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LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AT THE MESO LEVEL OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NETWORKS*

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Leadership theory has focused on interpersonal dynamics (such as motivation) and broad social leadership (such as national leaders during crises). Analyzing data from emergency response incidents, we describe a role for leadership between these micro-social and macro-social contexts. At the meso level, emergency managers both design and react to interorganizational structures; a process we call meso-leadership. We explore these leadership strategies, including efforts to engage diverse actors (brokerage) and reinforce group norms (closure). The task of meso-leadership is to balance these strategies, which we illustrate using examples that suggest a pattern of shifting strategies at different phases of emergency events.

Key Words: meso-leadership, emergency management, brokerage and closure, leadership strategies

INTRODUCTION

Emergency managers face unique leadership challenges. Peculiar to their work domain is the fact that the majority of the resources they need reside in other organizations. Their chief sources of personnel are other organizations, such as fire, police, and emergency medical service agencies. The discharge of their responsibilities

requires a wide variety of organizations, although the emergency manager has few tools to compel other organizations to participate.

Recent research in emergency management has illustrated the importance of emergency managers exercising leadership in unconventional ways (Waugh and Streib, 2006). Emergency managers must exercise leadership at a level in between the traditional roles of intraorganizational leadership (micro-leadership) and leadership at high levels of government and society (macro-leadership). We briefly review the wide range of research on leadership to illustrate the traditional focus on micro- and macro-leadership. After defining the concept of meso-leadership, we illustrate the tools of meso-leadership with examples drawn from emergency management. We propose that as the scale of emergencies changes, the strategies of meso-leadership can and should change. We conclude with a discussion of future work needed to elaborate the model of meso-leadership.

LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Many theorists in public administration have addressed the role of leadership (Van Wart, 2003; Behn, 1998), as have others in political science, history, and business administration (Burns, 2010 [1978]; Kotter, 1990; House, 1971). Debates in administrative theory have emphasized two levels of leadership: macro-social leadership by major political actors and micro-social leadership at the intraorganizational level, at the expense of a level of leadership essential to effective emergency management. We selectively review the literature on leadership to illustrate the two levels of leadership and provide examples of work in each tradition. We discuss only theories that fall most clearly into the micro and macro traditions. We then outline a theory of leadership that falls between these traditional levels at the meso level of activity - meso-leadership.

Micro-Leadership

Inquiries into leadership in business management have focused on a specific organization (Bass and Bass, 2008; Zaleznik, 1992; Fiedler and Chemers, 1974). These uses of leadership constitute intraorganizational leadership. At this level of analysis, leadership is a relationship between a leader and a follower, or a series of followers - each with an individual relationship to the leader (Yukl, 2002). It is the focus on interpersonal relationships that characterizes theories as micro-leadership.

There are many theories of micro-leadership, including Chester Barnard's (1968 [1938]) framework. Barnard emphasized that executives can manipulate follower behavior using a variety of tools. Some tools involve the use of material incentives such as salary. This tradition continues through research in leader/member exchange (LMX)

theory and negotiation-based theories of transactional leadership (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

The importance of micro-leadership is presented by Yukl (2002), who breaks leadership theories into levels. He identifies intrapersonal, dyadic, group, and organizational levels of leadership (Yukl, 2002: 13). There are few considerations of leadership that cross organizational boundaries. Yukl's system for organizing leadership theory is a fair representation of the business and organizational management literature, but it is limited in its application to emergency management.

Micro-leadership has not been the focus of scholarship in emergency management; except in the areas of volunteer management (Gazley and Brudney, 2005) and practice-based instruction on management skills (Waugh and Tierney, 2007). Leadership in emergency management, however, does not just call for the tools of micro-leadership, as would be the case with routine activity in clearly bounded organizations.

Micro-leadership involves the dyadic relationship between a leader and a follower. Barnard argues that there are two methods for executive leadership: the method of incentives and the method of persuasion (1968 [1938]). The former involves the use of compensation to create incentives to work toward an organization's goals. This method involves negotiation and the use of contracts to formalize relationships between leader and followers, so that each party can maximize his or her interests. The second method, persuasion, has been the subject of less attention and is more commonly applied in broader contexts.

Macro-Leadership

Macro-leadership steps outside of a specific organization. This level is considered more frequently in political science, although it is also discussed in some circles of prescriptive business management. Rather than focusing on the relationship between a leader and a series of individuals within an organization, macro-leadership focuses on the influence of leaders on broad social groups such as communities or entire societies.

Macro-leadership is related to political leadership (exercised by presidents, prime ministers, party officials, and other national-level political officials). The emphasis of macro-leadership is on the social changes these figures can catalyze through their influence on large groups of people simultaneously (e.g., Gilbert, 2007). One of the most influential theories of macro-level leadership is transformational leadership (Burns, 2010 [1978]). Burns develops his theory based on qualities of U.S. presidents. For a president, influence is not a dyadic relationship. Instead, the president addresses millions of people simultaneously to influence broad social groups. This task calls for different tools than intraorganizational leadership.

Instead, Burns turns to one of Barnard's methods of leadership: persuasion. Burns emphasizes how leaders can transform their followers by framing major questions or

emphasizing values within people. Rather than taking a follower's preferences as given, the transformational leader creates a new preference within the follower. This could mean fostering the values that support an opposition to slavery, as President Lincoln did (Gienapp, 2002), or the values that support a specific budget agreement, such as President Obama is seeking in the current budget negotiations (Office of Management and Budget, 2013).

With respect to emergency management, Boin et al.'s work on "meaning making" relies on the process of persuasion and is particularly relevant (2005). During disasters, citizens look to elected officials for both guidance and blame. "In the uncertainty that such a period of discontinuity provokes, people will try to attach meaning to their plight.[...] Through a process of collective meaning making, in which many different actors promote their versions of the events, some sort of shared (or contested) assessment will arise" (Boin et al., 2005: 148) Politicians balance the risk of failure with opportunities to rally the community toward a shared vision, reestablish continuity of operations, and advance a more profound sense of community. Macro-leadership relies on such tools as issue definition and persuasion to transform followers and influence collective action.

Meso-Leadership: The Missing Middle in Leadership Theory

Traditional approaches have neglected a core component of leadership that is important for emergency management activities - leadership in interorganizational activities. This critical component is meso-leadership. Researchers have explored the benefits of interorganizational cooperation across policy domains and the myriad obstacles to achieving collective action (Thurmaier and Wood, 2002; Feiock and Scholz, 2010). These issues are particularly germane to emergency management, since expectations for public sector leadership during disaster response have risen significantly following recent events (Kapucu and Van Wart, 2006). Emergency managers face particular challenges because the capacity to prepare for and respond to crises often lies outside of the emergency manager's own organization. This distribution of resources limits the applicability of intraorganizational leadership strategies. Emergency managers must navigate network structures and engage in collective action.

The need for a targeted understanding of meso-leadership has been recognized in emergency management research. Waugh and Streib (2006) argue that interorganizational activities call for leadership that mobilizes and frames support for a broad network, facilitated by effective strategies for and a compelling vision of what is to be done. Flexibility and openness to new information support this approach; individuals navigate a diverse set of actors all attempting to make sense of an incident and to bring the situation under control.

Work grounded in network and complexity analysis emphasizes the particular

demands of leadership in an emergency management context. Andrew and Carr (2013) map the tendency of organizations to demonstrate bonding and bridging behavior. Comfort has emphasized the complex nature of emergency management (e.g., Comfort, 1994; 1999). The diverse and often surprising nature of disasters makes planning for such events difficult. It is often unclear what specific skills and resources are needed until a disaster occurs. Multiple organizations with diverging viewpoints require boundary-crossing leadership to develop a common operating picture beneficial to self-adaptation and coordination (Comfort, 2007). As command-and-control management strategies have failed to empower these types of systems, different types of leadership strategies are needed (Lester and Krejci, 2007; Waugh, 2009). The attention to leadership in emergency management reveals a need for a theory that addresses the field's concern for interorganizational coordination and the management of basic properties of events as a cognitive frame for events. The shift to an interorganizational context imposes fundamental changes on the nature of leadership activities. A set of key abilities differentiates meso-leaders from followers and influences system performance. Meso-leaders must be able to 1) navigate networks, 2) recruit potential allies, 3) develop and maintain relationships, 4) acquire data to identify risk, 5) link that risk to vulnerabilities, 6) develop and execute strategies for action, often in coordination with other actors who share similar goals, and 7) contribute to the formation and maintenance of a systemic common operating picture that informs effective decision making. These skills require a continual process of information search, interpretation, and exchange (Comfort, 2007), and compel decision makers to balance the desire to maintain routine operations with the need to discover new options, a dynamic that March (1991) terms "exploration versus exploitation."

Theorists writing on collaborative public management provide a starting point for the creation of a theory of meso-leadership. Bardach (1998: 223) defines leadership as "a set of focus-giving or unity-enhancing behaviors that would help some collectivity [...] accomplish useful work." Crosby and Bryson (2010: 211) define their concept of integrative leadership "as bringing diverse groups and organizations together in semi-permanent ways [...] to remedy complex public problems and achieve the common good."

Case study research has fostered an appreciation for the distinctive needs of managers within this type of interorganizational context. Agranoff and McGuire have published extensively on the requirements for collaborative public management as part of a project to develop an interorganizational complement to the traditional POSDCORB (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting) schema of management responsibilities (2001). They propose a set of skills that may define the toolset for meso-leadership. Some skills have broad applicability, including communication and negotiation, which are recognized by practitioners as essential for the facilitation of interaction (O'Leary, Choi, and Gerard, 2012). These are traditionally recognized

leadership skills; however, important new skills emerge that have special prominence in meso-leadership.

Recruitment is one of these emerging skills. In intraorganizational leadership, shared organizational membership can be taken for granted. This condition gives a relationship a starting point and a minimal relationship as an ending point. In the interorganizational context, abandoning a relationship may be easy and may even be the default status for certain situations (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001). The basic expectation is that interorganizational ties are rare and temporary, especially during large-scale incidents, in contrast to the presumed permanence of relations within an organization. As a result, meso-leadership calls for recruitment activities that integrate outside personnel and resources in an effort to accomplish shared goals.

Agranoff and McGuire (2001) emphasize a second skill, the development of a shared appreciation of goals in which the focus is on fostering mutual commitment to cooperative activities. The emphasis on goals and values is important for recruitment (creation of an interorganizational tie) as well as the maintenance of existing membership (support for continuing an interorganizational tie).

Recent work on interorganizational management, however, has suggested that these two leadership tools, recruitment and maintenance, trade off with each other in practice. If the creation of relationships is viewed as a costly activity (Robinson, 2011), leaders have to choose between either reaching out by broadening recruitment efforts or investing in the maintenance and strengthening of existing ties (or some limited combination of both). Burt refers to these opposing strategies as brokerage and closure (2005). Brokerage involves the connection to new organizations that provides potentially useful new information. Brokerage ties provide a "vision" advantage of early access to new information rather than relying on existing ties to groups or individuals otherwise not connected to the network. Brower and Magno (2011) apply a similar concept to a case study in the Philippines to illustrate how key actors can serve as liaisons for vulnerable populations. Closure involves the investment of time to strengthen existing ties within a community, often through building trust and cohesion within the network. Closure efforts strengthen existing relationships to sustain the relationship or to allow it to serve as a strong social force. Both trust building and vision are important goals for meso-leadership. According to Burt, brokerage and closure strategies create trade-offs with each other to some degree; one can expand a network or invest in a current network, but not both simultaneously. Such decisions by the relevant managers are needed to balance the network.

The context of emergency management illustrates these contrasting strategies. Emergency managers can choose strategies for selecting partners based on brokerage or closure motivations. Both strategies are coherent strategies for meso-leadership (Robinson, n.d.). The distinction between brokerage and closure is not a choice between wise and unwise strategies. Instead, understanding how meso-leaders balance these

strategies is critical in the context of emergency management.

Meso-Leadership in Emergency Management

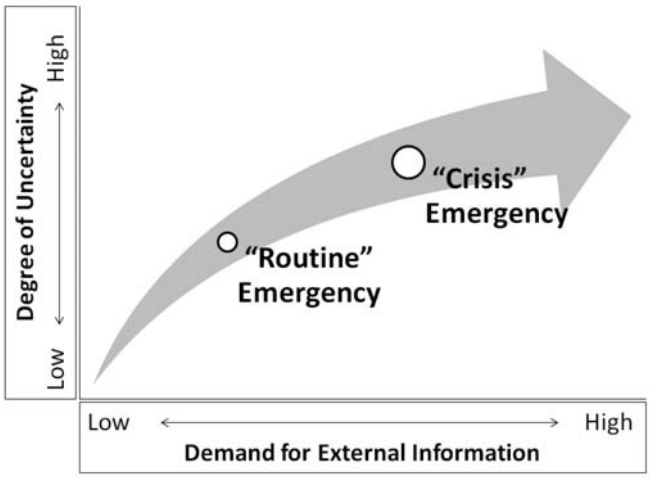
Given the importance of brokerage and closure activities in meso-leadership, the choice between these strategies warrants further attention. Both strategies have advantages of vision and trust, and each strategy serves a useful function. However, meso-leaders have to choose between these strategies, based on the situation in which they find their organization. We propose that meso-leadership activities shift throughout the course of emergency events, according to the need for resources and information.

Not all emergencies place the same set of burdens and constraints on the populations they affect. Leonard and Howitt (2007) draw distinctions between routine emergencies (such as house fires, traffic accidents, and relatively low-impact natural hazards that occur in prepared areas) and crisis emergencies, those that escalate quickly in size, scope, and novelty, exceeding the internal capacity of the affected regions to respond effectively.

Need and stress fluctuate according to the unique circumstances presented by an emergency. Emergency managers continually assess and re-assess changing, sometimes escalating, conditions. In situations with less uncertainty (the risks are more clearly recognized by responders), adherence to predetermined scripts can facilitate effective decision making and help to bring an incident under control (Leonard and Howitt, 2007). In these situations, managers still access information and resources from other agencies as need requires, but do so within established patterns of interaction. In decision spaces of greater uncertainty, managers must branch out even further to make sense of a situation (Weick, 1995), and improvise (Mendonca, 2007) based on unique circumstances.

Response to an emergency requires different types of organizational design and leadership strategies according to the extent to which it ranks as routine or crisis. As incidents escalate in size and scope, so too does the level of uncertainty experienced by decision makers. Each aspect of the decision space may be unclear, including the acts of 1) making an initial problem assessment, 2) identifying strategies for action, and 3) linking those strategies to likely outcomes. Figure 1, adapted from concepts advanced by Comfort (2007) and Leonard and Howitt (2007), demonstrates the relationship between uncertainty and the organizational demand for external information. As uncertainty increases, effective decision makers require ever more diverse sources of information to make sense of the situation. To develop appropriate problem-solving approaches, leaders reach out beyond their immediate network to participate in “crisis-based governance” (Weber and Khademian, 2008). The ability or inability to navigate these networks through brokerage and closure strategies and to attain information and resources differentiates meso-leaders from followers and often separates effective performance from failure.

Figure 1. Relationship between uncertainty and organizational demand for external information



DATA AND METHODS

A challenge facing public administration as an academic discipline is the need to reconcile traditional research approaches to emerging problems characterized by the interdependence of organizations (Kettl, 2002). Ostrom (2005) illustrates detailed steps to identify relevant actors in various situations and to model varying levels of interdependence. Her depiction of nested sets of action informs our approach in modeling two separate cases: 1) response to routine emergencies by 234 interacting fire departments over a seven-month period in Allegheny County (Pennsylvania), including the City of Pittsburgh; and 2) response to severe flooding and mudslides by 311 interacting agencies during an incident in Pennsylvania, in which the commonwealth received a federal disaster declaration in 2006. Both cases capture key elements of routine and crisis emergencies and demonstrate the basic architecture of meso-leadership.

To model complexity and interdependence, social network analysis (SNA) provides various methods to describe and evaluate both intraorganizational (Butts, Petrescu-Prahova, and Cross, 2007) and interorganizational response systems (Comfort and Haase, 2006). We use SNA, including network diagrams, to illustrate two networks in practice during routine and crisis emergencies.

A collection of anonymized Allegheny County 9-1-1 emergency dispatch records provides empirical data that document patterns of interaction among fire departments during response to routine emergency calls. Situation reports compiled by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) offer direct measures of interaction used to model response to severe flooding and mudslides during an eight-day

period in 2006, June 28 - July 5. A series of semi-structured interviews with domain experts also sheds light on both response systems, augmenting the network data. Thirty-seven interviews were conducted using a stratified sample of emergency managers and fire chiefs in Pennsylvania. The domain experts interviewed comprised 2 federal, 11 state, and 7 local emergency managers and 17 local fire chiefs.

A Detailed Illustration of Meso-Leadership

To demonstrate how both strategies are used to create and maintain effective response systems, we explore the seemingly conflicting mechanisms of brokerage and closure. Both strategies require meso-leaders to recruit partners and align shared goals across organizational boundaries to facilitate collective action.

Closure

The concept of closure is explored using a network of interacting fire departments (Allegheny County, Pennsylvania). The majority of research on emergency response networks focuses on the presence or absence of key, boundary-spanning agencies operating during large-scale incidents (Comfort et al., 2010; Kapucu, Augustin, and Garayev, 2009). However, fire service networks responding to less demanding, daily incidents offer an informative glimpse into how routine operations lead to closure.

The fire service represents a suitable case because of the high frequency with which they respond to a variety of emergency calls. During these incidents, departments develop reliably accurate situational awareness and stable routines of action. The goals of protecting life and property as well as maintaining continuity of operations are ingrained into each department.

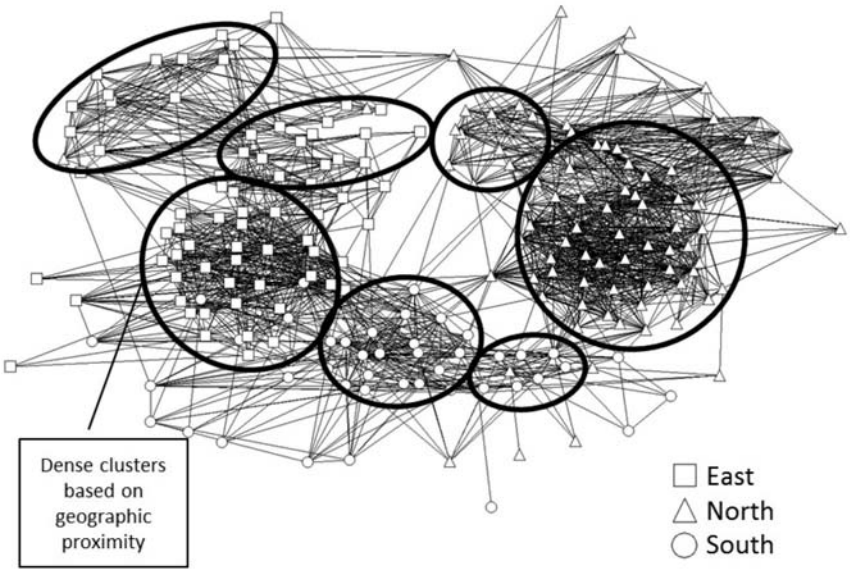
Frequently, mutual aid is requested from neighboring departments. The resulting response system represents a homogenous collection of agencies (closure). Because incidents are relatively well defined, the fire discipline and other first responders have developed strategies and acquired the resources needed to bring them under control. External resources and organizations are rarely in demand.

Meso-leaders in these routine emergencies demonstrate certain skills. During an incident, the fire chief with jurisdiction assumes command of a scene. Cooperation and coordination are still contingent on the voluntary participation of mutual aid partners. Successful fire chiefs are able to recruit partners, develop strong relationships, and incorporate other personnel and resources into their own plans as a relatively inexpensive surge capacity. They integrate smoothly with others on scene, especially when the threat is clearly recognized. They are experienced and well trained, have often seen the problem before, and have the knowledge to quickly reduce risk (Leonard and Howitt, 2007; Klein, 1999).

In interorganizational settings, one fire chief interviewed characterized his organization's close partnership with a neighboring department as an operational consolidation. He described an interorganizational relationship in which both crews trusted each other and their abilities, shared resources with ease, and considered themselves to be in the "same department," which simply had two different sets of administrators. This trust and sense of unity was built over years of mutual aid in which both departments demonstrated sound performance and reciprocated aid without hesitation.

Interactions like this one and others of varying intensity occurred within the field study area. Figure 2 shows the aggregate pattern of cooperation. Note the clusters of agencies circled in black. These groups join together on the basis of geographic location, a pattern of closure. As a leadership strategy, closure reinforces basic competencies and promotes sound performance in known, stable operating environments. Closure techniques help to bring typically routine emergencies under control. Crisis emergencies, however, disrupt normal emergency service patterns.

Figure 2. Diagram of interacting fire departments by geographic area, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania (2007 - 2008)



As one municipality is overwhelmed by a large-scale incident, the likelihood increases that its neighbors will be highly impacted. First responders who typically depend on mutual aid from their neighbors are forced to operate without their trusted

surge capacity. Local actors then reach out to regional, state, and national-level resources. By doing so, they go beyond their local clusters of organizations to reach into other networks, thus brokering occurs.

Brokerage

Larger-scale crisis emergencies require correspondingly larger, more diverse response networks to bring an incident under control. These networks often comprise organizations separated not only by geographic distance, but by their level of jurisdiction, social sector, and profession. While many might recognize shared risk, organizations often operate in totally separate administrative and operational jurisdictions, which leads to information asymmetries. These asymmetries deny decision makers information useful in identifying opportunities for coordinated action.

We illustrate this type of crisis situation by analyzing evidence from practice. In June and July of 2006, heavy rains led to flash flooding across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Communities experienced severe flooding and mudslides, which forced families from their homes, obstructed transportation routes, and hindered normal economic and social relations. Local authorities recognized that their constituents' needs exceeded their jurisdictions' internal capacity to respond and requested aid from the state. The governor, in turn, requested and received a federal disaster declaration from the president, which yielded related federal resources. The multi-agency response system that resulted provides a useful case to identify patterns of meso-leadership, particularly brokerage.

Identifying opportunities for brokerage. The domain of emergency management integrates a diverse set of actors and presents both challenges and opportunities for meso-leaders. Situation reports from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) document that 311 separate organizations were involved in the response. These organizations represent all social sectors (public, nonprofit, and private) and a range of jurisdictions. As reported in Table 1, county organizations (33.1%) made up the largest percentage of participants, followed by municipal (17.4%), regional (15.1%), state (14.8%), school district (10.9%), and national organizations (8.4%).

Examples of meso-leadership emerged in this context. PEMA, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Department of Health played active roles in initiating planned responses. PEMA served as the primary hub for information exchange, coordinating requests for resources. Daily situation reports, conference calls, emails, and press releases communicated risk and related vulnerabilities, maintaining a robust common operating picture. PEMA's importance to system integration as a broker was integral to the success of the operation—PEMA directly interacted with 126 organizations (40.5% of the total system).

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Organizational Response by Social Sector & Geographic Scale, Pennsylvania Summer Floods & Mudslides, June 27 - July 5, 2006

	Social Sector							
	Public		Nonprofit		Private		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
International	1	0.4	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
National	16	7.1	8	15.1	2	6.1	26	8.4
State	43	19.1	0	0	3	9.1	46	14.8
Regional	1	0.4	30	56.6	16	48.5	47	15.1
County	102	45.3	0	0	1	3.0	103	33.1
School District	34	15.1	0	0	0	0	34	10.9
Municipal	28	12.4	15	28.3	11	33.3	54	17.4
Totals	225	72.3	53	17.0	33	10.6	311	100.0

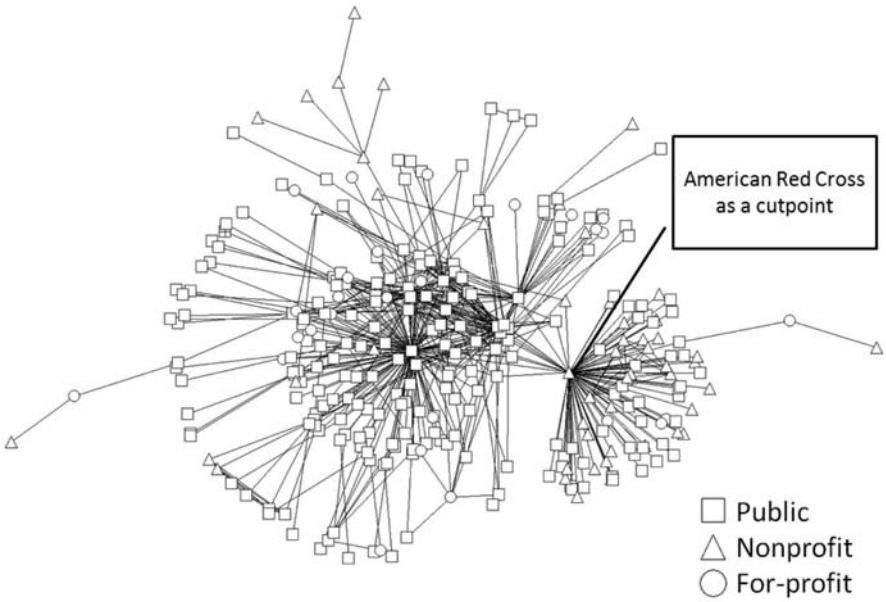
SOURCE: Pennsylvania Situation Reports

State and local officials deviated from planning at times, recruiting participants as needed. For example, local officials contracted on the fly with private-sector vendors for debris removal and other logistical needs. PEMA coordinated the shipment of potable water with Anheuser-Busch (a public service that the corporation provides across the country during large-scale disasters).

Organizational relations that bridge across clusters of communities. By identifying organizations that bridge across clusters of communities during crisis emergencies, meso-leaders emerge who 1) navigate networks, 2) recruit allies, and 3) develop and execute coordinated strategies for action in situations where no one else takes control. Our example of one such organization is the American Red Cross, which helped to integrate the overall response system by moving information and resources to otherwise disconnected groups.

In Figure 3, the network diagram shows the Red Cross as a key connector linking different clusters within the network. Without the Red Cross, 75 organizations would have been disconnected from the network's core, potentially denying needed resources to them and to the communities they served. The Red Cross developed this structural position by coordinating mass care operations, an emergency support function that provides shelter, meals, and other support to families in need. The Red Cross worked with local chapters and external partners to 1) identify vulnerable populations and 2) coordinate the provision of goods and services in a timely manner.

Figure 3: Diagram of Interacting Organizations in Disaster Response System by Source of Funding, Pennsylvania Summer Floods & Mudslides, June 27 - July 5, 2006



CONCLUSION

Existing leadership theories that focus on micro- and macro-levels of operation fail to anticipate the challenges faced by individuals attempting to promote interorganizational cooperation. Emergency managers increasingly require these meso-leadership skills to secure the participation of a wide variety of organizations. Illustrations from practice provide evidence of brokerage and closure strategies and support our proposition that as the scale of an emergency changes, the preferred strategies of meso-leadership can and should change.

We demonstrate the potential of meso-leadership to strengthen organizational effectiveness. Leaders nested within networks of organizations need tools to operate at this crucial meso-level, a necessity illustrated in the case of emergency management. There is still much research to be done in developing a theory of meso-leadership that is as thorough and useful as the existing traditions in micro- and macro-social leadership. For example, the incidents reported here demonstrate that the tools needed may evolve at different scales depending on the size and scope of emergencies. This brings issues of contingency theory into meso-leadership, but also raises questions regarding relevant contingencies.

Within each of the two strategies outlined here (closure and brokerage strategies for meso-leadership), there are a number of long-standing questions with which leaders must grapple. How does a manager use leadership to build cohesion and trust within a network, if closure is to be emphasized? This question brings together issues of network leadership, collaborative management, and interorganizational relations theory to tackle a vital, shared question. Within the brokerage tradition, leaders must assess how to build sustainable relationships over time that can facilitate interactions in response to sudden, urgent events. Brokerage ties tend to develop between dissimilar organizations with little history of collaboration. Making these ties sustainable will likely be a challenge, yet vital to the usefulness of brokerage leadership activities in the long run.

We see emerging research in collaborative public management and administrative networking as potentially important to scholars of leadership. While leadership theory has focused on the micro and macro levels, we have illustrated the importance of developing a theory of meso-leadership at the meso level of operations. Strategies from meso-leadership in the coming years can better equip administrators who must exercise leadership across organizational boundaries.

Questions we address initially but which require further elaboration in future research include:

1. What strategies and tactics do meso-leaders use to recruit new partners?
2. How do recruitment and maintenance strategies differ based on the size and scope of an emergency incident?
3. To what extent do actors anticipate the need for brokerage prior to a crisis emergency and take action to build these networks?
4. For what reasons do partners disengage from emergency management networks?
5. How do meso-leaders promote the joint recognition of need?
6. How do meso-leaders pursue goal alignment?
7. What strategies and tactics do meso-leaders use to maintain and strengthen relationships?

In the process of investigating strategies for meso-leadership, it is important to acknowledge that these strategies are not mutually exclusive; brokerage and closure strategies should be balanced (Robinson, n.d.). While each strategy offers different advantages, real situations may call for, or permit, different mixtures of meso-leadership strategies. The empirical frequency with which emergency managers use these strategies and the costs and benefits of the different strategies should remain at the core of the research project.

In conclusion, strategies of brokerage and closure are both critical to meso-leaders, depending on the context in which their organizations operate. Situations that differ according to severity, duration, and specific needs require different strategies for action. In our analysis, we identify organizations, such as the American Red Cross, that reach

across levels of government, sector, and jurisdiction during crisis emergencies to diversify their networks and facilitate collective action in an effort to reduce risk. In less demanding situations, organizations rely on the demonstrated expertise of closer-knit, more familiar sets of partners. Both strategies have their places in emergency management. Both require specific skill sets. Further research will continue to investigate how emergency managers use these strategies to protect life and property.

NOTE

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