

THE ROLE OF FAITH-BASED CONGREGATIONS DURING DISASTER RESPONSE
AND RECOVERY: A CASE STUDY OF KATY, TEXAS

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When governments are unable or unwilling to provide necessary relief to communities, local faith-based congregations (FBCs) step in and fill the gap. Though shown to provide for so many needs following disaster, FBCs have largely been left out of the institutional emergency management cycle. The aim of this study was to explore the role of FBCs in the disaster response and recovery process and investigate how recovery impacts FBCs. The primary objective of this study is to gain a better understanding of FBCs and how to better integrate them into the formal emergency management process. The main questions were as follows: First, what is the role of FBCs during the disaster recovery process? Second, how do FBCs change (temporarily and permanently) during disaster recovery, and what factors may promote or inhibit change? To answer these questions, qualitative semistructured interviews were held to develop a case study of Katy, Texas and its recovery from Hurricane Harvey of 2017. The applied and conceptual implications resulting from this study, which apply to FBCs, researchers, emergency managers, and policy makers, highlight the opportunity to better incorporate FBCs formally into emergency management practices.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When governments are unable or unwilling to provide necessary relief to communities, local faith-based congregations (FBCs) step in and fill the gap (Airriess et al., 2008; Atkinson, 2014). Though shown to provide for so many needs following disaster, FBCs have largely been left out of the institutional emergency management cycle (Atkinson, 2014; Eller et al., 2015; Flatt & Stys, 2013; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The purpose of this study is to explore the role of FBCs in the disaster recovery process, as well as examine how FBCs are impacted by recovery. This study addresses two primary research questions:

- What is the role of FBCs during the disaster recovery process?
- How do FBCs change (temporarily and permanently) during disaster recovery, and what factors may promote or inhibit change?

To answer these questions, this exploratory qualitative study employed telephone interviews with leaders of FBCs that helped provide disaster response and recovery assistance to those impacted by Hurricane Harvey in Katy, Texas.

1.1 Problem Statement

Immediately following a disaster—during the response and early stages of recovery—a phenomenon called “convergence” occurs; individuals and groups come from across jurisdictional lines to the disaster site to help and assist taking on emergent behaviors. These emergent groups take on these tasks because they *perceive* a need; not because there is an actual, quantifiable need for help. Emergent groups address “immediate and visible problems” that may have no relationship to their normal responsibilities (Quarantelli, 1997). Such groups may include informal volunteer groups

traveling from out-of-state congregations or organizations. Some groups maintain normal tasks, but change location based on the disaster; these organizations may include Salvation Army, electrical companies sending teams to help communities, or Islamic Relief USA. Once the disaster enters the later stages of the disaster cycle, many of these individuals and groups that converged to the response will begin to disperse, leaving the remainder of recovery to the citizens and organizations local to the disaster, including churches, community-based nonprofits, and local governments. In the days, weeks, and even months following a disaster, FBCs may provide food, clothing, shelter, housing, counseling, among many other critical human services still needed in the community. While FBCs cannot provide for these needs alone, these organizations have largely been left out of the institutional emergency management cycle (Atkinson 2014; Eller et al, 2015; Flatt & Stys, 2013), though integration may not be simple. There is still much unknown about these groups. The role of FBCs, how they adapt, and the predictors of involvement need to be better understood in order for them to be integrated into our current-day emergency management system.

1.2 Faith-Based Congregation vs Faith-Based Organization

“Faith-based organization” or “FBO” is a broad term used widely in the literature encompassing any organization that has a mission influenced or motivated by religious beliefs. FBO could include a variety of different organizations such as nonprofit organizations marked by religious undertones that *deploy* to disaster-sites during the response phase and into recovery. However, FBO may also mean churches, mosques, temples, and other *stationary* religious assemblies. Much of the research literature addressing FBOs groups all faith-influenced nonprofits together, choosing not to

separate or define the different types of organizations. The term FBO, although, is far too broad for the scope of this study. Rather than discussing FBOs as a conglomerate of organizations, this study focused on religious congregations *permanently* located in jurisdictions.

To differentiate this separation, I chose to use the term faith-based congregations (or FBCs) when addressing FBOs which are formally organized, stationary religious congregations. In general, FBCs are established and active in communities before disasters and operate during and after disasters, often expanding their role in the community during the response and into the recovery. Unlike some FBOs—such as Salvation Army, Samaritan’s Purse, Baptist Men’s Disaster Relief, etc.—FBCs are embedded in communities and steeped in those communities’ cultures. Though generally driven and inspired by the same religious tenets as other FBOs, FBCs are different and are considered as such throughout this study.

Like most FBOs, FBCs are considered 501(c)(3) organizations by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS). A number of inferences can be made about FBCs based on this 501(c)(3) status. Foremost, FBCs may *only* exist to achieve “exempt purposes.” Per the IRS, exempt purposes include:

Charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, and preventing cruelty to children or animals. (Internal Revenue Service, 2018)

Additionally, as long as FBCs adhere to the IRS requirements for being a religious 501(c)(3)—FBCs do not have to *apply* for 501(c)(3) status to be considered one. It should be noted that this is unique to FBCs and does not apply to all FBOs, as most FBOs must file for tax-exempt status. FBCs that do not file for 501(c)(3) status are not

required to fill out an annual 990 Form, meaning that FBCs may have fewer reporting requirements and less “red tape.” This loosened legal structure may make it simpler for FBCs to *activate* and evolve in times of disaster. Though any questions about reporting may also prompt questions regarding transparency and accountability for FBCs. However, this discussion is beyond the scope of this study, FBCs pursuing involvement in disaster response and recovery should keep this in mind.

1.3 Response vs Recovery

At the onset of this project, the study’s focus was to be on the roles of FBCs during the *recovery* stage of a disaster. However, I quickly found during the interview process that the differentiation between response and recovery was not fully understood in the community of Katy.

Per traditional disaster research definitions, immediately after a disaster occurs, the community enters into a stage of response. This is the period when response organizations and emergent groups are working to bring stability to the incident. During response, life, property, and the environment may still be in jeopardy. However, as the event reaches stability, the community enters the recovery phase.

Though the idea of “recovery” may seem like a simple enough idea, there is much ambiguity and confusion related to this phase of the disaster life cycle (Schumann, 2015). Per Phillips (2009), recovery is a “process that involves communities and officials in a series of steps and stages through which households and businesses move at varying rates toward reestablishing normal routines” (p. 503). Quantifying recovery is hard enough on its own; defining what qualifies as a successful versus unsuccessful recovery is another beast of its own. According to Quarantelli

(1999), a few different factors should be considered when evaluating a recovery effort: What were the goals of the recovery? What levels of recovery were involved? How big is the social unit that is recovering? What is that community's preexisting view of recovery? Did the recovery process have secondary impacts (positive or negative) in other communities? Was the disaster too large to recover from at all? Needless to say, putting exact, quantitative labels on recovery is difficult—if not impossible—at this time. But this does not mean researchers and practitioners should not try to identify success measurements. Some studies exist that have tried to do this and have made successful bounds forward (Horney et al., 2018), but there is still much research to be done in this area.

Per Stajura et al. (2012), the recovery phase—the longest and least understood phase of the disaster life cycle—is where non-profit organizations or NPOs (including FBCs) assist the most, especially in regard to providing crucial human services. Recovery is generally considered the time at which a community impacted by a disaster begins to build back to a “new normal” with the hope of restoring the community better than it ever was before. This may include several activities, including removing disaster debris, restoring utilities, issuing home loans for rebuilding, implementing new policy or regulations in response to the event, memorializing the event, among many other activities (Kates & Pijawka, 1977). Based on the findings in this study (demonstrated further in Chapter 4), I made the assessment that Katy is still in the early stages of recovery at this time. As such, I modified the study to look at FBC roles in *both response and recovery*.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the role of FBCs in the disaster recovery process and how recovery impacts FBCs, utilizing the community of Katy, Texas as a case study. The main questions are as follows: First, what is the role of FBCs during the disaster recovery process? Second, how do FBCs change (temporarily and permanently) during disaster recovery, and what factors may promote or inhibit change? To answer these questions, I performed qualitative semistructured interviews to develop a case study of Katy, Texas and its recovery from Hurricane Harvey of 2017. Thus, the primary objective of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of FBCs and how to better integrate them into the formal emergency management process.

1.5 Overview of Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 provides a review of the existing literature, focusing on organization change and collaboration in disasters. The chapter also provides a review of what is known about FBCs during disaster, including the services FBCs provide, how FBCs adapt in disaster, and known shortcomings of FBCs in disaster.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology for this qualitative, inductive study. Within this chapter, I describe why Katy, Texas was chosen as a research site and how participant sampling was conducted. The chapter also provides insight into the data collection and analysis process used in the research.

Chapter 4 analyzes the data and provides thorough descriptions of the research themes, study takeaways, and limitations. Ultimately, I identified five major themes in the research and provide a substantive look at each theme, providing quotes from study

participants and supporting data from the literature. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis with a final discussion the study's implications and limitations, offering directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the aftermath of a disaster—especially during the recovery phase—we often hear about the work of faith-based congregations (FBCs). These organizations, though often left out of the institutional emergency management cycle (Atkinson, 2014; Eller et al., 2015; Flatt & Stys, 2013), step in when governments—or other response agencies—are unable or unwilling to provide necessary relief to communities (Eller et al., 2015; Airriess et al., 2008; Atkinson, 2014). FBCs may even take on disaster response and recovery roles when they are *not* needed (Quarantelli, 1996), potentially causing issues during the disaster cycle. The ultimate aim of this literature review is to look at the literature related to the roles of FBCs, a sub-section of faith-based organizations that includes churches, mosques, temples, and other congregations centered geographically around a physical space of worship (see full definition in Chapter 1) in disasters.

This literature review examines relevant knowledge on organizational change in disasters, including topics such as the Disaster Research Center (DRC) typology, emergent and extending behavior, and concepts related to community consensus. The following section of the literature review looks broadly at collaboration during disaster. Finally, the literature review unpacks what is known about FBCs during disaster, including the services FBCs provide, how FBCs adapt during disaster, and known shortcomings of FBCs in disaster. Ultimately—planted in communities and influenced by both the local culture and deeply held spiritual beliefs—FBC present unique perspectives, strengths, and difficulties during the recovery process that should be

understood by researchers and practitioners alike in order to better prepare communities for the short-term and long-term impacts of disasters.

2.1 Organizational Change in Disasters

As seen later in this literature review, and even more so during the results section of this study, FBCs change and adapt during disaster situations—both during the response and into recovery. This organizational change during disasters—which is not limited to FBCs—creates what Dynes deems “an interesting paradox” (p. 430) as immediately following or during a disaster we see widespread disorganization, yet a strong presence of integration (Dynes, 1970). Communities impacted by disaster quickly abandon pre-disaster priorities, turning attention to disaster-caused needs (Tierney et al., 2001). Tierney et al. (2001) explain that—though portrayed in another light by media sources—behavior during disasters tends to be “adaptive and problem-focused” as opposed to “dysfunctional” (p. 109). As put by Kreps and Bosworth (1993), “The dynamics of change and stability are operating in tandem” (p. 431). A phenomenon known as “therapeutic community response” takes over communities impacted by disaster, prompting both individuals and groups to take on non-normal, disaster relief tasks to assist others (Tierney et al., 2001, p. 110; Fritz, 1961). In fact, this desire to help the surrounding community often leads to an overabundance of assistance, arriving both “unannounced and in extremely large quantities” (Tierney et al., 2001, p. 111). After a disaster occurs, priorities change and organizations will adopt new tasks to assist in the new “emergency consensus” (Dynes, 1985, p. 86). As Dynes (1985) explains,

The activities of some organizations within a community will become irrelevant in the context of the new consensus and many of these organizations will seek

activities crucial to the new situations and quite different from their usual predisaster activity. (p. 86)

In 1966, Quarantelli, one of the founders of the Disaster Research Center (DRC), presented a model known today as the DRC typology to help researchers “understand how organizations function under stress” (Webb, 1999, p. 2). During a disaster, FBCs may fit within any one of the types illustrated on the DRC typology (see Figure 2.1) depending on how these organizations choose to assist in the response and recovery. However, we primarily see FBCs take on a Type III extending organized response, as their structure and location remain the same and their tasks expand exponentially during disaster times.

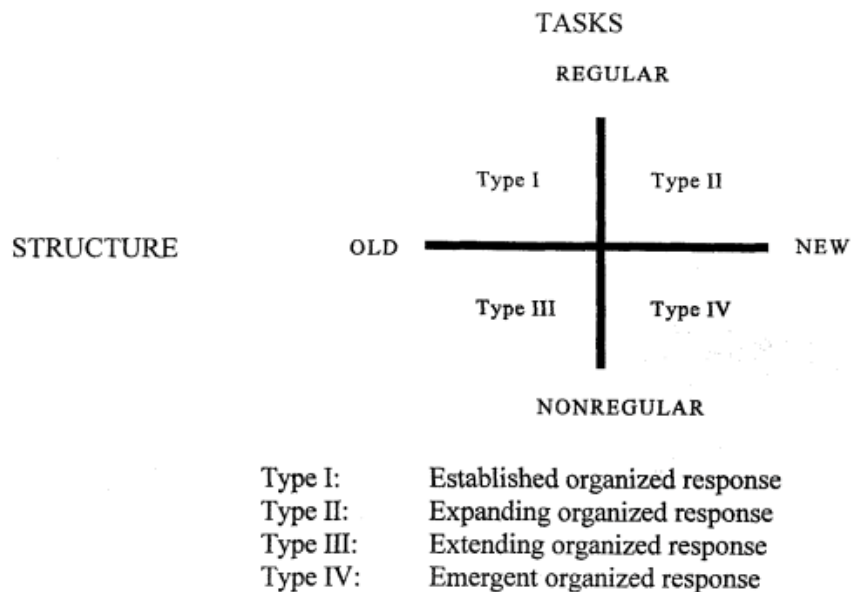


Figure 2.1. Disaster Research Center typology of organized responses to disaster (Dynes, 1970).

Type I established organizations are those organizations that continue their normal tasks and do not change their organizational structure in a disaster. Some examples of Type I established organizations include emergency management and fire

departments. An example of a Type II expanding organization could be an organization such as Samaritan's Purse, World Vision, or the Texas Baptist Men; these groups have established tasks, though their structure and location will change based on where the disaster happens. After a disaster strikes, these organizations deploy to the disaster site, offering their assistance. An example of a Type III extending organization would be a local nonprofit that is planted in the community and adjusts its tasks based on the need of the community. Dynes (1985) pointed out that often Type III extending organizations may "present problem for the other groups with which they often work" because "they do not really come under the effective control of other groups" (pp.145-146). Finally, there are Type IV emergent organizations. these are organizations that did not exist prior to the disaster; their existence is due entirely to the disaster event. The DRC typology is not a perfect system; however, it provides a useful framework for disaster researchers to classify the organizations they are studying.

The very process of organizations changing behaviors, tasks, and structures is due to a phenomenon known as "emergence." Per Wenger (1978), disasters cause the "normative structure of the community [to be] altered" which necessitates new, "non-institutionalized" (p. 33) activities to sustain life. Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) define emergent groups as "private citizens who work together in pursuit of collective goals relevant to actual or potential disasters but whose organization has not yet become institutionalized" (p. 94). Groups that form out of nothing—a group of bystanders acting as first responders—is what we traditionally think of when we consider emergent groups. However, the formation of entirely new groups is not the only type of

emergence we witness in disasters. Some groups may experience “quasi-emergence¹,” “task emergence²,” or “structure emergence³,” (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Quarantelli, 1996)—this is the type of emergence experienced by Type II and Type III organizations experience. Why does this emergence occur?

Research shows that when needs cannot be met by established responders, or when current systems are inappropriate or not sufficient, emergence will occur (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Emergence may also occur when there is a perception of a need that is not being met (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) present important implications emergent groups have for the emergency management profession; the first is that “emergence is inevitable before, during, and after disasters” (p. 98). Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) go on to explain these groups form from “natural social processes” (p. 98) that are not unusual. In a similar thinking, Forrest (1978) explains that emergency managers should anticipate the emergence of these groups and work to better direct the efforts of emergent groups by clearly communicating needs through media outlets.

Though emergent groups are not generally integrated into formal response processes, Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) posit these informal organizations are not “dysfunctional” (p. 98), nor are they necessarily antagonistic toward public authorities. It is critical to note that the emergence of groups during and post-disaster is not

¹ Quasi-emergence involves minor changes or adjustments to an organization’s tasks or structure based on needs presented by the disaster (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Quarantelli, 1996).

² Task-emergence involves changes or adjustments to an organization’s tasks based on needs presented by the disaster (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Quarantelli, 1996).

³ Structure-emergence involves changes or adjustments to an organization’s structure based on needs presented by the disaster (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Quarantelli, 1996).

preventable, and it is not a failure in planning; though these groups cannot be avoided, they can be planned for (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). However, it is important to remember that large-scale disasters will, more than likely, produce unanticipated challenges and issues, and “group emergence is one of the ways communities adjust to the uncertainties in their environments” (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985, p. 99).

2.2 Collaboration

Guo and Acar (2005) define collaboration as “when different nonprofit organizations work together to address problems through joint effort, resources, and decision making and share ownership of the final product or service” (pp. 342-343). In a disaster, collaboration is critical. As Eller et al. (2015) explain, “neither the governmental nor the private nor the nonprofit sectors have sufficient capacity by themselves to deal effectively with all the various service tasks necessitated by a disaster” (p. 224). Disasters do not present latent problems that can be ignored; disasters produce complex events, events that may pose visible direct threats to life, property, the environment, or general wellbeing. Based on propositions presented by Bryson et al., (2006), some level of cross-sector collaboration is likely in the “turbulent environments” created by disasters. Cross sector collaboration is also prone to occur when groups perceive that there is a problem that society cannot solve (Bryson et al., 2016). Simo and Bies (2007) found that cross sector collaboration is often necessary “to provide acute and longer-term recovery assistance in the administrative void” (p. 139) that is left by large-scale disasters.

Eller et al. (2015) state that the nonprofit sector has “robust and extensive” capacity for coordination and collaboration (p. 235). Simo and Bies (2007) elaborate to

explain,

Thrust into or voluntarily stepping up to fill in gaps in available services because local, state, and federal administrative failures, nonprofits oftentimes respond to the crisis by forming or engaging in collaborative activities... with varying degrees of formality. (pg. 125)

Atkinson (2013), in a paper describing cross-sector collaborations in response to flooding in Minot, North Dakota, described that “a common vision for the future of the city” (p. 173) was important to the organizations involved. After natural disasters, a strong desire for altruistic behavior settles into communities, strengthening community and cross-organizational ties (Wenger, 1978). As Wenger (1978) describes it, “The level of local interorganizational activity increase as a sense of ‘community’ develops centering around the core function of mutual support” (p. 35). This is a phenomenon known as “therapeutic community” (Fritz, 1961). As described in the previous section, this very phenomenon empowers much emergent activity.

Collaboration is not easy (Bryson et al., 2006). As Bryson et al. (2006) candidly state, “The normal expectation ought to be that success will be very difficult to achieve in cross-sector collaborations” (p. 52). As prime examples, most FBCs do not have auxiliary economic resources and their organizational capacity may be limited (Atkinson, 2013). The interviews conducted in Atkinson’s 2013 study showed that the collaboration between the various sectors was not flawless; there were communication issues and other disagreements between groups.

Simo and Bies (2007) posit that pre-existing networks are vital to successful collaboration. Stajura et al. (2012) came to similar conclusions after a qualitative study about collaborations between nonprofits and local health departments; the study found that informal and inter-personal relationships between organizations were predictors of

effective collaboration (Stajura et al., 2012). Stajura et al. (2012) write, “good inter-organizational relationships depend on the underlying interpersonal relationships of their organizational representatives” (p. 2303). McEntire (2002) also found in a study of the response to the 2001 tornado in Downtown Fort Worth one of the factors that contributed to an effective disaster response was the informal relationships between “key players in emergency management” (p. 377). More time and energy should be put forward toward forming these networks.

Based on research (Eller et al., 2015; Simo & Bies, 2007; Atkinson, 2014), emergency managers can assume that cross-sector collaboration may be critical and could occur, with or without planning efforts pre-disaster. Although, planning in advance, far ahead of an event, and building collaborative relationships with nonprofits before a disaster occurs, has the incredible potential to make cooperation more efficient and effective (Simo & Bies, 2007; Stajura et al., 2012; McEntire, 2002).

2.3 The Role of Faith-Based Congregations

In the United States, approximately 76.5% of individuals ascribe to a religion, including both Christian faiths (70.6%) and non-Christian faiths (5.9%) (Pew Research Center, 2015). Of Americans who consider themselves religiously affiliated, 46% attend services weekly or more often and 64% say that their religion is “very important” to them (Pew Research Center, 2015). This is a significant segment of the United States population. Religion may matter to individuals for several reasons. Religion offers a moral compass and a way of sense-making during troubling or unfamiliar circumstances. Religious groups may provide community and social support, increasing

households' self-efficacy and social capital. Religions, and the physical buildings associated with religions, are an important component of many Americans' lives.

FBCs play very specific roles in their communities pre-disaster. FBCs offer spiritual spaces for worship and fellowship between believers of the same faith and creed in their community. The mission of FBCs is—commonly—to practice their religion and encourage others in the community to join the religion as well. In communities like New Orleans, churches are an important piece of the community *long before* any disaster strikes (Phillips & Jenkins, 2010). In many communities, churches provide social services even during non-disaster times. An example of this was in New Orleans; many churches provided housing or other social services long before Hurricane Katrina struck the coast (Phillips & Jenkins, 2010).

After a disaster strikes, FBCs' roles change. Often, FBCs will begin providing food, water, shelter, counseling, among many other services to the community impacted. This change in role is often motivated by a mission to help those in need (Sutton, 2016) – to many congregants, it is a moral duty. These new activities are emergent, prompted by the needs FBCs see, not necessary by what the community needs (Quarantelli, 1996). Though, we know from the literature that FBCs play important roles in the aftermath of a disaster. The role that these organizations play—and their importance to communities—becomes especially apparent during the later phases of a disaster, when news crews have left and volunteers begin to wane.

2.3.1 Service Providers

During normal times, FBCs generally serve as places of worship. Each religion and denomination has different schedules for activities and meetings, but most FBCs

have services multiple days a week. As seen in the literature, after a disaster occurs, FBCs almost immediately begin providing disaster assistance. They spring into action, opening their doors as shelters and dining halls as soup kitchens (Murphy & Pudlo, 2017). Hirono and Blake (2017) found through a study of American and Japanese clergies that both American and Japanese clergymen believed “natural disaster relief efforts are their obligation” (p. 1). In a study involving over 30 ministers, Bradfield and Wiley (1989) found that all ministers in the study providing “ministering to physical needs “ (p. 399) in some way.

In a major disaster, it can take a day or more for formal response and supplies to be delivered to a community (Pant et al., 2008). But, during this time, support for victims is still needed. This is where FBCs step in to fill the gaps. FBCs are generally governed by a small group of elders, deacons, pastors, or other leadership positions; because of the small size of the governing group and lack of bureaucratic control, FBCs are able to quickly make decisions and mobilize during events (Pant et al., 2008). In their study of FBC sheltering operations in Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina, Pant et al. (2008) found that when FBCs see a need, FBCs are able to quickly assemble and provide for that need. Because of the informal relationships between the FBCs and other groups in the community, during Hurricane Katrina, FBCs were quickly able to get supplies and support from other organizations—helping them to open shelters quickly and begin helping more people faster (Pant et al., 2008).

FBCs are often able to provide services that government entities cannot (Murphy & Pudlo, 2017) or that government entities cannot provide *quickly*. Murphy and Pudlo (2017) explain that FBCs tend to have a deeper and more direct tie to the community

than do governments. FBCs—generally composed only of community members—are in-tune with their communities (Gianisa & Le De, 2018); as Gianisa and Le De (2018) put it, “Faith-based organizations speak the local language, understand local cultures, know the most vulnerable in the community...” (p. 77). Because of this, FBCs are able to provide the services that are most needed by those in the community.

Another example of activity performed by FBCs is acting as disaster relief hubs or donation centers. Churches often act as “informal processing [points]” for disaster donations (Holguín-Veras et al., 2014, p. 6). FBCs will take on masses of clothing, food, water, hygiene supplies, and more, stowing it away and distributing it from spaces within the building that are vacant or used infrequently. Church leaders are often recognized as community leaders, making them and the congregations they lead ideal entities to run disaster relief center, collect donations, and rally other organizations (Bradfield & Wiley, 1989). Bradfield and Wiley (1989) found that some congregations remained involved in providing services to disaster survivors for at least eight months.

2.3.2 Social Capital Foundations

Membership in or connection to an FBC can produce institutional social capital (Airriess et al., 2008). Social capital is generally considered the network of connections, relationships, and commonalities between group members; social capital is a powerful force that can greatly impact the decisions and actions of households and individuals. Studies have found that social capital affects individuals’ behavior regarding evacuations, relocations, and recovery (Airriess et al., 2008). For example, the shared experiences, faith (including the “church-centered social capital”), and community of the

residents in the Versailles community of New Orleans was essential to the community's recovery (Airriess et al., 2008).

Rivera (2018) noted that attending religious services can lead to increased bonding social capital. Social capital may promote trust, build understanding, and promote empathy between community members (Rivera, 2014). Per Rivera (2014), "Arguably, one of the most important aspects of social capital is social trust" (p. 185). Rivera (2018) found that individuals who attend church or other religious services are more likely to accept aid from an FBC. Bonding social capital is created through shared or similar "backgrounds, educational levels, nationalities, or religions" (Rivera, 2018, p. 41). Bridging social capital refers to connections which "span social groups" (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015, p. 258). Bridging social capital may be seen when, for example, different congregations of differing demographic composition collaborate together. Linking social capital, on the other hand, refers to vertical relationships. An example of linking social capital may be when collaboration occurs between community-based organizations and regional-based, umbrella organizations they are affiliated with. Social capital can be a uniting force which may "empower community members to take action" (Rivera, 2014, p. 202). The social capital produced by FBCs may motivate individuals within FBCs to provide assistance post-disaster; future studies should more deeply explore the link between social capital and FBCs' role in disaster response and recovery.

2.3.3 Psychological Support Sources

Beyond the physical building, the teachings that FBCs preach carry much personal meaning for many of those who attend. During non-disaster times, FBCs spread messages on overcoming adversity and grief; these non-disaster messages

become critically important after disasters, as households and individuals seek to make sense out of the chaos. Faith and religion are often used as coping strategies following a major disaster (Rowney et al., 2014); Rowney et al. (2014) found in their study of the recovery from the Christchurch, New Zealand earthquake of 2011 that grasping onto personal beliefs “tend[s] to reduce stress and increase psychological well-being following a traumatic experience such as a natural disaster” (pg. 9).

In their study of faith-based organizations after the September 11th terrorist attacks of 2001, Sutton (2016) found that FBCs in New York City began to open their doors, allowing their sanctuaries to be used as open space for “prayer and meditation, and crisis counseling [for congregants and] visitors who did not have a church home” (p. 413). Throughout the weeks following 9/11, FBCs continued to operate as they had operated pre-disaster, with the addition of tasks associated with emergent needs (Sutton, 2016). One church began offering support groups and providing educational material about grief management (Sutton, 2016). FBCs’ normal operations—which are, as Sutton describes, not “disaster-related”—continued after the disaster and were especially important to the community during recovery (Sutton, 2016).

2.3.4 Collaborators

As demonstrated in the Minot, South Dakota flood, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, and local governments can collaborate effectively (Atkinson, 2013). Following the flood, multiple organizations came together to form Hope Village, which became a boarding and staging area for volunteers (Atkinson, 2014, p. 174). Atkinson (2013) believed that it was the strong community ties and networks pre-disaster that helped Minot have a successful recovery from the flooding.

The paper concluded with a statement about how local government support of NPO coordination and collaboration can go a long way in encouraging a hopeful and helpful recovery spirit.

In the aftermath of 9/11, Sutton (2016) found that FBCs collaborated with other FBCs from differing religions and denominations. After 9/11, there was an uptick in reported harassments prompted by differing religious backgrounds and/or cultural heritage; churches in New York City came together to provide education and “speak publicly against acts of hate and violence” (p. 416). FBCs and other FBOs—from over 10 religions—also worked closely together to orchestrate a peaceful, interfaith memorial service for the victims of the attacks at the UNICEF Annual Interfaith Service of Commitment to the Work of the United Nations on September 13th 2001 (Sutton, 2016).

2.3.5 The Shortcomings of FBCs

Though FBCs are capable of strong and robust collaboration, it is not a perfect process. FBCs have many inherent hindrances to effective recovery. For example, most FBCs lack auxiliary economic resources; they may also have limited organizational capacity to provide additional relief services beyond their normal services (Atkinson, 2013). FBCs generally lack formal disaster training (Pant et al., 2008). This may mean that some FBCs may not be fully equipped with the knowledge necessary to perform well in providing disaster relief services. All of this said, another shortcoming is that not all FBCs choose to take on collaborative roles in disaster. A study revealed that some FBOs (specifically church organizations) may lack trust and interactions with outside organizations during non-disaster times (Muller et al., 2014), potentially hindering their ability to collaborate in the event of a disaster. Nelan and Schumann (2018) uncovered

similar results when studying formal and informal gathering places following Hurricane Harvey; a church donation center and an emergent camp were found to be lacking communication with one another, leading to “organizational isolation” (p. 517).

Murphy and Pudlo (2017) found in their study of collaborations during the recovery efforts in central Oklahoma following the 2013 tornado outbreak, nonprofit organizations with “a primary or secondary focus on disaster response or recovery (i.e., Red Cross and Salvation Army)” *could* serve as a “bridge” between nonprofit organizations and government agencies (Murphy & Pudlo, 2017, p. 158), helping to overcome lack of trust. However, they also concluded that “they are not necessarily a bridge for churches” (Murphy & Pudlo, 2017, p. 158). So, how can that gap be bridged? Finding the bridge for FBCs could aid in improving cross-sector collaboration between FBCs and other organizations. Murphy and Pudlo (2017) conclude that one of the best avenues for improving collaboration between FBCs and other organizations is to encourage more FBCs to join the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters or NVOAD (Murphy & Pudlo, 2017).

One of the strengths mentioned earlier in this review was that FBCs have robust, informal networks that can often get them the supplies and resources needed—fastest—to start helping households impacted by disasters quickly. However, one of the downfalls of the informal network is a lack of access to specialized equipment, “routine means of monetary support, communication, supply lines, or access to the affected area” (Pant et al., 2008, p. 52). Because most FBCs are not looped into the formal disaster response and recovery process—i.e. they are not a part of disaster plans, do not have communication lines with first responders, etc.—they may not have a full

understanding of the recovery needs of the community. Not having a full understanding of the needs of the community may lead to mismanagement of resources or improper prioritization of recovery tasks/services.

Bradfield and Wiley (1989) found that many pastors tend to overwork themselves during disaster response and recovery efforts, neglecting self-care and incurring high levels of stress. In their study, Bradfield and Wiley (1989) found in their study that “More than half of the ministers reported feeling fatigued, guilty that they should have done more, and burnt out” (p. 403).

2.4 Summary

As this chapter demonstrates, disasters prompt swift and dramatic changes within organizations which opens the door for collaboration between organizations. In the aftermath of a disaster, FBCs often spring into action, seeking to help however they are able. We hear about them on the news, often portrayed as the “faith-based FEMA.” FBCs, being embedded in their communities, have a unique connection with the citizens in their area (Gianisa & Le De, 2018).

We primarily see FBCs taking on roles as Type III extending organizations, as their structure and location remain the same, but their tasks take on new forms and expand exponentially. After disasters occur, many FBCs provide food, water, shelter, counseling, among a multitude of other services. FBCs can produce social capital for those who are members or are connected to the FBC in another form. FBCs provide psychological support to those impacted by disaster, helping them to make sense of the chaos. FBCs have the capacity to collaborate—and do often collaborate—with other organizations (both within and across sectors) during recovery work. But, all of this said,

FBCs present a number of shortcomings, such as lack of personnel, training, infrastructure, and so on. Nonetheless, FBCs are important players in disaster recovery and further work and research should be done to better integrate these organizations during disaster response and recovery.

In a major event, FBCs will emerge and seek to help, whether they are requested or not. Though the assistance of emergent/expanding groups goes against numerous of the conventions of our modern command and control system of emergency management, emergency managers should not try to inhibit emergent groups – including FBCs – from aiding in a disaster (Drabek & McEntire, 2003). They will come and when they do, emergency managers should try to be ready to utilize their assistance. This is, of course, no easy task; but that does not mean we should not pursue it.

As mentioned in the Murphy and Pudlo (2017) study, recovery activities may continue for many, many years following the disaster event. As the weeks and months and even years drag on, volunteers will leave; deployed nonprofits will have moved on to the next disaster; news crews will have ceased all coverage of the event. The only responders left will be those who remain in the community. Planted in communities and heavily influenced by both the local culture and deeply held spiritual beliefs, FBCs will remain. And, if integrated properly, may have the capacity to exponentially increase recovery efficiency and effectiveness. The next chapter provides details on the methodology and research processes for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The intent of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of the methodology that was employed to both gather data for this study and formulate data into research findings. The following provides an overview of the study format, detail a profile of the site and participant selection, demonstrate how data was collected, and describe the analysis process.

3.1 Overview

In order to understand the role of FBCs in the disaster recovery process, I sought answers to the following research questions:

- What is the role of FBCs during the disaster recovery process?
- How do FBCs change (temporarily and permanently) during disaster recovery, and what factors may promote or inhibit change?

I determined, based on the research objectives, inductive qualitative methods would be most appropriate for this study. Qualitative research is “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2018, p. 4). As this study seeks to understand organizations’ perception of their own role in disaster response and recovery, inductive and emic methods – which use the viewpoint of the interviewee and the context of the study to form an emergent theory – were certainly most appropriate (Tracy, 2019). Using a modified, grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I derived a “general, abstract theory of” how congregations work and change during disaster recovery “grounded in the view of the participants” (Creswell, 2018, p. 13). I began this exploratory study with an understanding of the current research related to faith-based disaster response and

recovery and other relevant theories, but was not strictly guided by prior research. I acted as a “key instrument” throughout the study, processing, coding, and inductively interpreting data from multiple participants (Creswell, 2018). The design of this study was emergent (Creswell, 2018), allowing the interview process to mold to the data based on the experiences of participants.

The intent of this study is to further add to the existing body of research related to faith-based organizations—specifically congregations—and their role in disaster response and recovery. As covered extensively in the literature review, given the pronounced involvement of faith-based congregations in disaster response/recovery and the lack of formal involvement of these organizations in disaster operations, I believe the study covers a worthy topic that will hold resonance with FBC leaders, researchers, and emergency management practitioners (Tracy, 2019).

This qualitative study utilized telephone interviews with a total of 13 individuals; 1 individual did not return an informed consent form and was removed from the study. In the end, 10 leaders (most commonly “pastors”) of FBCs were interviewed; 2 additional leaders of faith-based, disaster recovery focused nonprofits were also interviewed as they were brought up by study participants. By the conclusion of the data analysis, a complex image of the role of congregations during disaster recovery within the context of Katy, Texas was created.

3.2 Site and Participants Selection

According to the most recent population estimates, Katy has a population of just over 19,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). 63.5% of the population is Caucasian, 26.5% are Hispanic or Latino, and 6.6% are Black or African American (U.S. Census Bureau,

2018). With a median income of \$73,865, Katy is primarily composed of middle-class households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In late-August of 2017, Hurricane Harvey formed, making landfall on the Texas coast. Before dissipating on September 2, Harvey had dropped record-breaking amounts of rain across the greater-Houston area, including an estimated 30+ inches in Katy (Watson et al., 2018). Torrential rainfall was later exacerbated in Katy when the Army Corp of Engineers made the decision to release water from the Barker Reservoir on the southeast side of the city (US Army Corp of Engineers, 2017), protecting downtown Houston from catastrophic flooding but causing extreme flooding in Katy neighborhoods (Wallace et al., 2018).

Located approximately 30 miles from Houston, Katy was purposefully selected for this study because it was directly impacted by Hurricane Harvey and it is well-known FBCs participated in the response and short-term recovery there. Additionally, I have a personal contact with connections to FBCs in the Katy area, giving me more direct contact with knowledge gatekeepers.

Katy has a diverse population of Christian churches (including Baptist, Catholic, non-denominational, and others), with a few Islamic mosques and Hindi temples. However, for this study, all informants were from Protestant Christian churches. While this factor helps strengthen the rigor of this piece as a case study, it does highlight some limitations in transferability.

Purposive sampling (also known as “snowball sampling”) was used to identify participants. Per Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), this method of sampling is when the research sample is created through “referrals made among people who share or know others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (p. 143). After

each interview, participants were asked to provide the names of other potential participants. Some contacts for this study were not gathered in that way; rather, I obtained publicly accessible contact information from FBC websites. I utilized a resource website that had been created in response to Hurricane Harvey to develop an initial list of potential participants, gathering congregation names from the body-text of blog posts published to the site. Often the names retrieved from online sources were mentioned specifically by other research participants providing a level of verification and accuracy.

3.3 Data Collection and Interview Methods

Once identified, potential study participants were contacted via e-mail or phone and asked if they would be willing to participate in a qualitative phone interview for a study of community-level disaster recovery. Interviews lasted, on average, approximately 40 minutes. Each interview was audio recorded and then transcribed. Participants were required to sign and return an informed consent form—acknowledging they understood the purpose, risks, and uses of their interview—in order for their interviews to be utilized within this study.

The interviews were semistructured and followed a flexible interview guide as a starting point for discussion. Per Tracy (2019), in their guide on qualitative methods, semistructured interviews are “flexible and organic in nature and [use] questions or topics of dialogue that vary from one participant to the next” (p. 179). The interview guide utilized for this study was as follows:

- Was your organization impacted by the disaster?
 - If so, how was your organization impacted? Directly/Indirectly

- Was your organization involved in the disaster recovery process in any way?
 - If so, please describe thoroughly how your organization was involved.
- Did the disaster change your organization?
 - If so, how did it change your organization?
 - Has your organization been changed permanently in anyway?
 - What types of services does your organization provide during non-disaster times?
 - What services did your organization provide or not provide during the recovery from the disaster?
- Describe any collaborations your organization did with other organizations during the recovery from the disaster.
 - With other faith-based organizations?
 - With nonprofit organizations?
 - With governments?
 - If you did not collaborate, why did you choose not to?
- What successes did your organization experience during the recovery from the disaster?
- What challenges did your organization experience during the recovery from the disaster?

As a qualitative, exploratory study, the participants were encouraged to provide complex descriptions and often asked to expand upon answers. My intent was to facilitate narrative style interviews, allowing participants to share their experiences and stories. I was often prompted to ask additional, follow-up questions to help construct a richer and clearer image of the role of FBCs in the disaster response and recovery within Katy. Throughout the interviews, I sought to maintain an objective tone, avoiding use of filler words or commentary on respondents' answers.

Interviews were continued until a satisfactory level of saturation was achieved; I began to notice recurring themes in each interview, without even having to begin initial coding. Though originally I had intended to interview further participants, given the distribution of knowledge amongst interviewees (Tracy, 2019), the close-knit nature of the Katy community, and the repeat mentioning of participants' names across interviews, there was little need to pursue additional interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis

Initial data analysis and examination for themes began during interviews with participants. While recording the interviews, I concurrently took detailed notes, highlighting portions that appeared in other interviews or presented a unique viewpoint for consideration. After interviews were completed, I listened again to the audio recordings, making transcriptions. Reviewing the finished transcriptions, I coded the data, utilizing the "C" model as a basis for formulating starting themes (Quarantelli, 1997). The "C" model stands for four categories that can be empirically observed after a disaster: conditions, characteristics, consequences, and chronology (Quarantelli, 1997). The "C" model is the only data reduction technique that was designed for the disaster research field and I believe it made a good fit for the data obtained in this study (Phillips, 2014). I began with open coding, seeking themes throughout the interview transcriptions. Once multiple themes were identified, I revisited the transcriptions and coded again using closed coding methods against the pre-identified themes. The next chapter presents the results of the analysis and presents the five themes that resulted from this coding process. Table 3.1 provides the general characteristics of the congregations represented in this study.

Table 3.1

General Characteristics of Congregations Represented

Size	Fixed or Portable	Post-Harvey Meeting Space	Languages Spoken in Services	Denomination	Known Affiliations	Damage Sustained
Self-described as small	Fixed	Remained in pre-disaster space	Two weekly services in English	Evangelical Presbyterian	Member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)	No damage to church building
~1,000 members	Fixed	Remained in pre-disaster space	Two weekly services in English	Protestant, non-denominational	Affiliated with Southern Baptist. Part of the Union Baptist Association of Churches	No damage to church building
Self-described as small	Fixed	Remained in pre-disaster space	Weekly services in English and Spanish	Southern Baptist	Member of an association in West Houston and affiliated with the Southern Baptist Association	No damage to church building
~400 members	Portable	Spent two Sundays without a meeting space. Used a private business on one Sunday for services.	Two weekly services in English	Non-denominational	Member of a ministry group with other congregations in Texas and internationally	Unable to utilize the borrowed space due to damage. Unknown type of damage.
~500 members	Fixed	Utilized another congregation's meeting space for no cost	Three weekly services. One in Spanish. One in English. One bilingual.	Non-denominational	Oversees 15 churches in Central and South America	Complete loss of church building due to flooding
~5,000 members	Fixed. Two separate church locations in Katy	Remained in pre-disaster space	Four weekly services in English. International peoples group outreach efforts	Southern Baptist		No damage to church building
~1,500 members	Fixed	Remained in pre-disaster space	Three weekly services in English	Independent Christian Church / Non-denominational	Connected to other Independent Christian Churches across the country	One building was directly damaged by flooding. Main church building was not damaged.

(table continues)

Size	Fixed or Portable	Post-Harvey Meeting Space	Languages Spoken in Services	Denomination	Known Affiliations	Damage Sustained
~150 to 175 members	Portable	Remained in pre-disaster space	One weekly service in English	Interviewee listed affiliation as denomination	Member of a larger church network with 600+ congregations in the U.S. and 2,400 congregations Internationally	No damage to church building
~1,000 members	Fixed	Remained in pre-disaster space	Two weekly services in English, One weekly service in Spanish	Non-denominational	Independent	No damage to church building
~300 members	Fixed	Utilized another congregation's meeting space for no cost for over a year	One weekly service in English	Churches of Christ		Complete loss of church building due to flooding. 2 feet of flooding in the building

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

I found that the leaders of FBCs were eager to share about their congregations' experience in the response to and recovery from Hurricane Harvey. It was clear throughout the interviews, though never anticipated themselves, these congregations were deeply entrenched in disaster-related efforts as soon as the floodwaters began to rise in their city. These churches were not merely involved to provide for psychological or spiritual care (much like their daily operations); these congregations rallied members to save those trapped within their homes by flood water, provided for physical needs (food and housing), and led teams into homes for restoration and clean-up efforts. The stories shared were inspiring and provided a clear image of much theory from pre-existing research, such as “therapeutic community response” (Tierney et al., 2001, p. 110), “emergency consensus” (Dynes, 1985, p. 86), and organizational emergence and extending behaviors.

During the interview process, I concurrently analyzed the viewpoints and stories provided by participants. Unsurprisingly, given the close-knit nature of Katy congregations and the collaborative response displayed by so many FBCs, themes quickly began to emerge. Later, as I coded the transcribed interviews, five distinct themes emerged amid the data. As depicted in Figure 4.1, the themes are as follows:

- **Obligation:** FBC participation in disaster response and recovery activities is not optional
- **Established networks:** Pre-disaster networking groups paved the way for a successful, collaborative response among FBCs
- **Delegation of tasks:** FBCs fill gaps in response capacity during early activities, but relinquish provision of those social services when the recovery phase is reached

- Faced with fatigue: Fatigue is the greatest challenge that FBCs face during disaster recovery
- Still involved: Consolidation of efforts can present a creative and efficient solution for continuing to provide for the needs of a community still in the midst of recovery



Figure 4.1. Themes from the interviews.

The following sections describe each theme in more detail, providing direct quotes from study participants. In the end, it will be clear that FBCs are an important component of disaster response and recovery efforts and should be better integrated into the formal emergency management process. However, these organizations cannot operate in complete autonomy; they must be complemented by other social service organizations and supported in a way to help fight leader and congregational physical, emotional, and compassion fatigue.

4.1 Participation is Not Optional: FBCs' Obligation to Respond

One of the most prevalent themes discovered during interviews was that the leaders of FBCs felt it was an obligation for their congregation to be involved in the response and recovery process. Throughout the interviews, the thought of “opting-out” of the response and later recovery was presented as clearly not an option. One participant—the pastor of a small congregation—when asked to describe their congregation’s role in the recovery, discussed how their congregation was involved from the moment the disaster began:

We were involved from the very beginning stages of rescuing people out of their flooded homes... As a pastor, I was trying to locate everyone in our congregation to make sure they were safe.

A near identical sentiment was expressed by numerous other study participants. As soon as the waters began to rise, congregations sprang into action, rallying staff, congregation members, and resources to open shelters and perform such heroic tasks as rescuing individuals from their homes. Some spoke of the obligation to be involved in the response as prompted by a spiritual conviction. One participant explained that their small congregation—though their own church building had been flooded and was unusable—felt a need to be involved in the response and recovery.

The walls came down and we went out... It was when we physically lost our walls as a church, we were probably more active in our community than we had been in a long time, especially knowing when so many of our neighbors had losses of all of their homes... It convicted us immediately to start partnering.

A pastor of a larger church in Katy—mentioned many times by other congregations included in the study—explained the community of Katy had expectations for their congregation to be involved in the response. As described by the participant,

individuals within the Katy community turned to the church for guidance on how best to assist the community.

We had close to 2,000 volunteers who, from all over the community, from all walks of life, that were here volunteering, sorting clothes, stacking food, processing people, helping them. It was a pretty powerful thing to watch... Those volunteers were from all over our city. That was one of the interesting things. Almost immediately people were saying “What can we do to help?” Because everything was shut down... and people needed help, so people wanted to know “What can I do?”

A similar sentiment was shared by another participant—the pastor of a different small congregation in Katy. This pastor spoke about how, simply because they were a church *in* Katy, they wanted to be a part of the response and recovery efforts.

And, then, of course, being a church here in Katy, we wanted to be a part of the larger effort to try and help people, so we were a part of what was going on in Katy. Helping people to muck out their homes, and helping them get back into their homes, and hosting service teams from around the country.

A pastor of another large congregation in Katy explained it was really no surprise their congregation was involved in the response and recovery. This particular congregation was mentioned in numerous of the interviews; the church was described as being instrumental to the response and recovery efforts in the city. This pastor spoke about how involvement in the community years prior has made it possible for their congregation to be highly involved.

Yeah, I mean, for us, for the last 14 years, we’ve mobilized upwards of 3,000 volunteers to work in the community. So, when Harvey happened, it was already part of our DNA to respond and to help because we do that throughout the year, working all over the community. So, for us, did it change us? You know, it just accentuated who we are.... The reason we had so many people out is because we always have so many people out... So that makes a huge difference in mindset and willingness to respond.

These comments shared by participants demonstrate how FBCs exhibited task emergence (Drabek & McEntire, 2003) during the response to Hurricane Harvey,

becoming—what the DRC Typology—would classify as a Type III: extending organization (Quarantelli, 1966). As these FBCs described their obligation to aid their community in the aftermath of Harvey, we can identify Katy’s “emergency consensus” (Dynes, 1985, p. 86) as discussed in the literature review; it was obvious that the congregations believed their priorities as organizations needed to change in the new context created by the hurricane. In the same way that Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) spoke about the unavoidability of emergence, these FBCs felt an unavoidability of involvement; there was a deeply rooted urge for these organizations to respond. This same finding was obvious in Hirono and Blake’s 2017 study which found Japanese and American clergymen are highly likely to believe it is the church’s obligation to respond to a major disaster. This obligation, though, had great results; just as Bradfield and Wiley (1989) found in their study of minister’s responses to flooding, Katy congregations “served as powerful catalysts in generating, mobilizing, and organizing the resources to meet the needs of survivors” (p. 404).

4.2 Pre-Disaster Networks: The Gamechanger

Another pronounced theme throughout the interviews was the presence of established networks pre-disaster and how those established networks made a massive difference in the community’s response. Multiple times throughout conversations with study participants, interviewees described the city of Katy as uniquely close-knit, with church leaders being more than peers, but also friends. Many of the networks mentioned were formal nonprofits or groups that met frequently, on an established schedule, long before Harvey hit; the familiarity and connection these established meetings created paved the way for excellent and efficient collaboration post-disaster,

though none of these organizations were formed around disaster preparedness, response, nor recovery.

To demonstrate this point, a participant shared how a pastoral networking group within Katy was instrumental in starting collaborative conversations swiftly in the immediate response to Harvey.

[The pastor networking group] had started years before so I think there was a lot of relational capital that had built up through that, such that when Harvey hit, as a group of churches in Katy, we were able to come together very quickly. In the aftermath, one of the things we were hearing from other churches around Houston was how quickly the churches in Katy were able to collaborate together with each other. I think that is because of the prior work through [the pastor networking group].

Similarly, another participant described how, they believed, it was this formal networking that made Katy close-knit, and likewise, enabled amazing collaboration between congregations mentioning many other study participants interviewed as a part of this project.

The thing that's unique about Katy is every Wednesday we have [an inter-church prayer meeting]. It's a bunch of churches that come together every Wednesday to pray. Now, that's something that's been going on for years prior to Harvey. And, because of that, I was already kind of connected to churches. We also have another [pastoral networking group] which is where I know [another study participant], [another study participant] ... just, there's a bunch of pastors... [another study participant].

One of the participants of this study—at the time of Harvey—was the leader of a faith-based, Christian nonprofit located in Houston that was focused on building pastoral networks within cities. This nonprofit, originally established for Christian, inter-congregational networking, changed its direction after Harvey hit, turning its focus to responding to the immense needs created by Hurricane Harvey within the Greater Houston area. This network “activated,” creating a collaborative web of Christian

congregations that came together on a frequent basis to discuss congregations' role in the response and recovery within their individual communities. Now, this nonprofit continues to encourage and support the growth and development of networks of FBCs prepared to respond in disasters.

One participant explained that this network created amazing opportunities for collaboration across the entire Houston area, not just within Katy.

Within about a week after all the water receded, every one of the networks in the city... began to send a representative to a city-wide gathering. We'd come together, eat lunch, and tell stories about what was happening in each region... Somebody in Katy would say "So, we're working on this," and someone in Copperfield would say "Hey, we need—who's doing that for you?" We began to do that weekly lunch and gathering. That went on for about a year.

Though the participant's organization was not located or focused solely on response and recovery in Katy, the stories they shared were enlightening and further demonstrated that networks, whether directly related to disaster response and recovery or not, can assist organizations in collaborating. This organization later assisted Katy FBCs in establishing an independent nonprofit in Katy solely focused on helping individuals recover from the long-term impacts of Harvey in Katy; this newly formed nonprofit is discussed at greater length in the upcoming sections. Today, this Houston-based nonprofit continues to empower congregations to prepare for and respond to disasters.

The pre-disaster networks not only assisted during the response and recovery efforts, but even during preparation for the event—once they knew Harvey was coming—these networks sparked conversations. A participant spoke of how initial conversations began at the onset of the event:

When we knew that Harvey was imminent, my pastor called a meeting of many

of the pastors in Katy and we met here in the church to discuss what our roles would be should we be hit the way we expected to be hit. We began by trying to define roles so we wouldn't duplicate efforts and kind of walk all over each other. We had two very large meetings like that.

It was apparent throughout the interviews that congregations trusted other congregations; this trust provided a foundation on which congregations assisted one another in huge ways. For instance, some of the congregations in this study reported volunteering use of their building space to other congregations that had received substantial damage to their building; this happened even amidst the volunteering churches working to meet the needs of their own congregations. Another participant, when asked to share how they collaborated within their community, shared how their congregation opened their doors:

[Another congregation] was completely flooded and we opened up our church to them and they worshipped on Sundays just right after us. They did that for over a year while their church got rebuilt. And, during the disaster recovery, they were volunteers, they were here helping their families and helping us provide assistance to the community.

The participants' statements on the importance of their pre-disaster, pastoral networking groups echoes back to the findings of Simo and Bies (2007), Stajura et al. (2012), and McEntire (2002) who each found that collaboration efforts are great improved by the existence of pre-event organizational relationships. One participant, a pastor at a small congregation, described other participants in this study as more than just collaborators – they described other participants as friends. These informal relationships, just as McEntire (2002) described for emergency managers in responding to the Fort Worth tornado, made communication between church leaders seamless.

These findings also reflect the bonding social capital between pastors in Katy and the resulting bridging and linking capital between organizations in Katy and

surrounding areas including Houston (Rivera, 2014). The leaders of FBCs had incredible trust between one another and, on an organizational level, the FBCs as organizations showed confidence and empathy toward each other, collaborating together to pursue a common good. Especially as congregations opened their own doors to other congregations, offering space for free, we see strong evidence for bridging capital. Likewise, we see a large nonprofit in Houston collaborating closely with local, Katy groups, demonstrating linking capital. Per the study participant's, these were powerful forces in allowing an efficient and effective response to the needs created by Hurricane Harvey in Katy.

4.3 Filling the Need during Response: Relinquishing Responsibility in Recovery

By common definition, disasters create enormous response demands, overwhelming communities and disrupting normal services. As discussed in the literature review, disasters trigger a number of phenomenon, one – most notable – is emergent behavior; this is when organizations change their tasks and/or structure to accommodate the new situations formed by the incident. Though there is still much to learn, emergence is a well-studied concept and is expected in nearly every large-scale emergency or disaster situation. Though emergence among congregations in Katy, Texas was absolutely expected, I wanted to understand how the organizations changed and for how long that change lasted. The interviews revealed that, for most churches, organizational change was not impacted for the long-term. When there was need created during the disaster, churches did what they needed to adapt; however, as soon as needs had returned to a manageable levels, many (if not most) congregations in

Katy stepped away from their response and recovery activities, relinquishing provision of social services to community-based nonprofits.

A strong example of this was provided by a participant. They shared that during the response phase of Harvey their church was highly involved in providing clothing and many other services. However, as the response began to wind down the church then directed their donations and giving back to the local nonprofit that normally provided those services during non-disaster times. Instead of providing social services themselves (in addition to their normal church activities), the participant shared,

We support the organizations in our community that are primarily focused on [providing social services]... During Harvey, those organizations themselves were completely overwhelmed and unable to support all the services. At the end, for instance, we took all of our clothes we had left and gave all of those clothes to [a local nonprofit]. Likewise, all of our food... we gave to the food pantry.

This theme— being unequipped to provide social services—was a theme heard multiple times throughout the interviews. Another participant expressed a similar sentiment, also sharing that—though they had provided for social service needs during the disaster—as the incident turned to longer term recovery, their congregation began to direct individuals to local faith-based nonprofits that were far more equipped to handle such needs.

In Katy, Texas, there's several community-wide faith-based organizations that are not tied in directly with any church but are kind of supported by the area churches... To differing degrees, we will try to support financially simply because... they are equipped to evaluate people's needs when they come in much better than we are [equipped to evaluate people's needs]. So when people... call us or come by and ask for help from us, we want to help people... but our first question is do you live in the Katy Area, have you talked to [a local nonprofit]? Because they are going to be in a much better position to help you immediately.

One congregation described their relationship with local nonprofits as being

strategic. Another participant explained that their congregation tries to work closely with nonprofits so the church does not also offer these services and, therefore, does not unnecessarily duplicate efforts:

We've been more convicted of this after than we were before of the partnering mentality in a community the size of Katy, that we have a lot of groups that are doing certain things really well, a lot of nonprofits do certain things. So instead of having a fund where we help with medical bills, instead we try and financially support [the nonprofit that can assist with medical bills].

Another participant shared how, through collaborating during the disaster, their congregation has built a much stronger relationship with a local community-based nonprofit. This participant also took the time to describe how, during the disaster, congregations were needed to help fulfill response needs and gaps in the system; however, as those needs begin to wane and slowly return to normal levels, congregations need to “hand-the-reigns” of social service provision back to the experts.

Our relationship [with a local nonprofit] now is like... gone to another level because, [the nonprofit] has case workers, they have a lot of things that the local church doesn't have. From a standpoint of helping other people, you know, from a social standpoint... During the flood, when [the local nonprofit was] running out of food, we were shuffling food to them. And that's kind of one of the ways I got rid of my food pantry, is I just put up a sign that said “If you want food, go to [local nonprofit].” And I began to direct all of the food donations to [the local nonprofit] because they were more apt to be set up to handle that kind of distribution and that kind of care for the long haul and the long-term... In a war, the church has set up makeshift hospitals and tents, but eventually we got to send them to the hospital, because we're just set up for trauma.

The participants' showed through these quotes one of the shortcomings of FBCs that was presented in the earlier literature review: FBCs have limited organizational capacity to provide disaster relief services (Atkinson, 2013), lack formal training (Pant et al., 2008), and are not included in the formal disaster planning process (Pant et al., 2008). Katy FBCs admitted to not being fully equipped to provide longer-term social

services post-disaster. However—though this was presented as a shortcoming in the literature review—this was not necessarily a weakness in the instance of Katy, Texas. In fact, it was clear that congregations understood where they lacked and, so, active effort was made to appropriately delegate social services to organizations equipped to handle provision of those services into the long-term recovery. As in the analogy provided by the last participant quote, FBCs acted in the beginning to handle the overwhelming surplus of need, but they never intended to serve that role for the long-term. Though this may not have been the same finding in a study performed within a community lacking established social service nonprofits, the pre-disaster existence of a strong nonprofit network within Katy ensured FBCs would not need to serve as social service providers deep into recovery.

4.4 Fatigue: The Greatest Challenge

When asked to describe the greatest challenge, the most pronounced theme among participants was fatigue. Multiple types of fatigue were mentioned in the interviews with study participants: emotional fatigue, physical fatigue, and compassion fatigue or “burnout” (Chung & Davies, 2016). This fatigue resounded with pastors personally, but they also used the term to describe the attitude of the community and their congregation’s financial giving. One participant explained that, with an event as large as Harvey, the fatigue in charitable giving and community volunteerism is still present in the community:

This is such an enormous and... tolling event... We are still continuing to see ripple in our community regarding charitable giving, to certain degree of volunteerism... a little bit down. There’s a lot of fatigue that was an outcome of this.

Another participant described a near identical sentiment, also posing the question: with

the fatigue, how do you continue to care for your volunteers, your pastors, and others who are helping?

The biggest one (challenge) is compassion fatigue... You know, in the first couple of weeks after the crisis, people were taking off work, they were making big sacrifices. Churches were reallocating staff members, and not doing the things they would normally be doing during the week to work full-time on the recovery. But with every passing week, people had to go back to work. Churches had to staff their various things that they did. And, over time, I think that's the biggest thing: compassion fatigue. And trying to figure out... How do you care for the people who are caring for the people in crisis?

Per Figley (1995), compassion fatigue is “the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized person” (p. xiv). Compassion fatigue can result in “secondary traumatic stress disorder” which may produce similar effects on an individual as would post-traumatic stress disorder (or PTSD). Compassion fatigue may manifest both emotionally and physically (Chung & Davies, 2016) and may necessitate specific interventions for individuals experiencing compassion fatigue (Figley, 1995).

One participant shared very openly about their own struggle with depression following Hurricane Harvey. Though this individual was personally impacted by Harvey, and their congregation's building destroyed by the event, the participant continued to coordinate and participate in relief efforts.

This is very important in this interview: We were really fatigued. Even though we saw so many wonderful things happening, and we were learning and, again strengthening our faith, the reality is, even though you get strong in the spirit , you may be strong with all the emotions you have... when it comes to your adrenaline being pumped up constantly... you get to a point that then reality hits, fatigue hits, and sometimes you may even be affected by depression, and I went through that.

This widespread fatigue has, as one participant shared, inevitably led to multiple needs remaining unspoken and unidentified:

With something like this, you get a year on down the road, or a year and a half

down the road, two years down the road, and – of course – there’s no more national awareness of the issue, so there’s no more outside help coming in and those families that didn’t get any of that initial help for one reason or another – whether they reach out, they didn’t want to open their home, they felt embarrassed, or whatever it was – are now hurting and still hurting and have moved back into their homes, but their too embarrassed to let anyone know that they still have needs.

Previous studies of ministers working in disaster relief have noted fatigue as a hurdle. Bradfield and Wiley (1989) found that many pastors in their study reported fatigue as a great challenge.

4.5 Recovery is Not Over: Consolidating Efforts for the Long-Term

Very soon in the interview process, I realized that “recovery” in Katy is still, to this day, not finished. As of September 2019, there were still thousands of people in the city who still needed help, as their homes remained unlivable because of storm damage (Valente, 2019). One participant shared the struggle faced in remembering those still in need:

Once you get through September and October, and guys are back at work... sadly, you get back to a normal life. And, so, a challenge there was for a while was keeping it at the forefront of your mind. And, remembering that there was still a lot of people in need in our city and really still are.

The congregations in Katy spoke very openly about this hurdle, but congregations did not passively accept this need. Instead, churches came together—with an initial grant from a Christian, Houston-based nonprofit mentioned earlier in this study—to establish, support, and fund a faith-based, Christian organization with the sole mission and focus of helping those who have yet to recovery from Harvey in Katy. This nonprofit was formed under the “umbrella” of the Houston-based, Christian nonprofit. A study participant described the Katy-based nonprofit as an independent nonprofit, part of a network of organizations through their affiliation with the Houston-based organization.

By being a part of this larger network, the Katy-based entity could come together with other Christian FBCs in the Greater Houston area to share ideas. The Houston-based umbrella organization continues today to seek to establish nonprofits like the one built in Katy.

As a participant described, this Katy-based organization “is primarily a network of organizations, primarily churches, who are organized to address the longer-term needs following a disaster.” The participant described the thought process—and fatigue—that eventually led to the formation of the group:

After about the first six, seven months in the recovery process... the physical exhaustion definitely set in across many of the volunteers, emotion exhaustion set in. And, then, eventually a financial exhaustion across many of the churches and givers of different sort began to set in. And, that led to a point, where the churches were trying to examine what needs are there still in our community and how are we going to address them? And that was a point at which... the concept of [the nonprofit] was beginning to be discussed. Can we find a central place where, if our community of churches, businesses, individuals, or community supports the administration of an organization that will organize volunteers, identify those and qualify those home owners that still need assistance, and go and advocate for our community, recruit dollars from foundations, and make grants, etc.? Then the actual build-dollars will go directly into the homes through these grants... That concept was supported, led to the birth of [the disaster recovery nonprofit].

This participant went on to describe the importance of churches getting back to “churching.” They explained, as demonstrated in the following quote, congregations believe they are tasked with responsibility for caring for the emotional needs of their communities and though, of course, there may still be disaster-induced needs, the everyday, non-disaster related needs were still existent in the community and still needed to be addressed.

Church is, yes, to care for those who are hurting and out there in the community: no doubt. And they are not saying that they didn’t want to do that, but they were saying “We had to focus on these programs within the church that are weekly or

monthly that are caring for other communities that we've identified," right? Divorce care or whatever it happens to be. We need to focus and put energies back into this so that we can care for the people that we've been tasked with caring for from God properly.

This Katy-based Christian nonprofit, today, continues to identify needs, recruit volunteers, and assign individuals to relief opportunities. For many churches, this nonprofit provides a way to still be involved in recovery. The participant shared how their congregation still volunteers to help Harvey survivors once a month.

To be honest with you, we are still involved in some of the recovery efforts right now... We're still working on homes even now. We have another organization called [the disaster recovery nonprofit] that was kind of formed because there are still over a 1,000 people that are not home from Harvey even today. So, we're still going out and rebuilding homes and helping people put things back together.

Referring back to the DRC typology (Dynes, 1970), the churches in Katy, with the help and input of the larger Houston-based organizations, perceived a need and addressed that need by collaborating together to form a Type IV emergent group, with a new structure and new tasks. As Stajura et al. (2012) proposed, nonprofits can assist the most during the recovery period. Though FBCs may fit this description as a nonprofit, as we have seen throughout this study and the literature, FBCs are not equipped to provide for recovery needs in a long-term capacity; however, there are still disaster-caused needs that may not fit within the scope of local nonprofits. Katy FBCs had a creative solution to this relatively complex problem. It was clear throughout the study that recovery is not over in Katy. Going by the model presented by Kates and Pijawka (1977), I believe Katy is still within the replacement reconstruction phase, as still so many homes are in need of repair. Though, as Quarantelli (1999) has stated, recovery is difficult (if not impossible) to quantify. Recovery is a long phase that requires

long-term solutions, which Katy FBCs have strived to provide through the formation of a nonprofit focused on this phase.

4.6 Summary

Throughout the interview process, the leaders of FBCs were eager to share their Hurricane Harvey stories. From the onset of the event, FBCs were entrenched in response and recovery efforts. Without question or hesitation, FBCs quickly adapted to meet the needs they perceived in the community. Thanks to the existence of pre-disaster networks, FBCs in Katy, TX were able to quickly mobilize, delegating tasks and filling in response gaps which could no longer be met by the social service organizations in Katy. Though congregations were faced with significant fatigue, this exhaustion did not prevent FBCs from coming together to plan for the long-term recovery of Katy. The formation of a nonprofit dedicated solely to recovery efforts demonstrated the Greater Houston and Katy faith-based community's desire to see all individuals back to a new normal. There are numerous lessons which can be gained from the FBCs in Katy, Texas; these, along with the implications and limitations of this data, are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the aim of this study was to explore the role of FBCs in the disaster recovery process and how recovery impacts FBCs, utilizing the community of Katy, Texas as a case study. The main questions were as follows: First, what is the role of FBCs during the disaster recovery process? Second, how do FBCs change (temporarily and permanently) during disaster recovery, and what factors may promote or inhibit change? To answer these questions, I performed qualitative semistructured interviews to develop a case study of Katy, Texas and its recovery from Hurricane Harvey of 2017. Thus, the primary objective of this thesis was to gain a better understanding of FBCs and how to better integrate them into the formal emergency management process.

A number of important implications were drawn from this study. These implications—which may apply to FBCs, researchers, emergency managers, policy makers, etc.—highlight the opportunity to better incorporate FBCs formally into emergency management practices.

5.1 Applied Implications

Based on the results of the interviews, synthesized alongside research data, we can identify a number of study takeaways. As we noted earlier in the study, FBCs not only felt the obligation to respond, but it also seemed that the Katy community also felt an obligation for FBCs to respond. Based on this, and the literature reviewed in an earlier chapter, it is important for emergency managers to realize that the FBCs in their community are very likely to become involved in responses to disasters. Emergency

managers should anticipate this in their plans and work to build relationships with FBCs pre-disaster, so to better integrate them into the formal response process. Further research should look to better understand how communities perceive congregations' role post-disaster. Emergency managers should consider that their community may believe that FBCs are going to provide the most help in their community, and, therefore, that is where the community will go to provide help and where they will go to receive help.

Another noteworthy finding in this study was the existence of networks, pre-disaster, that "activated" post-disaster, speeding up and improving collaboration efforts. There are two lessons that can be learned from this. The first is for FBCs; FBCs should take the time to form networks in their community; as expressed by study participants, in a time of crisis or disaster, these networks will become invaluable.

The second lesson is for emergency management practitioners. Emergency managers should seek to both become a "familiar face" at local FBC groups and encourage the formation of local networking groups for FBCs and other organizations. It is likely that the local community will dispatch to these locations and expect assistance from these locations; but forming connections with these organizations ahead of time will allow emergency managers the opportunity to integrate these organizations more formally into the disaster planning process.

Another lesson learned was in regard to fatigue that emerged among FBCs. This study revealed that those organizations that changed their role for the disaster seemed to develop fatigue especially as they began to try to balance both response needs and normal activities. During the recovery, the adrenaline wears off. Emergency managers

should keep this in mind and know that these groups are going to assist in the immediate response and recovery; however, they may need assistance as time goes on as they will begin to experience fatigue in many forms.

This study revealed, also, the importance of community-based nonprofits in helping churches return to a sense of normalcy. As the incident entered the recovery phase, churches began to take steps backward, relinquishing control of the social services they were providing to established community-based nonprofits in Katy. It was very clear throughout recovery within Katy and the surrounding areas is far from over. Recovery is a long step of the disaster cycle. Congregations in Katy realized that the residual recovery needs in their community was going to take more than any individual congregation could address, so the congregations came together to establish a long-term solution.

Congregations came together to form a disaster recovery focused nonprofit in Katy. This group – part of a much larger network of organizations in the greater Houston area – today, helps those who still need recovery assistance. Future communities to be impacted by major disasters should take this action as a lesson: the creation of this nonprofit centralized response and recovery efforts, saving churches time and energy. This group allows congregations to remain involved through volunteerism and charitable giving, but allows congregations to fully relinquish control of providing direct care and assistance for those still feeling the impacts from the disaster.

5.2 Conceptual Implications

The results of the study—specifically the findings related to FBCs' obligation to respond—reveal that organizations improvise and change not simply to fill functional

gaps in disaster response. Rather, FBCs were motivated by religious beliefs and broader cultural factors, which is consistent with a growing body of research on the cultural dimensions of disasters (Webb, 2018). Not only did FBCs feel obligation to respond, based on the interviews, it would seem the community had expectations for FBCs to be involved. This may demonstrate what Weber (1978) defines as value-rational action – which is action motivated and justified given the context or culture. In studying disaster donations, Penta et al. (2020) found value rational action was heavily present in organizations that sought “to fulfill a responsibility or act on beliefs” (p. 154). I posit the same social phenomenon occurred in Katy as churches made decisions to involve their organizations in the response.

The pre-existence of established networks in the community was critical to the response and recovery in Katy. The existence of these networks, and their utility during the response and recovery in Katy, further demonstrates the importance of social capital in collaboration. Because these organizations—and the individuals which compose these organizations—were previously familiar with one another on multiple levels, the levels of trust, compassion, and care for each other was clearly evident throughout the interviews.

5.3 Limitations

There are a number of limitations within this study; the first, of course, was the small study area. Katy is not a large town; it's just one municipality within the much larger greater Houston area and the demographics within Katy are not necessarily representative of the other communities in Houston or other communities in the United States. However, it can be expected that many of the experiences of FBCs in Katy

would be transferrable to FBCs within other communities.

Another significant limitation of the study was the small sample size; I often found it difficult to retrieve interviews for this study. Purposive sampling was used; however, some leads did not pan out and with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic during the same timeframe as interviews for this study, I found it even more difficult to make contact with groups in the Houston area. Despite these difficulties, I am confident that those who did participate in the study are sufficiently representative of the faith community in the study area.

Another limitation was that not every denomination or religion within Katy was represented in the study. All participants of the study were connected to evangelical Christian churches; no congregations from other religions were included in this study. Future research, therefore, should seek to study the roles of FBCs in other types of communities with vastly different demographics; future research in this area could help determine what community characteristics are predictors of the importance of FBC involvement in disaster response and recovery. Future research should also seek a large sample size that better represents the congregations present in the community.

5.4 Summary

When governments are unable or unwilling to provide necessary relief to communities, local FBCs step in and fill the gap (Airriess et al., 2008; Atkinson, 2014). Though shown to provide for so many needs following disaster, FBCs have largely been left out of the institutional emergency management cycle (Atkinson, 2014; Eller et al., 2015; Flatt & Stys, 2013). Through qualitative interviews with the leaders of congregations, the purpose of this study was to explore the role of FBCs in the disaster

recovery process, as well as examine how FBCs are impacted by recovery.

Ultimately, through semistructured interviews, five major themes were identified from FBCs in Katy:

5.4.1 Participation in the Disaster Response and Recovery was Not Optional

Churches did not speak of “deciding” to be involved; FBCs spoke as though the only option was to be involved. I believed that this obligation to respond was from both internal beliefs within the church but also pressures from the community to be involved.

5.4.2 Pre-Disaster Networks were the Gamechanger in the Response

FBC leaders already knew each other on a professional level – and many on a personal level – far before Hurricane Harvey hit. These relationships created trust between congregations pre-disaster, allowing incredible collaboration post-disaster. Many churches spoke of this connection as the key facet that made Katy’s response and recovery from Harvey so effective.

5.4.3 FBCs Relinquished Control of Providing Social Services when Need was No Longer Overwhelming

In the first phase of the response and into the early recovery, FBCs provided a wide range of social services, including housing, food, clothing, etc.. Though the community already had established nonprofits that provided these services on a normal basis, these organizations became overwhelmed during the response; churches filled in the response gaps that Harvey created. The FBCs did not cling on to providing provision for these services; instead, they promptly handed the responsibilities back to the organizations that offered these services on a normal day-to-day and were better equipped to provide these services. This exhibited a significant level of community trust,

understanding, and delegation of tasks between organizations.

5.4.4 Fatigue was the Greatest Challenge faced by FBCs in Katy

There is a great wealth of research on the topic of disaster fatigue, though based solely on the findings of Bradfield and Wiley (1989) and Quarantelli (1988), it is no surprise that leaders of FBCs began to experience extreme fatigue. It was very clear throughout the interviews, FBCs became disaster response and recovery organizations – completely changing their tasks – though still worked to balance their full-time, non-disaster responsibilities. Many groups spoke of temporarily stopping their smaller programs, but no churches spoke of cancelling main services.

5.4.5 Recovery is a Very Long Phase of the Disaster Cycle; Katy, TX Implemented a Unique Solution to Address Recovery Problems

Recovery is considered the least studied and least understood phase of the disaster cycle. However, it was obvious throughout all interviews that recovery is not over in Katy. Though life may have returned to a semblance of normal, there are still individuals in need. To address this need – and relieve the fatigue of congregations – FBCs came together to form a nonprofit which was established with the sole purpose of providing for the needs of those still hurting from Hurricane Harvey.

In conclusion, in Katy, FBCs played an important role in disaster response and, now, into the recovery. FBCs have played and will continue to play an important role in disaster response and recovery. As we saw throughout the literature review, FBCs are collaborators, providers of important social services, and sources of spiritual and emotional encouragement and strength. These groups have shown time and again to activate, pulling together their resources, staff, and energy, to respond to the disaster in

their community. Many lessons can be learned from the response and recovery in Katy. Emergency managers should work to determine how to better integrate their local FBCs into emergency management planning, building networks with these critical community groups *before* disaster strikes. FBCs should know that, should their own community be struck by disaster, there may be an obligation to respond: preparations for this should be made *now*. FBCs should seek to build networks with important community partners and discuss how, if disaster struck, how they would come together to assist those in need while continuing to provide for day-to-day religious needs. Future research should continue to investigate the role of FBCs and how these congregations would assist in a different community with dissimilar demographics. Researchers should also seek to investigate how different religious groups approach disaster response differently. Another area that should receive significant inquiry is the public's perception of these groups; does the community expect FBCs to respond and offer assistance? If so, should more funding and energy go into providing FBCs and similar groups with tools needed to address community need in the event of a disaster? It should be understood if the obligation experienced by FBCs is self-imposed or grounded in a community's collective understanding of the role of FBCs.

FBCs made a major impact in Katy. We can continue to expect that FBCs will be major players in future disasters. Emergency management as a profession should recognize these organizations as a resource within communities and seek to better integrate these entities. Emergency managers should fight the urge to view these groups – and the emergent nature they take on – as an inconvenience; simply because these organizations do not conform to the traditional incident command system or other

standards within the profession does not mean that they cannot be utilized. As is clear from the literature (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985), these organizations *will* show up and *will* provide assistance; they should not be hindered from providing for those in need.

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