to news media, “multiple identities constantly compete for salience in ever-changing contexts” (p. 341). With respect to news media, Shahin (2015) argued that framing an event or issue in a particular way is “adhering to an identity that has been activated in the context of that event or issue” (p. 343). Shahin (2015) suggested that the news media do not just reflect societal complexities as news organizations have become “reflexive actors with fluid identities” and news framing supplements a “contextually sensitive performance of identity by these actors,” which gives the news media the power to “reproduce the phenomenology of the social world” (p. 353).

When news stories are constructed out of shared or singular experiences and events, frames then function as the organizing principle for news, while the narrative linguistically assists with its projected structure. Thus, the frame is supported by the narrative. As Eason (1981) suggested, journalists “make sense out of events by telling stories about them” (p. 125). This allows the narrative framework to connect varying “strands of experience into a meaningful paradigm” (p. 126). However, for the news media, those fibers of reality should provide an enrichment in knowing the history behind those experiences as it is important to understand how

another being experiences a crisis, especially a being that has lived in a cycle of perpetual racial disenfranchisement.

2.9 The Black experience in disasters

Structural arrangements within the social world, be they race, class or gender, imply that a history within those categories of experience has been established for millennia. According to Lester and Ross (2003), American history and culture have commonly perceived the Black race as interchangeable with deviance as “blackness has become a conventional notation symbolizing abnormality” (p. 90). Every social experience in the human life cycle is different based on a number of contributing factors, including where one has lived, and the time period in which they lived; yet the color of one’s skin, one’s level of physical and/or mental blackness, breeds a traditional racial perception and portrayal of stereotypically negative images and text in the news media.

Haider-Markel, Delehanty, and Beverlin (2007) used framing theory to examine the role of race in constructing attitudes after Hurricane Katrina and found that news media coverage produced a negative, racialized news frame of Black hurricane victims. Haider-Markel et al. (2007) concluded that the media coverage of Hurricane Katrina was racialized and found that African American confidence in government response to future disasters diminished due to the belief that the slow response of the government was “partly a function of victims being poor and Black” (p. 600).

According to Berger (2009), the coverage of Hurricane Katrina had both tangible and erratic impacts, including that Black criminality was the cause of extensive turmoil and justified military response as a relief effort. Berger (2009) analyzed the first month of Hurricane Katrina’s initial news media coverage and revealed that the news values bolstered “a narrative of

lawlessness” (p. 492). Similarly, various frames used by the media during Hurricane Katrina coverage resulted in an illumination of criminal justice problems that defined the government’s response to the disaster as “media coverage created a demand for the military, the police and the prison” (Berger, 2009, p. 493).

Murali Balaji (2011) argued that the dynamics of race and otherness have consistently been constructed by a news media narrative where a space populated by blackness will always be at the mercy of the hands of the white and at the discretion of the powerful. Using a post-colonial framework, Balaji (2011) conducted a rhetorical analysis of various news articles, including the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 as references. Balaji noted that in the case of the Haiti earthquake, a racialization dynamic was further magnified in Western media where race relations are intensely charged (p. 51). Emotions exploited by the Haiti earthquake were “in part cultivated by American news media all too eager to make the quake into a mediated spectacle of pity” (Balaji, 2011, p. 51). Similarly, Rosaldo (1989) confirmed that Western audiences have long indulged in a nostalgia that perpetuates an innocence of ethnic domination.

Therefore, Balaji (2011) contended that the news coverage of the Haiti quake adhered to a certain news narrative in which the victims are depicted as needing the generosity of white philanthropy as a means of survival. News media created a routine focused on “the actions of the American/European do-gooders at the expense of Haitians’ efforts at helping their countrymen in the wake of the disaster” (Balaji, 2011, p. 61). Balaji pointed out a key insight that while people of color are the majority of media consumers, American media corporations continue to “export depictions to transnational audiences that reaffirm a discursive adult-child relationship between whites and Others” (Balaji, 2011, p. 52). This is important because the people of color consuming the Western narrative also showed pity to Haiti’s victims during that disaster as the unrefined power dynamic and processes “continue to be shaped along a white-black binary” (Balaji, 2011,

52). Van den Bulck (2009) confirmed that by news media presenting the West's intervention as a solitary option, the Western celebrity is defined as the "necessary solution" that must come from the West (Van den Bulck, 2009, p. 131).

Celebrities, as Chris Rojek (2001) pointed out, are therefore "cultural fabrications" (p. 10) that have replaced royalty and divinity as sacred while appearing to have a spontaneous impact on the public. Interestingly, American history was built on overthrowing the British Monarchy as an ideological power, yet America opted to participate in the "ideology of the common man" (Rojek, 2001, p. 10-13). This ideology is just as defective as the institution of colonialism, because one must place themselves at a position of power in the life cycle of the lowly, as celebrity status is still dependent on public recognition (Rojek, 2001, p. 20). Celebrities, therefore, must seek out public recognition in the countries and communities where notions of eminence and elitism are still active in the lives of a public that did not have the opportunity to replace that system of cultural superiority.

2.10 How colonial countries are covered in Western news media

As the world becomes increasingly connected through technology, it is not uncommon to encounter a global response to a single country in crisis. However, companies and individuals alike will offer humanitarian and philanthropic responses to aid in response to the media coverage of an event (Thomas & Fritz, 2006).

When a small island archipelago with a history of slavery experiences a collective trauma, it is no accident that colonialism can be seen as a "social experiment, a multilayered system of explicit and implicit controls designed to strip colonized peoples of their culture, confidence and power" (Klein, 2018, p. 27). Therefore, how post-colonial countries are covered in news media and the way in which the information is packaged and presented to fit a Western narrative are

important, especially at a time when global information is so easily accessible. Gans (1979) found that news coverage of foreign countries in American news media that were not dominant political associates, only made it to the news if they experienced “unusually dramatic happenings,” including major disasters (p. 32). Foreign news in American outlets is thus restrained to the most dramatic foreign events and concentrating on what “Americans do to, for and in other countries...and unless Americans become seriously involved with helping the victims” (p. 32-36).

It is equally imperative to form the initial discussion with the news coverage of Africa to understand the relationship between the colonial and post-colonial news coverage discourse in regions where blackness resides. Franks’ (2010) article examined how and why news media coverage of Africa during the post-colonial period misled and misinformed audiences and how the relationship between news media coverage and relief agencies had damaged the efforts of informing the public. Franks (2010) argued that Africa is often neglected and misreported on, allowing horror and disaster to become regular patterns of discourse. Additionally, Franks (2010) noted that Africa has become known through variations of disaster coverage, topics of ethnic wars or celebrity visits with a consistent cycle of bad news, resulting in a contradictory requirement that “what is newsworthy has led to bizarre extremes, verging on a form of racism” (p. 74).

In their essay, Hanitzsch and Vos (2016) argued that the discourse surrounding the roles of journalists has been discussed from a purely Western lens, focusing on the news media’s contribution to political realms and the public. Hanitzsch and Vos (2016) suggested that there are a number of roles that journalists must play within the Western and non-Western worlds. For American journalists, those roles are ultimately a result of what Schiller (1996) argued are America’s imparting of global cultural influences and perspectives as the only lens through which

to view the world (Schiller, 1996). As a result, “western journalism scholarship has reproduced this hierarchy, privileging a journalistic world that is narrower than that which resides in practice” (Hanitzsch & Vos 2016, p. 150). Utilizing examples from Hurricane Katrina to examine the role of the television news media during natural disasters, Miller and Goidel (2009) contended that “disaster coverage in the United States tends to be individualistic and not collective, focusing on the individual stories and not the larger societal stories” (p. 272). As it relates to the crisis of Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas and its effect on disaster relief by celebrities, Strachan (2002) argued that there are varying degrees at which “black Bahamian poverty, however real, becomes performance” (p.106). This is important in relation to Hurricane Dorian because the celebrity can now operate within the confines of the disaster, executing a strategic Western savior narrative that is part of reinforced legacy of dependency in The Bahamas.

Colonialism inflicted deep, psychological, social, and economic wounds on post-colonial countries. Under traditional colonialism, countries were controlled directly by agents from what Paragg (1980) identified as “metropolitan or centre countries” (p. 629) that used implied devices of control, including aid, to construct and alter fiscal and industrial growth (Paragg, 1980). Colonialism allowed the colonizer to facilitate their own interests and economic benefits. As these former territories were granted ceremonial independence, Macqueen (2007) argued that this was merely a facade, changing out the visible markers of colonial rule and oppression, while the “underlying dynamics remained unaltered” (p. 144). Colonialism quickly mutated into the “less formal, but no less exploitative, ‘neocolonialism’” (Macqueen, 2007, p. 144). According to Vakhrushev (1987), neocolonialism is a strategy that targets countries formerly under colonial rule via hidden tactics and mechanisms in order to “impose and consolidate capitalism in those countries” while fending off socialism, culling profits and ensuring “economic, political,

ideological, and military-strategic positions of imperialism” (p. 15). The goal, Vakhrushev (1987) argued, is to incorporate these countries into the capitalist system, cementing the post-colonial country’s development within a capitalist foundation and preserving their reliance on “state monopoly capital within the framework of this system” (p. 16).

According to Gurevitch (1996), it is less about direct political or economic control that defines First and Third world relationships, but it is the dependency by the Third World on the First World for cultural, economical and political resources, which supply a cycle of “colonialist logic and action” (p. 207). This pattern of dependency enlists the news media as an institutional machine that constructs these dependencies by “providing western-produced packages of information and entertainment that carry and transmit western cultural values” (p. 207).

According to Clarke (2009), Western news media actively participate in the privilege of “celebrity and the vulnerability of developing nations” (p. 309), which can be traced back to the end of World War II. Lugo-Ocando (2020) described this as “aid-journalism” when foreign aid is published as a distinct representation of “journalism practice and education that is aligned with the interests of the wealthy, industrialized northern donor nations” (p. 99). American news media pay particular attention to the issues and events their readers are interested in (Nesbitt-Larking, 2007) and therefore have the power to construct how their audience understands communities outside of their own country and the encounters involved with the people impacted by the foreign disaster from the lens of popular culture elites.

2.11 Research questions

While disasters may never be framed as anything but destructive forces, celebrities can be framed in a variety of ways in the news media based on the context of coverage and the information that is deemed most important to the public of both the news media and the celebrity.

Considering the cultural perspectives that allow the news media to apply a frame to an event based on celebrity involvement, it is important to understand what frame/s would be utilized in the coverage of a disaster. Based on the literature reviewed, this study seeks to contribute to the research on news media framing by analyzing news media coverage of disaster relief by celebrities.

The overarching research question is as follows:

How were celebrities framed by journalists during relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian?

This question is divided into two sub-questions:

1. *What frame or frames were used by journalists?*
2. *What means were used by journalists to construct the frame/s?*

The first sub-question refers to the organizing principle/s used by journalists in their coverage of disaster relief by celebrities, whereas the second sub-question refers to the framing devices (such as headlines and metaphors) that created the organizing principle/s.

3 Method: A Qualitative Approach to Framing

This study employs a qualitative textual analysis to examine how celebrities were framed by journalists during relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian. This type of analysis allows me to identify and interpret journalistic choices that do not fall within predefined categories. In what follows, I describe and explain what a qualitative textual analysis is and the rationale for using it in this study, which data were collected for analysis and how they were analyzed, and the researcher's positionality and its connection to the study.

3.1 Qualitative textual analysis

Qualitative analysis is both science and art. As a science, qualitative analysis is a “disciplined and systematic approach to inquiry that can be reliably communicated to others” (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 375). As an art, qualitative analysis is more concerned with the creation of meaning as “meaning implies relativism and diversity” (Eisner, 1981, p. 9). Qualitative analysis has the ability to look at underlying or latent meaning that can result in the development of theories or constructs (Kondracki et al., 2002, p. 224). Kondracki et al. (2002) argued that having deeper meaning implied via text “is often the more interesting and debatable aspect of communication” (p. 225). According to Tracy (2020), qualitative research is relevant for infiltrating “tacit, taken-for-granted, intuitive understandings of a culture” (p. 7). Qualitative research emphasizes how a social event is created, structured and thus given meaning. According to Reese (2010), a qualitative analysis in the context of framing can emphasize the “cultural and political content of news frames and how they draw upon a shared store of social meanings” (p. 18).

Textual analysis is the “linguistic analysis of naturally occurring connected spoken or written discourse” (Stubbs, 1983, p. 1). The analysis of text, also known as discourse analysis, emerged in the mid-1960s and mid-1970s and became acceptable as an addition to social science methods, concerned with the “structures, functions and processing of talk and text” (van Dijk, 1991, p. 108). Textual analysis is different from other qualitative methods of research in that the researcher is seeking meaning within the text. According to Fürsich (2009), as it relates to media discourse, textual analysis goes beyond the content that news media create and “focuses on the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text” (p. 240).

Textual analysis was chosen as a method for this research because it would allow for the investigation of how journalists framed celebrities involved in disaster relief efforts and would reveal the framing devices that contributed to the creation of the frame/s. Textual analysis can also help understand how news stories express or exclude different cultural values (Fürsich, 2009, p. 247).

This study used an inductive approach. According to van Gorp (2010), inductive framing analysis is useful in reconstructing frames to define a certain topic. To do so, van Gorp (2010) argued for the open coding of texts without the use of a “predefined coding instrument,” while organizing device patterns by “linking them to overarching ideas” (p. 94-95). Reese (2010) suggested that an inductive qualitative approach helps understand the “constitutive components and narratives” that bring frames together (p. 22). An inductive approach was appropriate for this research because it allowed me to discover what patterns emerged “from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). I sought to understand how journalists, through the use of varying journalistic means, framed celebrity’s offering disaster

relief in the news. It was crucial to discern the structural and literary themes present in the news stories and allow those themes to guide me through the commonalities in the data.

My analysis focused on written texts. As Kress (1989) suggested, “meanings find their expression in text” (p. 18). In addition, texts can indicate the importance of information placement strategies and culturally relevant patterns (Entman, 1993).

3.2 Data collection

Digital news articles from English-language Western media outlets were analyzed for this study. To collect articles, Google Advanced Search was used as it allows users to get content from diverse sources, including various media outlets.¹ Specifically, I used the search string of the keywords “hurricane dorian celebrities or star or celebrity” surrounding the news coverage of Hurricane Dorian relief efforts, as they were relevant to the research question. The search resulted in dozens of articles, but articles that were not Western news media articles or not in English were excluded. This resulted in 50 articles that were collected for analysis. Although the search term “celebrity” may have limited the results, it was used to ensure that the definition of celebrity was undertaken by the news source themselves and not the researcher.

The study focuses on English-language media outlets based on the geographical origins of the celebrities involved in post-Hurricane Dorian relief, the locations of news media producing the stories, and the English-speaking audience that was targeted. This research examined 50 digital news articles from news media outlets in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. The location of the news media producing the articles is significant to this study because of their proximity to

¹ Initially, LexisNexis was used in an attempt to collect data, but the availability of relevant content from a diverse set of media outlets was limited.

The Bahamas and the historical colonial influences. This study examines online news articles from a variety of media outlets, including 12 television sources, nine magazine sources, 11 newspapers, one radio station, and 11 digital-native publishers. See Appendix A for the full list. The time frame of the articles dates from September 3, 2019 to November 7, 2019, which is in line with peak hurricane and tropical storm activity The Bahamas experiences in August through October (National Hurricane Center, n.d.).

3.3 Data analysis

To facilitate the qualitative textual analysis, NVivo version 12.6.1 (for Mac) software was used as my computerized assistance tool. NVivo is a software used to conduct qualitative and mixed method analyses and allows for identification of patterns and themes. The first step in the analysis process was to choose my unit of analysis, which was a given news article that emerged from Google Advanced Search query.

According to Fairclough (2003), “texts are elements of social events” (p. 8) that change the way one thinks about their values, knowledge, and belief systems. I focused on a news text as a unit of analysis because it is based on the interpretive requirements of the social event the journalist is communicating. This is due to the journalist’s function as not the inventor of the text in the news story, but the “assembler of text” (Kress, 1989, p. 47) and curator of information.

The second step of the analysis began by reading through the text several times. I then uploaded the data into the NVivo software via Ncapture to understand the text more clearly by developing a “universe of words” (Chong & Druckman, 2007) and phrases, marking the presence of any themes and signifying elements I identified. I also sought to identify what terms and phrases were most dominant in the text as certain keywords and phrases possess “greater analytic power than others and appear more frequently” (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015, p. 3)

Figure 3.1 shows the results of using a query tool in the NVivo software called a word query. A word cloud is formed as a result of the word query to give a visual representation of recurrent texts, helping to identify themes in the data. Word queries are of value to this research because they provide a way to see the dominant words used in the news articles that contribute to meaning making. Next, each text was analyzed separately through a grounded analysis to identify themes from the consistent reading and re-reading of the texts and keyword separation. This reading took place based on van Dijk's (1992) "super structure" schema. van Dijk (1991) argued that news stories follow a "hierarchical schema," which includes traditional categories that usually appear in the news story, such as "Headline, Lead, Main Events, Context, History, Verbal Reactions and Comments" (p. 114). In order to supplement my understanding as I read, it was important to define the text based on what van Dijk (1991) called the "marco structure". This is a critical step in my analysis because it is here that pieces of information found on the lead or headline can "conceptually summarize the text and specify its most important information" (p. 113). To further clarify the structural elements in the text, Pan and Kosicki's (1993) table method was used. As an illustration, Table 3.1 shows an analysis of a news story from my data using Pan and Kosicki's (1993) method.

mechanisms relevant to this study and the research question. I created nodes within the NVivo software based on the identified signifying elements of meaning that are relevant to my research question and placed combinations of text and keywords into those nodes.

For example, for the signifying element of source elevation, I broke down the data into the nodes of celebrity, local authority, non-local authority, local non-authority, and non-local non authority, and coded for those instances throughout the data set to determine the salience a particular source was given. This allowed me to determine the connections between dominant words in the data and significance of the source's presence in the data.

The final step in the analysis was the interpretation of the findings. During the textual analysis, text features in the data were used to distinguish the themes occurring in the text. These themes were then paired with dominant signifying elements, previously mentioned in the literature review, that emerged from the data and included the portrayal of the celebrities, Hurricane Dorian, and the Bahamians impacted. Guided by Entman's (1993) four functions of news frames: problem definition, moral evaluation, casual interpretation, and treatment recommendation, I narrowed down the themes and topics through the investigation of the signifying elements and framing mechanisms that emerged from the text. A dominant frame and/or signifying element of meaning was designated as such when it was the most replicated or highlighted in the text. The strength of this approach lies in the ability to capture framing as a multilayered concept and the ability to move beyond fixed categories of meaning, that is, to pinpoint what is happening in the text and how what is happening is manifesting itself throughout the text, thus giving structure to the news article.

Table 3.1 An Example of Data Analysis Using Pan and Kosicki Method

Sentence	Preposition	Syntax	Script	Theme	Rhetoric
1	Lenny Kravitz Calls For Prayers For 'Brothers And Sisters' In Bahamas Following Hurricane Dorian's Destruction.	Lead paragraph (headline)	Actor Action Actor	Celebrity response of relief	Metaphor: 'Brothers and Sisters' In Bahamas
2	Lenny Kravitz is sending love to The Bahamas following hurricane Dorian.	Lead Paragraph (lead)	Actor Action Actor	Celebrity response of relief	Metaphor: "Lenny Kravitz is sending Love to The Bahamas"
3	The singer took to Instagram on Tuesday to share a moving message to those affected by the huge storm, sharing footage of Dorian's destruction	Background	Actor Action Social media	Celebrity sharing images of destruction	Metaphor: "huge storm"
4	"My heart aches for my brothers and sisters going through this storm in the Bahamas," he wrote. "The strongest winds reported in the Atlantic at 220 mph."	Quote	Actor	Celebrity response of sharing grief	Metaphor: "My heart aches for my brothers and sisters."
5	He added, "I pray that life will be spared and when this clears we are going to do everything we can."	Quote	Actor Action	Celebrity response relief	Catchphrase: we are going to do everything we can."
6	In posts to his Instagram stories, Kravitz gave his followers a look at the heartbreaking aftermath of the hurricane as it moves closer to the coast of Florida, South Carolina and North Carolina	Supporting paragraph	Actor Action Social Media	Celebrity response of sharing grief with social media followers. Sharing images of disaster. Disaster has geographic proximity to U.S	Catchphrase: heartbreaking aftermath of the hurricane

Sentence	Preposition	Syntax	Script	Theme	Rhetoric
7	Many celebs replied to Kravitz's post, taking to the comments section to share some love too. Reese Witherspoon commented a couple of emojis, "♡," while Naomi Campbell wrote, "♡ 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏."	Supporting Paragraph	Actor Action Social media	Celebrity response to another Celebrity relief plea via social media with social media emojis	Depictions/social media: "♡," "♡ 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏."
8	In happier times, back in February 2019 Kravitz took part in a Bahamas tourism campaign.	Background	Actor Action	Celebrity taking part in Bahamas gov. campaign	Depiction: "happier times" of a celebrity working for The Bahamas govt.
9	Kravitz grew up in New York City and Los Angeles, but he has Bahamian roots and has a property on a private island in the country.	Background	Actor Context	American Celebrity with Bahamas land ownership Connection to Bahamas through mother.	Celebrity identity as an American and acknowledgment of Bahamian blood. While still owning land on a private island as an American, not a Bahamian.

3.4 Researcher's positionality

My identity as a female, Bahamian journalist of African descent is relevant to and has influenced my interest in this topic. As a previously practicing journalist, I have experienced the disaster news cycle in The Bahamas and the impact hurricanes have on the public. As a journalism student, I have experienced what it is like to look at The Bahamas from the outside in as I received journalism education in the U.S. and Canada. I had the opportunity to witness the Western gaze due to my being from a country that is considered by the West to be a tropical escape from their own reality, a purposeful paradise. Yet, I would still be probed and asked by students if people in my country lived in huts, or I would be told, not asked, that The Bahamas is part of the U.S. These experiences were a learning platform for me to understand how the West viewed The Bahamas. I now understand that the current perceptions of the Caribbean for many Western and European people could be due to their limited knowledge and exposure to destinations south of their reality and may be the result of media organizations only making the region visible during advertisements for luxury beach resorts, television reality shows, or news coverage of crises.

4 Findings: Celebrity-Based Framing

This study investigated how celebrities were framed by journalists during relief efforts post-hurricane Dorian. Specifically, I examined what frame/s were used by journalists, and what means were used by journalists to construct the frame/s. Framing is grounded in how an issue is presented in the news media. Framing and its devices can have implications on the audience's understanding of an issue (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006), and can provide a pattern for the public to decipher the unfamiliar "Other." In this chapter, I suggest that the dominant frame used to depict disaster relief by celebrities after Hurricane Dorian is *Celebrity Response Frame*, which I explicate. This frame correlates with neocolonial perspectives that are projected by celebrities, amplified by the disaster and possessed by Bahamians. It is joined together through the content and context built by journalists around Hurricane Dorian relief by celebrities. I also show that journalists used four mechanisms to construct the frame: dramatic language, celebrity-centric headlines, social media validation, and unsource elevation.

4.1 Celebrity Response Frame

To answer the first sub-question (what frame/s were used by journalists), the Celebrity Response Frame has been identified. This frame emphasizes the celebrity as the solution to the issue or problem. It focuses on the celebrity representation as a savior to the "Other," analyzing their background to the issue and their method of relief – both monetary and non-monetary; and it involves assertive language reflecting from the celebrity.

The Celebrity Response Frame makes the disaster relief personally relevant to a new audience by connecting the event (disaster) and the need for relief (solution) for those impacted (Other), to the elites of popular culture (celebrities) who are already recognized by the audience

as familiar and as taking important actions. As Chong (1996) suggested, frames are ultimately constructed with the audience already in mind, indicating the preference of the audience provided by the news media as being a significant factor for the position that the celebrity takes in the narrative. The Celebrity Response Frame perhaps has given meaning to the nature of the disaster event itself, securing the audience-induced pattern needed for the celebrity to respond. Contrastingly, the generic attribution of responsibility frame connects the cause of or solution to a problem to an individual, group, or institution of power (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Therefore, the Celebrity Response Frame and attribution of responsibility can co-exist in the same narrative, but the Celebrity Response Frame identified in this study is solely individualistic and does not project to be the cause of the problem/issue nor seek the responsibility of the problem. Rather, it is the solution with underlying connections to neocolonialist ideals.

4.2 The frame and projections of neocolonialist perspectives

The Bahamas, from a historical perspective, is an ideal candidate for the study of celebrity impact on disaster events because of its history with European colonizers and white elite figures for decades. It is a country with an economy highly dependent on imports of both food and foreign nationals. The Bahamas is consistently in a vulnerable position with its main economic source embedded in tourism and an extreme dependency on “foreign countries to feed its citizens” (Hepburn, 2015, p. 21-22). Consequently, due to the systematic reinforcement of these issues, the Bahamian identity continues to be characterized as the “eternal host to the visitor” (Carroll, 2020, p. 220). Therefore, when celebrities respond to disaster relief, they are actively participating in the interplay of the neocolonialist systems already in motion.

To describe how those stories of relief are shared in the news media, there needs to be an interpretive system, a “structure of expectation” (Tannen, 1993, p. 15), that can translate

accordingly – a frame. Drawing on Entman (1993), frames have the ability to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements, and suggest remedies. Lakoff (2010) argued that frames “come in systems” (p. 72). These systems can be triggered by just one word, indicating both the formalized frame and the system that frame is part of (Lakoff, 2010, p. 72). For news media reporting on celebrity disaster relief after Hurricane Dorian, activating the Celebrity Response Frame by using assertive language that is already projecting the celebrity as the solution to the problem, allowed “ideological language” to “activate that ideological system” (Lakoff, 2010, p. 72). Once those texts appear and are repeated throughout all journalistic work of that one event, it bolsters the effects of that ideology on the audience, becoming a routine discourse for the journalist and the public (Lakoff, 2010). Therefore, how the discourse of the text (in this case, the news story) is organized is dictated by the ideology present in “response to the demands of the larger social structure” (Kress, 1989, p. 83).

These socio-economic vulnerabilities of The Bahamas are exposed yearly when severe weather events cut off this lifeline of economic dependency on Western tourists and elites. In this study, Western news media churn the ideological system of narratives about a celebrity bringing relief in a crippled utopia. Based on the textual analysis I conducted, I suggest that content selected by journalists to communicate celebrity relief efforts reinforced neocolonial perspectives about The Bahamas and Bahamians. For example, in Wacker’s (2019) article, *With the Bahamas reeling, from Hurricane Dorian, local Golf community looks to help lead relief efforts*, Bahamians “have been left to wander and wait in despair” (para. 10) in what Fortney’s (2019) article, *Island of Bryan dodges Hurricane Dorian but HGTV Celebrity pitches in*, described as a “tourist-dependent country” (para. 14).

Additionally, the data communicate three stories. Firstly, the data reveal an emphasis and reliance on the celebrity as the solution via the use of keywords and catchphrases such as

“support,” “helping locals,” “rescue mission to the Bahamas,” “small community in need of big help,” “back on their feet,” “help islanders recover,” and “struggling communities like The Bahamas.” Secondly, people from developing countries are represented as an isolated phenomenon. For example, Rihanna was described in the data through the use of keywords and catchphrases such as “proud Barbadian,” “Barbados native,” “native Barbados,” and Barbados-born entertainer.” Yet according to the data, Lenny Kravitz is allowed to trace “his ancestry to the Bahamas” and Rick Fox “lived there when he was growing up.” This suggests there is a separation of celebrity identification, where race is not the determining factor, but rather the celebrity’s connection to the region and successful assimilation to Western (predominantly American) ideologies. For example, in Smith’s (2019) article, *Athletes join efforts to help Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian*, the term “native of Nassau, Bahamas” (para. 9) was an added descriptor to a Bahamian source in the story. Although the source had his academic and sports achievements in the U.S. listed after his name, the final phrase reduced him back to a primitive status.

Thirdly, phrases about celebrity ownership were dominant in the data through phrases such as “owns a home in The Bahamas,” “owns a private cay in Exuma in the Bahamas,” “owns a 25-acre island in the Bahamas,” “owns land on celebrity haven Paradise Island,” “owns property and visits frequently,” and “get a piece of paradise, help the local economy.” Thompson (2006) agreed that in The Bahamas, the elite during the colonial period, just as postcolonial celebrities, participated in a cycle of developing “tourism-oriented locations by neglecting the rest of the island, especially the colonies’ black district” (p. 15). Just as Christopher Columbus declared his ownership in the Caribbean as a “Spanish possession without having lifted a finger in combat” (Strachan, 2002, p. 23), celebrities’ authority in the disaster relief narrative is attributed in the text through ownership of Bahamian land. For example, Terpany’s (2019)

article, *Hurricane Dorian ravages Bahamas but spares Sean Connery's mansion*, suggests ownership of the nations' capital as "Connery's island of New Providence" (para. 5). These themes assist in structuring the news stories about disaster relief that reflect elite ideals as normal and are a direct reflection of the Western gaze on post-colonial regions.

4.3 Signifying elements of meaning

The elements included in how a news story is put together create the kind of interpretation expected from the reader. The news media's role in the construction of the disaster narrative begins with how the content is laid out in the story. In addressing the second sub-question (what means were used by journalists to construct the frame/s), I sought to identify which signifying elements of meaning were used by journalists in news articles about celebrity relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian. To explore this, I assessed the various textual structures and thematic occurrences in the text. Below, I elaborate on the signifying elements of meaning located in the text.

4.3.1 Dramatic language

Language is an important signifying element of meaning that develops realities and multiple versions of those realities (Edelman, 2001). Language is deeply rooted in the building of meaning, yet much of Western discourse disconnects language from experience, deeming it a neutral communication vessel (Kress, 1989). However, in this study language emerged as a dominant framing mechanism in portraying celebrities during relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian via various forms of rhetoric. To begin this search for the use of language, I first needed to identify 'who' the text revealed to be dominant in the data. Figure 4.1 shows a word cloud created from the keywords coded in the theme of language retrieved from the data set. A

grouping option was chosen before a word query was run in the dataset so that instead of an exact match, there would be a group of words with the same stem together (e.g., search for pledge and pledging).

Keywords such as “celebrities,” “Rihanna,” “devastation,” “victims,” “destruction,” “hurricane,” “relief,” and “support” are large in the word cloud, demonstrating that these keywords were dominant in the news stories across the data. The word cloud also shows the prominence of particular celebrities within the data, their place in the news narrative, and their connection to the language used by journalists. Dramatic language was used by journalists to communicate the celebrity hurricane relief narrative at the very beginning of their content structures to perhaps “influence the flow of sympathy and support” (Harrison, 1999, p.107). Via the use of catchphrases and metaphors, such as “slamming into The Bahamas,” “path of destruction,” “devastation is absolute,” and “deadly storm,” the event is initially described as an action. Due to these descriptors, the disaster is now contextualized and given character, thus providing a base rationale of meaning of the event and its level of deviance deeming it newsworthy.

cloud signifies the movement and building blocks in the news narrative timeline, as well as the words used to quickly tell the story.

Metaphors and catchphrases amplified the use of dramatic language in the framing of hurricane relief by celebrities. Metaphors were especially dominant in the news stories about celebrity disaster relief, not in their comparative, embellished function, but as a means of using dramatic language to value reality (Foss, 1989). The catchphrases and metaphors used were in the form of quotes and paraphrases, directly attributed to and coming from the celebrity.

Catchphrases and metaphors such as “offer their condolences to the stricken Caribbean nation,” “It truly breaks my heart to see the complete devastation,” “donating proceeds,” “You are in our prayers,” and “lending a helping hand” are also common responses to crisis that were used as quotes in news and were recycled, reiterating that although this is a routine response for a non-routine event, it is familiar language that is already systematically patterned to fit the event.

Once the normal language was established, journalists then turned to new, dramatic language in catchphrases and metaphors, such as “catastrophe of the highest order,” “it is like a war zone,” “the damage is incomprehensible,” “it’s pretty gnarly,” “this is a wolf,” “You’re in my blood,” and “we are going to do everything we can.” This use of dramatic language creates an opportunity for the celebrity to describe the disaster and their role in their own words, strengthening their position as authority in the news story. Meanwhile, journalists reinforced and affirmed the celebrity’s role in disaster relief by using catchphrases and metaphors such as “kept his word about sending help,” “vowed to help with storm recovery,” and “rescue mission to the Bahamas.” This means that journalists used words that invoked the celebrity as hero in the news structure, confirming the continuous cycle for an ideal of defender and liberator the public craves, as Lalonde (2008) suggested. The journalist’s decision to use dramatic language provides the audience with the assumption that the event carries significance and the celebrities mentioned are

of notable salience in the culture of the audience, and therefore worthy of the audience's attention.

4.3.2 Celebrity-centric headlines

The most prominent content element in a news story is the headline. Headlines have the ability to increase relevance by capturing the largest amount of "contextual effects" (Dor, 2003, p. 701). As discussed by Allport and Lepkin (1943), headlines are the core part of the news structure that is "most universally read" (p. 212). Similarly, Pan and Kosicki (1993) agreed that a headline is the "most important framing device of the syntactical structure" (p. 59). Journalists used celebrity-centric headlines during the relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian that immediately "othered" those impacted by the disaster and elevated the celebrity, as the names of celebrities were dominant in the news headlines. This grants the headline the ability to dominate the subconscious of the reader of the news article (Allport & Lepkin, 1943).

For example, Cummings' (2019) headline *Tyler Perry did an amazing thing for victims Of Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas* utilized the first name of the celebrity at the beginning of a headline, suggesting significance that the celebrity will play in the story. Likewise, simply using the term "celebrity" as an absolute, for example, in McBride Roach's (2019) headline *The Celebrities donating to Hurricane Dorian victims* projects the celebrity as the collective social response to the issue of hurricane relief. Additionally, according to the data, a combination of the words "hurricane Dorian victims" or "victims of hurricane Dorian" was also used in the headlines along with the celebrity lead headlines. For example, Massot's (2019) headline *Chef José Andrés and other celebrities aid victims of Hurricane Dorian* grants the celebrity possession of the action of providing relief, and Hurricane Dorian is granted possession over those impacted. This is important because it may result in the reader subconsciously connecting the disaster with the

victims (negative connotation) and the celebrity as the relief provider (positive connotation), playing on the audience's emotional resources and framing their interpretation of the issue (Molek-Kozakowska, 2013). Celebrity-centric headlines were also used by journalists to suggest celebrity power over the storm in the headlines. For example, Fortney's (2019) headline *Island of Bryan dodges Hurricane Dorian but HGTV Celebrity pitches in* presents the celebrity as a force unto themselves, able to escape the wrath of nature while Bahamians could not. This suggests that the celebrity is not a victim in the news story and can withstand the disaster event while maintaining an elite status.

4.3.3 Social media as validation

Evidence of social media as a way to validate celebrities as sources was a prevalent theme throughout the texts examined. The use of celebrity social media quotes and screenshots of social media posts in news stories is significant because it highlights the acceptance of social media integration as a journalistic method of credible newsgathering instead of utilizing traditional journalistic tools and textual structures.

In my findings, news media implemented screenshots from celebrity Instagram and Twitter pages as mechanisms of content, placed higher up in the news story perhaps to convey prominence of the celebrity as part of the overall content structure. Molyneux and McGregor (2021) agreed that journalists consider tweets to be “more like *content*, an interchangeable building block of news, than like *sources*, whose ideas and messages must be subject to scrutiny and verification” (p. 2). Additionally, technology has provided the public diverse levels of interest expression via their use of social media with algorithms tailored to audiences' curated choices. This is important to journalism because if journalists are selecting captured tweets and

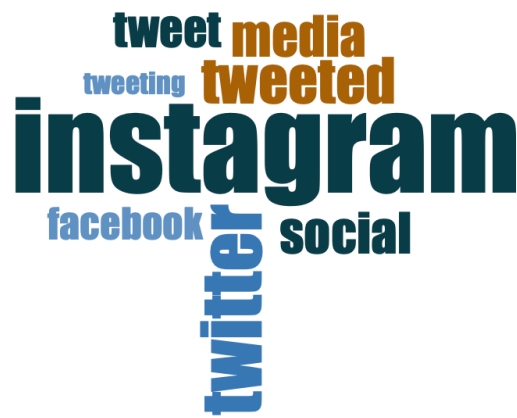
Instagram posts to use within the narrative, this allows social media to be used as an instrument of relevance selection when it comes to the issues that capture the audience's attention.

In the case of Hurricane Dorian disaster relief by celebrities, the screenshots of Twitter and Instagram posts were used in the articles as a means of proof or validation that the celebrity actually pledged hurricane relief. Journalistic interviews with the celebrities themselves were few and far between, as the news media relied on social media posts to validate the celebrities' pledge of support for Hurricane Dorian relief. As a result, this type of content usage suggests there is no need for or perhaps a decreased interest for the use of journalistic tools of refinement, such as interviewing the actual source (Molyneux & McGregor 2021, p. 14).

Additionally, it also gives power to the social media platform as a source for journalists to obtain information and enforce use of technological language such as emojis and hashtags. For example, in Gawley's (2019) article, *Bethenny Frankel travels to Florida and the Bahamas to help Hurricane Dorian victims*, the celebrity was quoted via a tweet. My analysis reduced this tweet to a catchphrase combined with a metaphor via a hashtag, depicting the architectural durability of the homes impacted. Bahamian homes were depicted as not having the ability to withstand a hurricane as "construction there is not built for this. #thisisacrisis." This kind of textual construction does two things: 1) it depicts the celebrity as an authority that has a presumed knowledge of Bahamian real estate and building codes, and 2) combining the use of a hashtag as both a metaphor and catchphrase depicts Bahamian homes as being in a state of crisis, unfit from the celebrity's authoritative perspective, before the crisis happened. This depiction provides a dual rationale for the celebrity to provide relief to those impacted not only because the hurricane's impact is a crisis, but also because Bahamian's ability to create suitable shelter from this kind of storm is in a critical situation. As a catchphrase, the hashtag #thisisacrisis is disseminated across social media, which is then picked up and repeated in the news media.

Similarly, Kacala's (2019) article, *Bethany Frankel flies to The Bahamas to help those in need after Hurricane Dorian*, used two quotes from the celebrity's Instagram posts, including the same hashtag, #thisisacrisis. In this instance, the celebrity depicted her relief efforts as mission for her charity to provide aid while "addressing the fallout of #HurricaneDorian because #thisisacrisis" (para. 7). These instances validate Bernard's (2019) notion that the power of the hashtag lies in the content – the social media post that the news media embed into their news stories. The relevancy of the social media post to the hashtag itself plays no role in its ability to be distributed across digital platforms by the hashtag (Bernard, 2019, p.16). This grants an almost effortless capability for the celebrity to elevate and position their voice about the disaster and relief efforts on both social media and the news media, which use social media posts as content. Figure 4.2 illustrates the references of social media attribution to the celebrity mentioned in the examined articles. This confirms what Molyneux and McGregor (2021) suggested is a shift in values and a new role for journalists in the social media and digital universe as one of "discovery and amplification rather than that of independent verification" (p.14).

Figure 4.2 Word cloud of celebrity social media attribution



Source: Generated using NVivo

An additional point of interest was that journalists always attributed the celebrity back to the social media platform. Journalists' use of word phrases such as "announced on Instagram," "published a statement on social media," and "wrote on Twitter" in news articles does two things: First, it establishes the celebrity's credibility as being part of the same communicative interconnections as their supporters or people who are not celebrities, as they make what are regarded as official announcements on a public platform that their audience also accesses. Second, it allows the social media platform to be used as an information source in the news article by the journalist, elevating the credibility of both the social media platform and the celebrity while providing the journalist access to a source without having to leave the reporter's desk. The problem for journalism and for the journalists (both in practice and education) comes from the utmost reliance on social media platforms to vet the celebrity as a source during a crisis, which can damage fact checking and follow-up capabilities and practices.

For the celebrity, this is important as "perceived source credibility is a prerequisite of successful framing" (Druckman, 2001, p. 1061). Furthermore, if a celebrity can secure

themselves as a source in the news narrative, their attention prestige advances with the public deeming them an authority and ultimately gives control of the news narrative to the celebrity. For example, Gawley's (2019) article, *Bethenny Frankel travels to Florida and the Bahamas to help Hurricane Dorian victims*, states that via Twitter, "Frankel said that the 'unofficial death toll in Abacos/Marsh Harbour is 50+' " (para. 6). Gawley (2019) did not provide any additional quote or evidence from a local Bahamian official to verify the death count, allowing Frankel to become a source of authority through her tweet being used in the news story as an official quote. This is important because it places emphasis on the celebrity as authority with insight into the effects of the deviance. In other words, information that would normally be quoted from an official source relevant to the community experiencing the disaster is now being quoted from the selected celebrity as fact. Journalists now have to share jurisdiction of knowledge with social media platforms, as the journalist is reduced to amplifying social media posts as part of their news content structure, instead of verifying the information posted by the celebrity, resulting in the social media platform and the celebrity having the capability to position themselves as a credible news source (Molyneux & McGregor, 2021).

4.3.4 Uneven source elevation

The voice of a news story emerges from the sources that are tucked throughout the narrative. The amplification of a source or voice in a news story should be understood as a method and not a sole routine for journalists (Reid et al., 2020). Based on the texts analyzed, the celebrity source was dominant in the relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian. Not surprisingly, the celebrity had succeeded in dominating the relief effort narrative, while non-celebrity sources were diminished. For example, Simpson's (2019) article, *'Devastated' Michael Jordan donates \$1 million to Hurricane Dorian relief in The Bahamas, where he owns land on celebrity haven*

Paradise Island - as the death toll climbs to 50, and thousands are left homeless, included screenshots of Jordan's Twitter press release, while also adding the same wording as quotes and as parts of the text in the article.

Contrastingly, a Bahamian source was pushed down to the end of the news article, suggesting to the audience the salience of the non-celebrity cited information. Additionally, quotes from the social media posts were pulled and weaved into the articles as stand-alone quotations. For example, Connor's (2019) article, *Rihanna, Ludacris among celebs to pledge support to victims of Hurricane Dorian: 'You are in our prayers,'* had a mix of screenshots from the social media of the celebrities, as well as parts of the quotes weaved into the story. This is important because as Pan and Kosicki (1993) discovered, quotes can be implemented as framing mechanisms by quoting experts or persons being perceived as experts, to claim whether something is fact or valid in a given situation by associating various perspectives to authority (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Meanwhile, some local non-authority voices were not attributed to actual people or names, but to the social media platform. For example, in the BBC News (2019) article, *Hurricane Dorian - Who is helping in the relief effort*, a local non-authority source was attributed as "one grateful Instagram user" (para. 22). This means that social media, and in this instance, the visual platform of Instagram, have gained importance in the news story as source of content while diminishing the local non-authority source, pushing it down the journalistic content curation salience structure.

Additionally, more than one celebrity source was utilized in multiple articles. This further confirms journalists' dependency on the celebrity as a source of authority. An important way this was achieved was using consistent exemplars of past relief efforts. For example, McBride Roach's (2019) article, *The Celebrities donating to Hurricane Dorian Victims*, highlighted Michael Jordan's other relief donation during Hurricane Florence and that Jordan was a "frequent

visitor to the Bahamas,” and his current pledge “was not the first time the billionaire has helped those in need” (para. 4). This is important because it grants the celebrity a connection to the place where the disaster took place and emphasizes the celebrity’s authority in relief efforts, making the celebrity’s infiltration into the narrative and representation as a relief provider not a suspicious circumstance. Allowing the celebrity to be an authoritative source in the disaster relief news story leaves little to no room for the audience to interpret The Bahamas as a country with officials or official organizations that can handle their own crisis management. The celebrity is therefore cemented as a hero in the news story structure, portrayed as bearing gifts of aid and seemingly able to solve the problem the Bahamians are facing.

What is also significant is the silence of major relief organizations throughout the stories and the elevation of the celebrities own charitable organizations as lead relief agents. For example, Rogo’s (2019) article, *These are the celebrities who’ve supported The Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian*, makes mention of how “Through his Let Love Rule Foundation, Lenny Kravitz plans to send boats” (para. 9) and Rihanna’s tweet and charity handle attribution of “you are in our prayers and the @ClaraLionelFdn is already figuring out how best we can help” (para. 8). This means that the celebrity is once again elevated in credibility by establishing that they have humanitarian aspirations by forming their own organizations, granting the celebrity more power for their role in the relief efforts instead of giving voice to a local authority organization that may already be implanted in the region and understands the issues on the ground post-disaster.

4.4 Summary

According to the findings of the textual analysis, journalists framed celebrity disaster relief efforts via the Celebrity Response Frame, which asserts the celebrity as the solution to the issue or problem. The Celebrity Response Frame reflected neocolonialist ideological patterns within the analyzed news media stories about celebrity involvement with Hurricane Dorian relief. The means by which journalists used to construct these frames aided in the significance of the celebrity's position in the frame. Headlines are the first place in the news structure that an audience looks for guidance on whether or not the news is interesting and how to understand it. Celebrity-centric headlines, while used as a strategy to gain audience's attention, elevated the celebrity's status in the relief, signifying their place in society and therefore their newsworthiness.

The text in these headlines also "othered" those impacted from the disaster by prescribing to them the negative connotation of victim instead of survivor. The use of dramatic language, through the use of catchphrases and metaphors, revealed the sociolinguistic impact that the journalists in both their writings and use of celebrity voices (quotes), had on the disaster relief stories. Journalism must now share what used to be its highly coveted news sharing capabilities. However, social media as validation via the use of celebrity social media quotes and screenshots of social media posts in news stories, highlight the acceptance of social media as worthy news providers in the digital environment. Finally, uneven source elevation used by journalists diminished the voices of those impacted by the disaster in order to amplify and give salience to the celebrity voice in the news story. The meaning of these findings is further discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 5), which also addresses the implications of the findings.

5 Discussion and Conclusion: Journalism in Crisis

The Bahamas is a country that is vulnerable to hurricanes, and its people are vulnerable to remnants of a regime that has left them bound to a system of socio-economic subjugation with a smile. It is how Western audiences view The Bahamas, not understanding it, that is crucial to its survival. Visitors and investors, elite or not, are the aorta of the Bahamian economy, as hurricanes are its recurring heart attack every year. When a disaster strikes, celebrities, many of whom have experienced The Bahamas, digitally broadcast mini drama series via social media with promises of relief. Journalists, many of whom already reported on the disaster, move on to these promises and construct news stories about celebrities as saviors to the distressed nation. The news media enjoy a good story, and indeed, celebrity aid allows journalists to tell such a story.

This study focuses on the news coverage of celebrity relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian, the most powerful Category 5 storm to ever make landfall in The Bahamas. Specifically, I investigated how celebrities were framed during relief efforts after Hurricane Dorian. Based on a qualitative textual analysis of 50 news articles, I identified the frame used by journalists and the means used to construct the frame.

Theoretically, this study drew on media framing literature (e.g., Gitlin, 1980; Goffman, 1974; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Reese, 2007), as well as literature pertaining to celebrity culture (e.g., Marshall, 2005; Ponce, 2002; Richey, 2016; Rojek, 2001) and neocolonial perspectives in news coverage of non-Western countries (e.g., Clarke, 2009; Franks, 2010; Hanitzsch & Vos; Lugo-Ocando, 2020; Schiller, 1996). Specifically, my investigation was guided by the concept of framing (Reese, 2001; Entman 1993) and studies of framing devices (Gamson, 1992), framing mechanisms (Tankard, 2001) and signifying elements of meaning (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

This thesis shows that the news media coverage under study focused on celebrities as the solution to the issue of disaster relief. Briefly, I offer two main theoretical contributions: the introduction of what I call *Celebrity Response Frame* and its accompanying ideological element; and the identification of combined traditional and non-traditional means through which this frame is created, including the embedding of social media content in news stories. In what follows, I discuss the key findings and contributions of this research and what they mean for journalism and society. I also address limitations of the research and provide recommendations for journalism scholars and practitioners.

5.1 Key findings and contributions

Drawing on framing theory as it relates to news media, I suggest that journalists can communicate about celebrity relief efforts by using the Celebrity Response Frame, a frame that projects the celebrity as the solution to an issue or event. This frame can be reinforced by the ideological components relevant to the story context. Specifically, in this study, I found that this was the key frame used after Hurricane Dorian to communicate celebrity relief efforts. Neocolonialist perspectives were amplified in the news media articles, presenting the celebrity as an elevated source of authority in the disaster relief news narrative, while silencing the voices of the people in a developing nation experiencing the disaster.

A combination of framing devices or signifying elements of meaning can be used to construct the Celebrity Response Frame. They include traditional means, such as the choice of headlines, and more modern means, such as the embedding of social media content. These means can come together in a journalistic work and contribute to the understanding of celebrity's infiltration into a disaster news story.

Focusing on celebrity representation in news stories about Hurricane Dorian relief efforts, I identified the use of keywords, catchphrases, and metaphors that allowed journalists to do three things: reducing celebrities who live and work in America but have a connection to the post-colonial region back to their native status, depicting the celebrity as the solution, and publicizing celebrity's ownership of Bahamian land to justify their interest in aiding the impacted nation. Symbolic stereotypes about The Bahamas and Bahamians were resurrected in the minds of the Western audience perhaps based on the rhetoric advocating the celebrity as savior to the distressed nation, through depictions of The Bahamas as place of possession and restoration for the elite. This finding supports Strachan's (2003) assertion that The Bahamas is perpetually constructed by "controlling metaphors 'paradise' and 'plantation,' and the ideologies that have deployed these metaphors for the past five hundred years" (p. 3-4).

The Black experience in relation to Hurricane Dorian relief efforts by celebrities was substantial due to two perspectives of blackness embedded in the disaster narrative: the Black celebrity and the Black Other. The Black celebrity experience is unique in this study as the majority of celebrities in the news articles examined are of African descent or African Americans. Therefore, they are locked between two identities: the Celebrity and the African American. As noted in the literature review about the role of celebrities in disaster relief, celebrities function as a psychological buffer from the disaster impact (see Cloud, 2014). Therefore, the Black Celebrity has to become a buffer for the disaster impact in addition to having to engage with news media that have historically constructed African Americans in disaster situations as victims or criminals (e.g., Berger, 2009; Haider-Markel et al. 2007). Having this dual identity as both Black Celebrity and Black Other proposes a collective trauma of dueling realities and cultural expectations on the Black celebrity representation in disaster news narratives. While news media may have provided reports about Black celebrities in American

popular culture promising relief as a way to demonstrate that celebrity status and power are attainable goals in the Black community, journalism miscarries the opportunity to establish an “empowered collective” (Wallace & Andrews, 2021, p. 5).

The Black experience of the Other who do not have a celebrity identity is one of silence as what is considered culturally deviant (Black people) is now subjugated by a deviance (the disaster). The language used to portray the people of color impacted by Hurricane Dorian depicted them as offerings to be sacrificed (victims) to Hurricane Dorian, while the celebrity is depicted as providing relief from the disaster, professing to contribute to the rebuilding of a divine archipelagic abode they already, partially, own. The findings of this research support previous literature (Balaji, 2011; Rosaldo, 1989) that blackness in a disaster will always produce dominance and forbearance from historic systems of oppression.

In news, these social systems are textually restructured via the information chosen by the journalist in order to create and communicate meaning that their audience understands – their social understanding of blackness.

Based on my analysis, I also propose the means through which the Celebrity Response Frame is constructed, whereby celebrity culture is granted informational superiority in the news media to engage and persuade. These means include dramatic language, celebrity-centric headlines, social media as validation, and uneven source elevation. They are utilized by journalists to support the representation of the celebrity as the solution to the problem or issue. News media utilized a combination of the these means, which in turn produced a pronounced trend towards celebrity neocolonialist projections, especially through the use of dramatic language.

Language was revealed to be an important framing indicator not only in its ability to provide meaning, but because it confirms journalism’s place in society as “the most important

textual system in the world” (Hartley, 1996, p. 32). The findings of this study show that dramatic language was used to give linguistic life to Hurricane Dorian. While the disaster event was frequently depicted as an action and its impact sensationalized, the language in the news stories about disaster relief supported the theme of the celebrity as a solution. Interestingly, the language used allowed the journalists to dismiss the social position of the celebrity within Western celebrity culture based on their geographical origins. This means that journalists (knowingly or unknowingly) participated in “othering” not only the individuals impacted from the disaster, but also celebrities who were not born in America. These findings support the narrow perspectives and privileges Western journalism projects to the rest of the world (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2016; Miller & Goidel, 2009).

A notable finding of this study was the ability of journalists to incorporate textual elements of social media as validation within their news story structure. The reliance on and use of social media content as a source of validation in news stories about disaster relief was utilized to a great extent in the online articles. My findings are in line with Molyneux and McGregor’s (2021) findings that journalists do not spend time qualifying tweets and opt to pick and choose parts of social media quotes as a way to “retain the ability to frame the information as they wish, rather than adopting the tweeter’s frame wholesale” (p. 14).

Considering the nature of the internet and the tradition of journalism, I was surprised to see social media allowed to infiltrate the news story so brazenly, to the point where even emojis were pulled as quotes, depicted as emotional cues from celebrity social media messages. This exposes how social media source validation is no longer a crutch, but a functioning appendage of journalism and society. Journalists must recognize that framing, when used as a method in news construction (unintended or intended), can be a process that connects elements that are both relevant to the conversation and potentially harmful to journalistic credibility. Using social media

as source validation can amplify the celebrity that owns the social media content. Social media offer a number of content elements (e.g., emojis and screenshots) that can be organized by journalists to create meaning in the news story.

The use of celebrity-centric headlines presented a unique case where the headlines were predominantly used as an attention-grabbing, communicative strategy for the relief actions of the celebrity. The headlines analyzed made use of present-tense emotive verbs, such as “promises” and “pledge,” thus establishing the celebrity before the story even begins as the active, current response to the issue of hurricane relief. This supports Dor’s (2003) finding that headlines are not simply a function of semantics and pragmatics, but “communicative device” (p. 720), operating solely to create the highest level of knowledge between the information in the news story and audience’s ability to interpret the content of that information. The interpretive function comes from previous knowledge about the actors in the disaster event, as journalists used celebrity-centric headlines as a way to (knowing or unknowingly) “other” those impacted by the disaster.

In the examined texts, this was achieved by the use of not only celebrity names but also the term “celebrity,” a dominant feature in the news headlines about Hurricane Dorian relief. Journalists also elevated the celebrity in headlines through depictions of the impacted Bahamians as “victims of Hurricane Dorian” and not as survivors of the storm, granting the storm possessive quality over those impacted. Alternatively, headlines were used by journalists to suggest celebrity power over the storm, projecting the celebrity’s ability to withstand and escape the storm while Bahamians are claimed by the storm. This finding supports Schickel’s (1985) assertion that celebrities are an important, altering force of civilization.

Although uneven source selection was not a surprising finding, what I did find interesting was unattributed sources that were referenced to the social media platform, allowing the celebrity to succeed in dominating the relief effort narrative. This is important because it shows not only

the power journalists have over choosing their sources, but also the use of the social media outlet as a checkpoint for control of the source. This supports previous research (Altheide, 1978; Druckman, 2001) surrounding journalists' structural news story decision-making processes, linking source and source location as familiar to the journalist, including the credibility of the source and the source location.

The findings of this research also showed how journalists used the same celebrities in multiple articles about their involvement with Hurricane Dorian relief. This is important because it highlights this "narrow segment of elites" (Manoff & Schudson, 1986, p. 13) created by journalists, and establishes journalists' dependency on the celebrity as an authoritative source. These findings support Manoff and Schudson's (1986) insight that "who the sources are" holds a close connection to "who is news" (p. 25). Journalists elevated celebrity-led charitable organizations in the news media. By so doing, they increased celebrity credibility as a source in the story because the celebrity could now speak from a second level of authority – that of an organization. This is important because it acts as a new-found benefit to the journalist, who now has no real need to seek out other elite sources as they can get a two for one just by interviewing the celebrity about their own charity and their role in disaster relief efforts. Meanwhile, voices of the local authority organizations (e.g., NGOs, local charities) are strangled by the elevation of the celebrity in the disaster relief news story, fighting to have their voice placed high enough in the news structure to matter, but it is not enough.

There is much work to be done as it relates to news media coverage of celebrity-initiated disaster relief. When a disaster strikes, such as a hurricane, journalists should understand that they are not covering a new environmental phenomenon. The strength of the hurricane may intensify, and the wind and the rain may come together hard enough and fast enough to cut flesh, but this is not a new event. This is exactly how celebrity culture can consistently and successfully

infiltrate the disaster news cycle. There is work that needs to be done to understand the social and economic backgrounds of countries that are in close proximity to the West both before and after a disaster strikes, because the underlying social implications can definitely be missed when the dispossession of Bahamian voices consistently strangles a developing nation reliant on the narrative of “It’s Better in The Bahamas,” a 1980s Bahamas Ministry of Tourism advertising slogan, to survive.

5.2 Study implications

Previous research (Franks 2006, 2013; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006; Singer et al., 1991) has focused on disaster coverage based on social, cultural, and geographical factors. The findings of this study demonstrate that how news stories about disaster relief are framed, based on celebrity’s influence and involvement, is important to understanding the intricacies of reporting in countries outside of the Western news framework, as well as the cognitive journalistic routines subscribed to disaster news structure.

This study can help improve how journalists understand their reporting on developing nations with a colonial past and the impact celebrity-initiated relief can have, by offering a small glimpse into the devices that were revealed to construct these narratives.

While adding to the literature on framing, this study may inform scholars about how the theoretical framework of media framing can be improved by further examining the social meanings of the frames, moving beyond the effects media frames have on the public and into the origin stories of the social, economic, and political constructs that are the pure essence of how these frames develop. It is important to take into account this next level of framing because it can not only unveil a complex, hidden background for the method chosen to study the frame, but also

offer an historical rationale as to why journalism, as an interpretive institution, continually keeps a rotation of contextual constructs alive.

The findings of this study could contribute to a deeper understanding of the ongoing deprivation of post-colonial voices in journalism stories about disaster relief, due the preferred pattern of including a celebrity into the natural disaster news discourse. Identifying signifying elements of meaning that render the Bahamian voice not newsworthy in a news story can help journalists recognize that the generic pattern of authority is not the essence of disaster relief, but the people impacted are the ‘who’ that is a necessary voice in a news narrative that rinses and repeats a new disaster, year after year.

5.3 Study limitations and future research

As with most research, this study has a number of limitations. Most notable is the sample size and focus on predominantly U.S. news media outlets. There may have been non-English language outlets and journalists in other countries that perhaps had other celebrity voices or local sources and perspectives not included in the sample. Other outlets from a global perspective may have enriched the findings further. Additionally, a local perspective of the celebrity relief could contribute a different view or scenario to the findings, as it could reveal more about the relationship between Western celebrity and those experiencing the disaster.

More news media options or other means of news communication (e.g., podcasts, television) could also be examined to determine any differences in celebrity relief coverage post-disaster. Future research should consider further investigation into the framing of news stories and the coverage of different disaster events in different countries over time, especially in regions that may not be granted U.S. news media attention. Future research could also examine the historical news coverage of hurricanes in The Bahamas and the ways in which those stories were

covered by foreign news media. This kind of analysis and in-depth study could add to the understanding of disaster news coverage in The Bahamas. As a region that experiences hurricanes yearly, understanding the disaster news routines throughout Bahamian history is ideal to comprehending what journalistic elements were valued by news and the public over time.

This study can be extended and expounded upon, as this topic of who gets to speak in relation to news coverage of celebrity disaster relief warrants further research in journalism studies. Future research would do well to further investigate the relationship between celebrity and journalism, especially concerning journalists using social media as content and the implications of Western values on other countries via news media. Future research should also consider exploring and expanding on celebrity representation in news in order to understand how celebrities are identified and codified in news media based on various factors, including racial, political, economical, and social variables.

5.4 Suggestions for journalists

This research is an opportunity for journalists in the Anglo and Francophone Caribbean to determine their options about how to increase their discoverability in online news media formats and platforms. Journalists transfer information to an audience they cannot hear or see (Neuman et al., 1992), so this research serves as an opportunity for current and aspiring journalists to review the impact of celebrity source elevation and content curation in the news narratives of communities that are historically othered. It is also an opportunity for journalists in The Bahamas and the Caribbean at large to discuss and discover ways to contribute to their present realities.

This study reveals how framing as a method in the news media encourages the audience exposed to Western perspectives to remain loyal to the westernized celebrity gaze. If journalism is to remain a true institution of knowledge, and if journalists are to continue to be deemed

curators of knowledge, they must work to acquire and distribute that knowledge as a collective system. This may offer journalism a way to avoid being reduced to a revolving social media content machine that refuses to elevate the reach of democracy and understand the social conditions of post-hurricane, post-colonial developing nations.

It is my hope that the results from this study can achieve three things: 1) inform scholarly journalism literature, 2) impact the global thought processes of journalists and their relationships with elite newsmakers and inspire West Indian journalists to begin to contribute to the narrative that has long been told for and about them, and 3) impact the global thought processes of journalists and their relationships with elite newsmakers. If journalists are to continue utilizing the elite of society and technology as content and consider framing as a method to bring attention to a story about a disadvantaged group, a detailed thought process about not only who the audience is, but also who gets to speak to that audience is imperative. The pawn is not the public, but it is the citizens of a socially and economically handcuffed nation who are the scapegoats for disaster relief news narrative of elites. Future journalists must work to create disruptions in the dependent post-colonized versus savior colonizer discourse about celebrity disaster relief efforts still present in Western news media. If journalists sincerely take the time to understand the societies they are reporting on, then journalists could potentially live up to journalism's mission to inform the public, connect our communities and bolster the arm of democracy. In turn, the world we live in could be better.

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Appendix: News Sources

Television

ABC
BBC
BET
CBS
CNBC
CNN
First Coast News WTLV-WJXX
KOAM News Now
NBC
REVOLT TV
TMZ

Radio Station

96.9 The Game

Magazines

Black Enterprise
Bizjournals.com
Design & Fashion Magazine
ELLE
Essence
Golf
Golf Digest
People
Teen Vogue

Newspapers

Calgary Herald
Journal News
Metro UK
New York Daily News
Sun Sentinel
The Daily Mail
The Hill
The Miami Herald
The Mirror
The Sun
USA TODAY

Digital Native Publishers

Aleteia
AtlantaBlackStar

Borden Magazine
Celebrity Insider
Face2faceAfrica
Global Sport Matters
HighSnobiety
NarCity
SheKnows
The Root
Yahoo