

Federal/State/Local Collaboration Networks in Disasters Case Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study, with a biblical perspective, was to analyze intergovernmental collaboration networking during disasters by evaluating six areas that require additional research: 1) An analysis of the strong federal direction of national goals or greater flexibility; 2) The analysis of the effects of federal management roles in emergency management positions; 3) A discussion of how states address major hazards without federal encouragement; 4) Analysis of advantages to developing local capabilities that reduce hazards; 5) Discussion on the likelihood of local officials addressing risks to life and property without outside funds or support with recommendations for the future. Effective communication during natural and man-made disasters reduces response time and when practiced with local community volunteers periodically develop collaboration and cooperation with private, public, and nonprofit organizations. Therefore, this study examines frameworks of local, state, and federal emergency management agencies and their inter-organizational communication patterns during times of uncertainty for the development of skills in interagency situations.

Keywords

Emergency Management, Communication Skills

1. Introduction

The purpose of this case study, with a biblical perspective, was to analyze intergovernmental collaboration networking during disasters by evaluating six areas that require additional research: 1) An analysis of the strong federal direction of national goals or greater flexibility; 2) The analysis of the effects of federal management roles in emergency management positions; 3) A discussion of how

states address major hazards without federal encouragement; 4) Analysis of advantages to developing local capabilities that reduce hazards; 5) Discussion on the likelihood of local officials addressing risks to life and property without outside funds or support with recommendations for the future.

Effective communication during catastrophic emergencies is a must and “the role of information technologies has to be achieved for decision-making goals and directives” therefore this study examines frameworks of inter-organizational communication and development during times of uncertainty for the “development of skills in interagency situations of coordination efforts in public, private, and nonprofit organizations” (Kapucu, 2006: p. 207). Kapucu et al. (2010) found that the use of “intergovernmental and interorganizational response to coordinate complex operations” involving cooperation from intergovernmental agencies, nonprofits, and business was not inductive in responding to the public’s needs during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. Kapucu et al. (2010) study utilized network and partnership concepts. After analyzing the networking and collaboration between partners, Kapucu et al. (2010) found “that more investment should be made in community capacity building at local and state levels for effective partnerships” and communication during disasters.

During hurricane season, climate change has been mentioned by Presidents and Vice Presidents as the blame. President Biden addressed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to “thank Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas; Commandant of the Coast Guard, Fagan; Commanding General of the Army Corp of Engineers, Lieutenant General Spellmon; and FEMA Administration, Criswell” proves federal agencies are working together with other intergovernmental agencies, private individuals, nonprofits, and non-governmental organizations to accomplish goals of caring for others in disaster relief efforts with goods and services (White House, 2022). Dangerous missions with Coast Guard rescues, intergovernmental teams, and braving flood waters from Hurricane Ian examines the many available resources that assist those in need, for example, the Red Cross and Hope, both nonprofits, and if “Floridians need additional insurance, relief assistance is available up to \$37,900 for home repairs, \$37,900 for lost property”, White House (2022) in addition to 1000 FEMA personnel providing supplies.

2. Strong Federal Direction of National Goals or Greater Flexibility?

Do national goals and strong federal direction, as in “creative federalism” need more flexible efforts from government agencies? “I consider that the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; Moreover, whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, He also glorified” (The Holy Bible: New King James Version, 1982, Romans 8:18, 30). Therefore, continued research needs to evaluate if the strong federal direction of national goals should be more flexible, but it depends on the total revenue of local and state governments to cover such catastrophic disasters

and when it comes to grants, aid, and continued relief, *what are the best ways to accomplish intergovernmental goals?* Furthermore, quantitative, and qualitative research can be tested by interviewing public officials, private donors, nonprofit agencies, intergovernmental managers, and public administrators. For example, testing hypotheses of dependent variables that are the effect of the cause of a problem and testing with quantitative tools of statistical performance to find significance in non-bias variables confirms theory concepts (Creswell, 2014).

Networking involves communication with agencies and organizations with multiple linkages across boundaries with collaborative activities consisting of public policymaking, politics, law, and governmental management partnerships with nongovernmental organizations for contracts and outside services to deliver services demanded by the public (Agranoff, 2017: p. 191). And testing theories of whether directions of federal goals need to be flexible depends on hypotheses testing. Nevertheless, partnerships and collaboration resolve problems in emergency situations.

However, in the 1970s state and local officials wanted more flexibility from the constraints of federal categorical grant regulations to distribute to their areas of need from their own decisions. States have the flexibility and the governor's legislative power to enact state legislation, approve budgets, and coordinate the National Guard, police officers, Army Corps personnel, and private sources to dispatch in areas of need for disaster relief (National Governor's Association, 2022).

Analyzing Federal Direction, National Goals, and Greater Flexibility

States have the power to compete, collaborate, and set goals for grants and funding from the federal government (Agranoff, 2017). But the federal and state governments are responsible for tax dollars to pay for emergency operations in which states assist other states with federal assistance. Therefore, states with higher tax revenues, fewer emergency needs, and partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, and community volunteerism are less dependent on federal funds when preparing for emergencies and are communicated by local emergency management office websites. By analyzing disasters, policymaking decisions become implementation strategies for recovery in the reconstruction of frameworks and provide a guide for future recovery plans in man-made and natural disasters.

However, local and interstate connections of partnerships formed with emergency agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and links to local websites of emergency management agencies can provide updates for shelter locations in the future for tornadoes and ice storms, periodically reviewed by the weather stations on news networks that inform the public before power losses. Thus, community awareness and communication become necessary for the survival of rare natural disasters like ice storms or earthquakes. Community efforts begin with leaders and homeowner associations, nonprofits, and businesses can volunteer their time to address their neighbors, clients, friends, and business associates on preparation plans for natural disasters developing local capabilities that educate the public on

preparation measures for ice storms, tornadoes, cyber-attacks, and mass shootings. Furthermore, pre-collaboration can meet community needs in areas of low income “for long-term community resilience to overcome inequalities” when rebuilding renewal projects after disasters (Karaminejad, 2021).

In addition, stronger structure and countermeasures can reduce the impact on casualties in future disasters, contributing to needed research in case studies worldwide.

3. A Discussion/Analysis of the Effects on the Federal Role in Emergency Management

What would happen if the federal role in emergency management was reduced to only providing financial aid? “Disasters illustrate networking and hierarchical characteristics that need centralized coordination” efforts across territorial boundaries that require the exchange of ideas to “operate under changing conditions” Nowell et al. (2017: p. 10) therefore, the reliability of only funding from the federal government abandons judicial negotiations and laws across boundaries that are important to overall governance in disaster response. Thus, voters vote for legislators, governors, judges, and politicians and it is important to campaign and involves communities to educate them on the backgrounds and the goals of candidates and issues that address voters. Improving community awareness of policy issues makes an impact on the implementation of policy decisions.

The 2022 Household Survey of Disaster Preparation by FEMA does not include ice storms as a category in quantitative or qualitative research; refer to FEMA’s 2022 Household Surveys.

4. Discussion on How States Address Major Hazards without Federal Encouragement

“Hazard mitigation begins with local, and tribal governments to identify natural disaster risks and to develop strategies for the future” and with the guidance of FEMA and the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) comprehensive economic development strategies and hazard mitigation plans keep communities more secure (FEMA, 2022). Furthermore, with the State Governor’s support of allocating resources and manpower from the National Guard, Red Cross, nonprofit, and profitable organizations, states can regulate, protect resources, and negotiate with outside state contractors for reconstruction efforts from disasters. Therefore, intergovernmental management is more than “reading rules, regulations, listening at the hearing, exchanging information, and negotiating with advisories for mutual agreement, it is about working with nongovernmental administrators to develop joint resolutions” (Agranoff, 2017; p. 222).

Countermeasures Proposed

States can address hazards, natural disasters, and man-made disasters by educating their nonprofits and businesses from case studies of past experiences in

disasters. For example, what does it take to make a state governor issue a state emergency to call local nonprofits, emergency teams, hospitals, businesses, and the public to donate time, shelter, and resources for recovery and protection of a disaster, specifically an ice storm? Updating local emergency management offices with community links on shelters, volunteerism, and resources protects the public. Therefore community involvement is important; FEMA's 2022 National Household Survey reports only 10 percent of the public gets involved with their community for disaster preparations.

Therefore, there is a need for further research and communities to find leaders to participate in preparations for disasters, specifically, rare ice storms. Community involvement can start with local homeowner's associations and city council representatives.

5. Advantages of Developing Local Capabilities to Reduce Hazards

There are advantages of developing local capabilities to reduce hazard response time from planned strategies; however, if local volunteers paid employees, managers, administrators, and political officials are unaware of laws and policy arrangements, and liabilities may be imminent, justifying why human resource managers of business organizations and nonprofits need to address workers with strategies, plans, and guidelines in case of a disaster. For example, the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) to "direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency" to "promulgate final reportable quantity regulations for specified hazardous substances by December 31, 1986, or by April 30, 1988" (U.S. Congress, 2022). Notification of guidelines, regulations, and how to report hazards and disasters is vital for compensation and to reduce liabilities by intergovernmental agencies, nonprofits, business organizations, and private citizens. In other words, communication and education reduce additional harm from hazards and disasters.

In addition, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) prepare for emergencies, and with the Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) LEPCs "must develop a response plan reviewed at least once a year and provide citizens with information on hazardous chemicals for community awareness", EPA (2022) which provides advantages for local governments and citizens to participate in sharing education about how to dispose of chemicals and knowing where there are disposal location sites.

Another advantage to local emergency planning for hazards is to educate citizens on natural disasters and nuclear attacks by mapping out location sites, how to organize and prepare for disasters, numbers to call for additional information on disaster relief, prevention, what resources to have available in one's home and car, how to prepare pets, children, and protect property. Therefore, the benefits of hazard mitigation are to "protect public safety, prevent loss of life and injury

and reduce damage to existing and future development” (FEMA, 2022). When was the last time your church, school, workplace, home, and organizations reviewed what, where, and how to go to a place of safety during an emergency?

Mary Schulz, Associate Director for the Michigan Extension Center for Local Government, Finance, and Policy educates her state and Michigan’s local government leaders about the “federal revenue sharing that was last available to localities in 1986 and that it can be reestablished” (Schulz, 2021). When “President Nixon initiated the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972, it enabled federal grants to state and local governments for four years and extended in 1976, 1980, and 1983 before it expired in 1986” (2021). “Federal revenue sharing was distributed by one-third to states and two-thirds by grant funds to local governments, but in 1981, state governments were excluded from this program” (2021). “President Trump provided \$3 trillion to state and local governments to defend against the Coronavirus pandemic and Biden distributed \$1.9 trillion as the first installment to be used as an economic stimulus plan” (2021). Furthermore, “Jerome Powell, Federal Reserve Chair reported that strong congressional financial support builds productivity and Congress by fiscal investing not done by the federal system” (2021).

From a literature review perspective, scholars recognize and evaluate those disasters involving pandemics, terrorism, economic turmoil, and hazards that require organization and collaboration across intergovernmental levels (Nohrstedt et al., 2018). Scholars also have an opportunity to research and evaluate that “crisis management is a practice of collaborative public management relating to concepts of collaborative governance” (as cited in Nohrstedt et al., 2018: p. 257). Research scholars have evaluated collaborative applications of principles and strategies during crises and found that skills of “goal-attainment and uncertainty achieve common goals in specifying operational response and recovery guidelines, leadership abilities to maintain control among the public, and keep morale and information ongoing throughout the state and local communities” (Nohrstedt et al., 2018: p. 265). “Collaboration costs to improve effective and efficient networking with other organizations in time, energy, and money by responding to crises across territorial boundaries” incorporates improved organizational skills, manpower operational tasks, and response times which develops “capabilities to overcome future disasters by analyzing, evaluating, and assessing disastrous situations performed in collaborative research” (Nohrstedt et al., 2018: pp. 265-267).

The “Stafford Act, amended and related to authorities provides federal assistance, preparedness mitigation assistance, definitions of findings, and codes that can advance recovery, contracting, equipment standards, urban search and rescue, terrorism prevention, use of funds, Homeland Security grant programs” and additional information from disability coordinators to contractors, within the Homeland Security Act, as “amended by the Federal Emergency Management-related Provisions, FEMA, 2019, P-592” (FEMA, 2022).

Consequently, the advantages of developing local capabilities to reduce ha-

zards require communication and leadership abilities to motivate and guide people out of disastrous situations, but intergovernmental agency managers, personnel, administrators, nonprofits, nongovernmental organizations, and private individuals with social media influence must pray to God for protection and bureaucratic agencies, nongovernmental organizations, nonprofit entities, and the public because “the Lord is near to those who have a broken heart and saves such as have a contrite spirit” (*Holy Bible: New King James Version NKJV, 1982, Psalm 34:18*).

Recap of Community Involvement, Partnership, & Cooperation in Disaster Relief

Advantages in leadership in Homeowner’s Association, local affiliations, clubs, politicians, administrators, academic scholars, and the public are as follows: Partnerships with stakeholders, private organizations, retired citizens, scholars, and young adults for the educational benefit of updating communities on disasters, specifically ice storms, rare or not, electrical failures need attention to homeowners, renters, lessors, and the homeless on preparation education on ice storms and shelters for the protection of disasters.

6. Conclusion

Overall, there does appear to be a pattern of “networking and hierarchical characteristics during a disaster or hazard” but appropriate governance on the structure of response in those networks, *Nowell et al. (2017)* are not complex when there are strategic plans in place for problems that may require cooperation from nongovernmental and governmental agencies. And with the Mayor, City Manager, OEM, police force, nonprofits, nongovernment organizations, and Governor’s support, under God’s protection, federal, state, and local agencies can collaborate effectively with planning, training, and annual reviews to assess preparation efforts for disasters or hazards. Nevertheless, with national goals and strong federal direction in grant funding with state governors having the flexibility to distribute those funds where they are most needed and FEMA preparing state and local governments on how to prevent, protect, respond, recover from catastrophic disasters, and terrorist attacks under Homeland Security since 2003, created by President Carter from an Executive Order in 1979 (*FEMA, 2022*) allows the federal government to become more of a judicial partner instead of only for financial support.

Political officials addressing their state’s hazards and disasters by analyzing research journals, studies for prevention, and periodic reviews from their OEM strategies can do so without federal encouragement. States have become more knowledgeable on how to use social media as an education tool with participation from Local Emergency Planning Committees, nonprofits, and nongovernmental organizations. Therefore, the public has the advantage of local capabilities that assist in the reduction of hazards, for example, OME, the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) with help hotline numbers colla-

borating with local state poison centers and Convoy of Hope, a nonprofit that transports trucks of food, water, personal hygiene products, blankets, and toys to communities nationwide “identifying causes of poverty and hunger in those communities”. People can survive with God’s support by caring and sharing, educating others on how to grow crops, make clothes, and protect natural resources. However, having volunteers from the National Guard, OEM, nonprofits, and nongovernmental organizations reflect how most communities operate today during hazards and disasters. This process enables local officials to address risks to life and property and be less dependent on outside state funding and support with recommendations that include continued research on mental and physical effects on victims of disasters for continued recovery efforts (McLaughlin et al., 2011).

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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