

The Role of Nonprofits in Disaster Response: An Expanded Model of Cross-Sector Collaboration

In this study, nonprofit involvement in cross-sector collaborative efforts for post-Katrina and Rita relief, recovery, and rebuilding are examined. Using Bryson, Crosby, and Stone's model as a framework, the collaborative and intermediary roles played by nonprofits in three affected areas, New Orleans, southwest Louisiana, and central Texas, are analyzed. Extensions of the model are introduced to include aspects of organizational capacity and individual and prosocial behaviors resultant of cross-sector collaboration during extreme events. Implications of the findings for nonprofit practice and policy as well as future research in emergency management are discussed.

Thrust into or voluntarily stepping up to fill in the gaps in available services because of local, state, and federal administrative failures, nonprofits oftentimes respond to the crisis by forming or engaging in collaborative activities. Such collaborative activities are not new (Agranoff and Pattakos 1979; Austin 2000) and are formed through partnerships, coalitions, and alliances between nonprofit, private, and public sector organizations with varying degrees of formality. Perceived utility and desirability (Agranoff and McGuire 2003; Lawrence, Hardy, and Phillips 2002; Rethemeyer 2005) are essential considerations when forming such collaborations, yet just as important are interorganizational relationships, which can be fragile and fraught with problems of control and coordination, communication, and complex individual and leadership behaviors. This is particularly the case in response to extreme events such as natural disasters, conflicts, and other emergencies (Comfort 2002; Comfort and Kapucu 2006; Waugh and Streib 2006). Examples of failure in post-Hurricane Katrina (and Rita¹) cross-sector collaborative efforts include inadequate planning by local organizations, sluggish responsiveness, and uncoordi-

nated control and communication by federal officials (Comfort and Haase 2006; Kiefer and Montjoy 2006; Morris 2006; Robinson, Berrett, and Stone, 2006).

This essay is divided into five sections. First, an overview of nonprofit involvement in cross-sector collaboration during general and extreme events, as well as collaboration challenges in the post-Katrina environment, is provided. Second, the model of Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) is introduced as a framework for the study reported here. Next, three areas that were severely affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are compared. Following that is the methodology, and finally, the application of the model to these data is discussed, along with implications for improving nonprofit networks, support structures, and interagency relationships for effective crisis management.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Cross-Sector Collaboration and Nonprofits

Cross-sector collaboration is defined as “partnerships involving government, business, nonprofits and philanthropies, communities, and/or the public as a whole” (Bryson, Crosby, and

Stone 2006, 44) toward mutual goals. Organizing structures for collaboration can vary from informal and episodic activity, such as onetime task forces, to highly formalized contracts between organizations. Although carried out for a variety of purposes, (Austin 2000; Lipnack and Stamps 1994), the term “cross-sector collaboration” suggests an orientation toward the public good and some measure of public or nonprofit actor involvement. Indeed, cross-sector collaboration is closely tied to strategies that are designed to address some of society’s most entrenched and difficult social problems (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone 2006).

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Similar to cross-sector collaboration is the term “collaborative public management,” which is described by McGuire as a “process of facilitating and operating in multi-organizational arrangement in order to remedy problems that cannot be solved—or solved easily—by single organizations” (2006, 33). In the collaborative public management paradigm, government involvement is not only assumed but is extended to include public policy, management involvement, accountability, and performance expectations (McGuire 2002). While collaborative public management is recognized as a common and widespread practice, research on the skills necessary to manage and operate in collaborative settings lags practice. Research on the end result of collaboration is also insufficient: The effects of collaboration on program and organizational outcomes need to be better understood (McGuire 2006).

Although research on collaborative public management and cross-sector collaboration is flourishing, the literature on nonprofit involvement is less well developed. Early research on nonprofit collaboration explored structural and resource motivations for collaboration (Guo and Acar 2005) but did not sufficiently consider the constraints on collaboration as a result of a nonprofit’s institutional and legal environment (Galaskiewicz 1985). And though Guo and Acar offer the insight that nonprofits with more resources and more government funding but less government resource dependence, greater board overlap with other nonprofit organizations, and older organizational age are more likely to behave collaboratively, the extant literature on nonprofit collaboration fails to address key process and outcomes issues. An exception to this is the growth of research on local relief imperatives emerging in the context of extreme events, which often characterizes necessarily high nonprofit involvement in cross-sector emergency solutions.

Cross-Sector Collaboration in the Context of Extreme Events

The problems associated with extreme events require cross-sector collaborative response and relief strategies (Comfort and Kapucu 2006; Waugh and Streib 2006), particularly in planning for and responding to the aftermath of natural disasters, technological and biological hazards, terrorist acts, and humanitarian crises (Donahue and Joyce 2001). Waugh and Streib emphasize the point that emergency management is a multistage, collaborative process involving “hazard

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mitigation . . . disaster preparedness . . . disaster response activities . . . and disaster recovery” (2006, 131). Similarly, Comfort (2002) calls for a rethinking of governmental security responses and constraints and proposes an adaptive model in which cross-sector collaboration is assumed and supported by information infrastructure.

While viewed as essential, collaboration can also be problematic. In his study of interactions among private, nonprofit, and public actors in response to the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York City, Kapucu (2005) uses network and complexity theories to illustrate that collaboration often occurs among proximal and like agencies, sometimes to the detriment of effective responses. He argues that new forms of relationships and trust building are essential in cross-sector collaboration. Waugh and Sylves (2002) emphasize the challenge of coordinating such networks and point to the importance of a diversity of resources linking federal and state assets to community social capital, such as nonprofit organizations and voluntary citizen initiatives.

Cross-Sector Collaboration in the Post-Katrina Environment

Administrative failure by governmental agencies and actors—at all levels—has been a major theme in the post-Katrina critique, especially in the popular media. Ink (2006), for instance, concludes that widespread administrative failure resulted in catastrophic loss of life beyond the failure of the levees, including communication blackouts and ill-advised evacuation coordination. Collaborative failures are cited such as poor communication, inadequate planning, misguided and poorly executed leadership by the federal and state government, and insufficient coordination with state and local nonprofits, private sector entities, and individuals (Menzel 2006; Walters and Kettl 2005; Wise 2006). Additionally, citizen preparedness has been implicated as inadequate (Menzel 2006), particularly in terms of the consistency and coordination of local efforts.

Burns and Thomas (2006) emphasize the significance of unique local characteristics to Katrina failures: notably, a legacy of issue-based coalitions to carry out public initiatives versus well-developed, reliable governing mechanisms. In contrast, Mattox (2005) argues that preexisting local collaborative networks contributed positively to medical relief efforts for evacuees in the Houston area, an insight that is echoed by Paul

Light (2005), who advocates local, flexible workforces and civic resources as central to high-functioning emergency management systems. Pipa (2006) found that local nonprofit and religious organizations played critical health and human services roles, even in the face of limited centralized support and established networks, supporting Smith's (2006) assertion that both governmental networks and nonprofit capacities need to be enhanced.

Related local collaborative behavior included prosocial individuals who engaged in self-organization after Katrina, as local hotels and community centers became de facto shelters, hospital staff played nontraditional security and evaluation roles, and individuals teamed to evacuate neighbors or pool resources to create makeshift local shelters (Rodriguez, Trainor, and Quarantelli 2006, 85–95). Studies of community resiliency offer three important lessons for postdisaster rebuilding that are useful to an analysis of cross-sector collaborative rebuilding efforts: (1) grassroots coalitions may need to branch out to individuals and emergent groups in order to bridge capacity constraints; (2) reaching out to individuals and emergent groups may involve teaching new civic skills and new training methodologies; and (3) intermediary roles played by cross-sector collaboratives become even more critical, especially as they play representational roles for traditionally disenfranchised peoples (Berke and Campanella 2006, 205).

Cross-Sector Collaboration: A Model and Propositions

Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) have developed a model comprising five central dimensions of cross-sector collaboration that is useful for framing the discussion of three discrete post-Katrina contexts. The first dimension details the effect that initial conditions have on the formation of cross-sector collaborations, including the role of key sponsors or brokering agents, shared understandings of problems, and the degree to which networks and relationships are “socially embedded” based on trustworthiness and perceptions of legitimacy. The second dimension relates to process aspects, including the collaboration's central purpose, composition, and operating elements, and the explication of resources, authority, and procedures; such deliberate planning contrasts with the discretionary and emergent nature of improvised crisis response. The third dimension focuses on the impact of environmental factors, such as changing members and client activities and governance mechanisms that affect stability and influence strategy (48–49). The last two dimensions include the long-term aspects of cross-sector collaboration, such as process contingencies, structural and resource constraints, and outcomes of prior cross-sector collaboration. The application of the key antecedent conditions and actors associated with cross-sector collaboration in three locales post-Katrina will now be examined.

Three Varied Contexts of Response and Relief

In addition to the direct effects of Hurricane Katrina for Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, tangential yet severe outcomes affected hundreds of thousands of evacuees who fled to Texas and elsewhere, followed less than a month later by Hurricane Rita's direct impact on southwest Louisiana and parts of southeast Texas. Naturally, the impact was experienced in different ways in New Orleans, southwest Louisiana, and parts of Texas. Nonprofit cross-sector involvement across these three discrete areas, as diverse in nonprofits as they are in social, economic, political, and geographic characteristics, are examined here. All three illuminate aspects characteristic of both successful and unsuccessful cross-sector collaboration.

Tulane/Canal Neighborhood, New Orleans

The Tulane/Canal neighborhood is part of Orleans Parish (in Louisiana, “parish” government is equivalent to county government elsewhere). Situated just outside the historic French Quarter and the central business district of New Orleans, it is an area challenged by poverty and urban concentration. When the levee system in New Orleans broke, it caused massive flooding in many neighborhoods, including the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, less than half a mile away from the now infamous Superdome, with flooding ranging from 3 feet to more than 7 feet deep.

To provide a comprehensive demographic picture of the communities studied before Katrina and Rita, two secondary data sources are utilized that are often cited in recovery planning. Table 1 shows the central census tract of the Tulane/Canal neighborhood (census tract 60; U.S. Census Bureau 2000) as a subsection of Orleans Parish, as well as the parishes in southwest Louisiana included in this study. Census tract 60 is distinct from the city of New Orleans and Orleans Parish in that it has a higher poverty rate (54 percent for individuals; 45.8 percent for families with median income at \$5,904 per capita or \$6,875 per household), a lower median age (25.8 years), and a higher proportion of females (60.8 percent). Although the area is predominantly nonwhite (67.5 percent), it has a larger proportion of white residents (32.5 percent) than the parish as a whole (28.1 percent). The home ownership rate (11.8 percent) and median housing value (\$44,500, 51 percent of the average home value for Orleans) are well below those of other parish residents.

In terms of nonprofit activity before the Gulf storms, a September 21, 2005, Urban Institute fact sheet indicates that the largest share of the state's 3,200 nonprofits were concentrated in New Orleans. Specifically, the report noted the following:

Table 1 Census Data for Selected Geographic Areas

| Geographic Designation | New Orleans | | Southwest Louisiana | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| | Tulane/Canal (Census Tract 60) | Orleans Parish | Calcasieu Parish | Cameron Parish | Iberia Parish | Vermilion Parish |
| Population | 1,326 | 484,674 | 183,577 | 9,991 | 72,773 | 53,807 |
| Median Age | 25.8 | 33.1 | 34.5 | 35 | 33.9 | 35.1 |
| Male | 39.20% | 46.90% | 48.70% | 50.2% | 49.0% | 48.4% |
| Female | 60.80% | 53.10% | 51.30% | 49.8% | 51.0% | 51.6% |
| Average family size | 3.68 | 3.23 | 3.11 | 3.21 | 3.50 | 3.16 |
| Average household size | 2.15 | 2.48 | 2.61 | 2.76 | 2.87 | 2.67 |
| Race | | | | | | |
| Caucasian | 32.50% | 28.10% | 73.60% | 93.70% | 65.00% | 82.70% |
| African American | 50.80% | 67.30% | 24.00% | 3.90% | 31.60% | 14.20% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1.20% | 3.10% | 1.30% | 2.20% | 1.70% | 1.40% |
| Income and poverty | | | | | | |
| Median household | \$6,875 | \$27,133 | \$35,372 | \$34,232 | \$35,476 | \$29,500 |
| Median family | \$17,014 | \$32,338 | \$41,903 | \$39,663 | \$44,668 | \$36,093 |
| Median per capita | \$5,904 | \$17,258 | \$17,710 | \$15,348 | \$19,130 | \$14,201 |
| Families in poverty | 45.80% | 23.70% | 12.80% | 9.10% | 20.60% | 17.40% |
| Individuals in poverty | 54.00% | 27.90% | 15.40% | 12.30% | 22.90% | 22.10% |
| Housing | | | | | | |
| Owner occupied | 11.80% | 46.50% | 71.60% | 85.10% | 70.20% | 77.10% |
| Renter occupied | 88.30% | 42.70% | 28.40% | 14.90% | 29.80% | 22.90% |
| Median housing value | \$44,500 | \$87,300 | \$80,500 | \$59,600 | \$84,400 | \$68,000 |
| Cost with mortgage | \$1,375 | \$910 | \$783 | \$675 | \$887 | \$662 |
| Cost without mortgage | \$321 | \$285 | \$224 | \$230 | \$279 | \$209 |

- Almost half of the Louisiana-based charity expenditures and assets were located in New Orleans, home to nearly 900 charities spending \$4.3 billion and holding \$6.3 billion in assets.
- A total of 83 charities—with \$2.6 billion in annual expenditures and more than 15,000 employees—provided direct health and mental health services to New Orleans residents.
- In all, 385 organizations with \$389 million in annual expenditures provided human services and community improvement programs to New Orleans residents (Urban Institute 2005, 1).

Auer and Lampkin (2006) report that after Katrina, more than half of the nonprofit health and human service agencies shut down in the state's hard-hit parishes. The reduction in capacity to serve clients was offset in part by significant population shifts and the exodus of hundreds of thousands of former residents. Overall, these data suggest that although the Tulane/Canal neighborhood possessed some of the most challenging extant conditions prior to the storm, these conditions were exacerbated by the challenges facing the remaining nonprofits.

Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, and Vermilion Parishes of Southwest Louisiana

The four parishes studied in southwestern Louisiana are remarkably similar to one another (see table 1), though Calcasieu Parish is the largest in population (183,877), 18 times larger than Cameron (9,991). Median ages are close in range, as is the gender split. The size of the nonwhite population is much lower in all four southwestern Louisiana parishes than in

Tulane/Canal or New Orleans, with whites comprising 65 percent in Iberia Parish and 93.7 percent in Cameron Parish, compared to 32 percent in Tulane/Canal and 28.1 percent in Orleans Parish. Poverty rates are also lower, ranging from 9.1 percent to 20.6 percent of families and from 12.3 percent to 22.9 percent of individuals. Home ownership rates are also relatively high at 70.2 percent to 85.1 percent.

The primary geographic differences between southwest Louisiana and New Orleans are area size and density. Southwest Louisiana is characterized by large land mass and low population density, compared to population-dense New Orleans. Such geographic expanse increased the difficulty of response efforts spreading their resources over a wider area. Additionally, the destruction of vehicles and damaged roads made it nearly impossible for affected residents to get to places where assistance was available. Because of the lower densities, large nonprofit organizations placed southwest Louisiana lower on their priority lists as they tried to reach the largest numbers in need first. At the same time, local southwest Louisiana nonprofits were faced with an increasing range of service demands and a rising number of people in need. Incidentally, it also made data collection more time-consuming and costly, as the researchers involved in this study had to travel hundreds of miles daily to collect data, providing firsthand experience with some of the difficulties experienced by recovery service providers.

Post-hurricane data suggest that shifts in the population have affected southwest Louisiana and New

Orleans in different ways. For example, the largest population losses in hurricane-affected areas of the Gulf Coast occurred in the New Orleans metropolitan area (Frey and Singer 2006), and the current population is now more white, less poor, and more transitory than the pre-hurricane population. This contrasts with the counties along the Mississippi coast, which lost more white residents and home owners after the hurricane. In contrast to the non-profit closures in the New Orleans area, 80 percent to 90 percent of nonprofits in nonmetropolitan and rural parishes in Louisiana are operational, providing services that were not previously part of their missions, such as food, shelter, and cash assistance, and now serving more clients (Auer and Lampkin 2006).

Central Texas

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, hundreds of thousands of evacuees fled to Texas, and Hurricane Rita displaced even more people into parts of Texas. While no hard figures are available, it has been estimated that more than a half million evacuees fled to Texas, most to Houston (Appleseed Foundation 2006). About 251,000 evacuees remain in Texas today, with the largest concentrations of 111,000 in Houston, 66,000 in the Dallas–Fort Worth area, 62,000 in central Texas (including Austin and San Antonio), and 12,000 in west Texas (Texas Department of Health and Human Services 2006).

The majority of remaining evacuees are low-income, adult, African American women with more than one child; nearly half report a household member with a chronic illness; and many have ongoing emotional trauma (Texas Department of Health and Human Services 2006, 9). Average household income is less than \$500 per month for 41 percent of evacuee families (5). Although 71 percent report being employed prior to the hurricanes, only 30 percent were employed as of May 2006 (7). The percentage of uninsured has also increased from 18 percent prior to the hurricanes to 36 percent among adults, and from 8 percent to 30 percent among children (2).

The 13-county region studied in central Texas poses antecedent conditions that are demographically quite different from either New Orleans or southwest Louisiana. Together, these 13 counties have a population of 1.8 million (U.S. Census Bureau 2006) and are home to more than 1,800 nonprofit organizations (Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations 2002), in addition to dozens of independent, corporate, and community foundations (Foundation Center 2006). The urban center of Austin and its suburbs, and the twin cities of College Station–Bryan, are among the fastest-growing regions of the United States (Texas Workforce Commission, n.d.).

Central Texas has experienced rapid growth, nearly doubling its population between 1990 and 2000. The region, home to the state's two flagship research universities, has a population that is more highly educated and more likely to be employed; a higher per capita income and a lower poverty rate; and a slightly smaller proportion of African American and Latino residents than Texas as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau 2006; Texas Workforce Commission, n.d.). However, there are variations among the 13 counties. For example, Williamson County, north of the capital, and Brazos County, home to a major research university, rank above the regional average on most measures of income, whereas Bastrop and Caldwell counties rank well below the region—though still above the state—on the same indicators (Tang et al. 2006). Nonetheless, 2005 data from the Community Action Network found that local requests for food and clothing have increased more than 60 percent in the previous two years, and thousands of local residents that year lingered on waiting lists for affordable housing, child care, mental health services, and substance abuse support. The system overload has skyrocketed well beyond these numbers since Katrina.

Method and Data Sources

This study focuses on three comparative areas, two of which were directly affected by the events of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and one of which was affected secondarily: an urban, densely populated New Orleans neighborhood, the largely rural and geographically vast southwest Louisiana, and 13 Central Texas Counties, respectively. A mixed-method research design was used to gather in-depth qualitative data from all three locations and survey data on nonprofit involvement in relief in central Texas. The New Orleans and southwest Louisiana data are part of an ongoing research initiative characterized by an action research approach, with intensive fieldwork involving six data-collection trips by 35 researchers over an 18-month period. The central Texas study took place as part of an initial investigation into the capacity-building needs of central Texas nonprofits and was extended to include a focus on nonprofit responses to the needs of Katrina evacuees; the initial study involved 28 researchers and 10 counties but was extended to include three additional central Texas counties.

Primary data were collected through systematic participant observations of organizational meetings, focus groups, interviews, and surveys of staff and administrators of government and nonprofit agencies. These agencies included 205 public and nonprofit organizations in New Orleans, 32 public and nonprofit organizations in southwest Louisiana, and 216 nonprofit organizations in central Texas ranging from large national and international organizations to small faith-based agencies and local governments; these

totals include new agencies incorporated specifically to deal with the needs of those affected by the storm. Sample and data-collection strategies related to each area are outlined in table 2.

New Orleans. The research team collaborated directly with the Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation on community development and strategic planning activities and met with representatives of key stakeholder organizations. Three key issues for the community emerged: housing, health and human services, and economic development. The initial fieldtrip centered on broad input and inclusion of stakeholders, needs assessment, and exploration of collaborative relationships. Researchers spent time surveying the affected areas in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood and documenting areas of particular concern. The remainder of the fieldwork activity was devoted to meeting with stakeholder groups, attending previously organized meetings of these groups, and collecting data from individuals within them.

Southwest Louisiana. A second research team, focusing on the collaborative efforts of government and nonprofit organizations, traveled to southwest Louisiana in December 2006. This segment of the fieldwork was sponsored by the Community Foundation of Acadiana, with the goal of identifying organizations involved in recovery efforts, focusing on collaborations, and prioritizing major funding needs. A list of government and nonprofit organizations involved in collaborative recovery efforts in the region was the starting point for data collection. These organizations were specific to at least one of three southwest Louisiana parishes, Cameron, Iberia, or Vermillion. Because many of the organizations that served Cameron Parish are located in Calcasieu Parish, researchers included these organizations in the study.

Central Texas. As part of a larger study on nonprofit capacity-building resources in central Texas, data were collected on general organizational characteristics, organizational capacity, and perceptions about participation in capacity-building activities such as training, consulting, and organizational development activities. Specifically, data were collected on the capacity of nonprofit organizations to engage volunteers and to respond to the disaster.

Findings

Generally, themes from the three study sites supported the Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) model, though the current research extends the model in three significant ways: 1) nonprofit organizational and volunteer

management capacity were identified as key initial conditions; 2) the role of informal activity as exhibited by individual initiative and pro-social behaviors emerged as central to cross-sector collaboration; and 3) the urgent temporal nature of extreme events demanded a scope of nonprofit activity not addressed by Bryson, Crosby, and Stone.

Figure 1 illustrates how the current research expands Bryson, Crosby, and Stone's formulation and further emphasizes the importance of effective planning and flexible structures in cross-sector collaboration. It offers a more in-depth understanding of collaboration during extreme events in ways that provide direction for improving cross-sector collaboration generally and during extreme events, as well as for future research. Organized around the five key dimensions of Bryson, Crosby, and Stone's (2006) model, the results from the three areas studied are introduced, illustrated, and analyzed here. The strength of this research lies in the fact that, as with all studies of the Katrina aftermath, it is necessarily formative in nature and thus provides great insight into the initial conditions, providing a sound basis for longer-term studies on these emergent collaborations.

Initial Conditions

Turbulence. Cross-sector collaboration emerged within turbulent environments in all three areas of this study, emphatically so in both Louisiana contexts where antecedent conditions exacerbated post-hurricane turbulence, also apparent but to a lesser extent in central Texas.

In New Orleans, concentrated areas of urban poverty had already posed challenges for cross-sector collaborations and related services. New Orleans city officials'

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overestimation of the ability of large portions of its poor residents to evacuate by independent means is evidence of critical antecedent conditions and is associated with the scale of human suffering and loss of life, which contributed to the urgencies of turbulence.

In southwest Louisiana, nonprofit agencies, proprietary organizations, and local governments reported being able to

moderate turbulent conditions by watching and learning from the effects of Katrina on New Orleans. Thus, the desire to avoid turbulence drove cross-sector collaboration to anticipate demands. In general, respondents reported feeling more organized and better prepared when Rita struck but also that they underestimated the longer-term aspects of turbulence over time. For example, southwest Louisiana

Table 2 Method and Data Sources

| | Study Locations | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | New Orleans | Southwest Louisiana | Central Texas |
| Sublocation(s) | Tulane/Canal neighborhood | Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia and Vermilion parishes | 13 central Texas counties |
| Number of researchers | 27 | 13 | 12 |
| Research time frame | In-depth fieldwork, December 2005; February, March, June, October 2006 | In-depth fieldwork, November–December, 2006 | Survey, February–March, 2006 interviews and site visits, November, 2005–December 2006 |
| Hours of data collection/fieldwork | 2,750 | 1,000 | 250 |
| Study Participants | Representatives from 39 collaborating government and nonprofit organizations with key assignments to the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, including housing, health and human services, and economic development and Bring New Orleans back subcommittee meetings; environmental scan of 205 nonprofit organizations | Representatives from 32 collaborating government organizations with key assignments to the Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia and Vermilion Parishes nonprofit and municipal government leaders, chambers of commerce, school leaders, healthcare leaders, and faith-based agency representatives | 207 Nonprofit Executive Directors from Central Texas organizations serving as direct service providers in human service, educational, arts, and health-related organizations; 17 in-depth interviews, 8 with nonprofit executives and 9 with funders; and 7 focus groups with 64 nonprofit leaders |
| Data collection methods | Observation, interviews, focus groups, document review, building inspection, and surveying | Observation, interviews, focus groups, document review, building inspection, and surveying | Surveys, interviews, focus groups |
| Data analysis | Daily researcher debriefings, thematic analysis | Daily researcher debriefings, thematic analysis | Descriptive and inferential statistics, thematic analysis |
| Validation methods | Interresearcher reliability, triangulation, and fact checking | Interresearcher reliability, triangulation and fact checking | Test for face validity, survey reliability measures, interresearcher reliability, triangulation, and fact checking |
| Data utilization | Feedback to nonprofit change agents; agency and organizational meetings; contributions to strategic planners and policy makers; development for published research; resulting strategic plan was adopted and is in use | Feedback to nonprofit change agents; agency and organizational meetings; contributions to strategic planners and policy makers; development for published research | Feedback to study stakeholders, funders and policy makers; developed for published research |

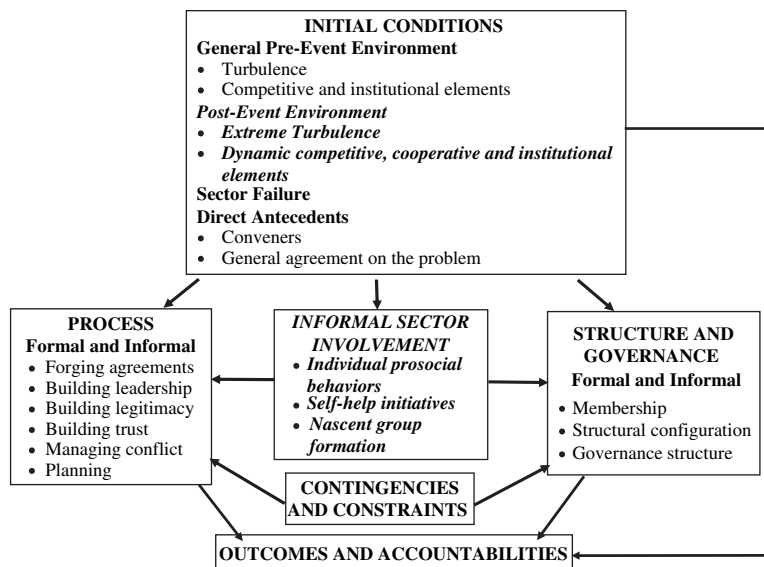


Figure 1 An Expanded Framework for Understanding Cross-Sector Collaborations during Extreme Events
 Source: Adapted from Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006, 45); author adaptations are noted by use of italics.

had numerous long-term environmental effects, many of which were not readily discernible immediately following the storm. It was only later that the extent of the devastation on the farming and fishing communities was realized. Respondents also reported feeling that their problems were being ignored or underestimated in their severity in comparison to the media attention given to New Orleans.

Initial conditions that Bryson, Crosby, and Stone describe as “driving and constraining forces in the competitive and institutional environments” (2006, 46) were evident in central Texas. The state of Texas received high marks from respondents for its ability to disseminate information and resources to Katrina evacuees, thereby reducing transaction costs. Similarly, nonprofits closely affiliated with other central actors, such as local United Way organizations, large faith-based entities, and universities, reported being propelled toward collective involvement in relief efforts. Respondents described such central actors as the initial drivers of collaboration, with most centered on short-term relief activities, such as filling acute housing needs and distributing food and clothing. The experience of smaller nonprofits and those less connected with existing networks or large private or government funders are reflected in the statement of one nonprofit respondent: “We did not know where to turn to initially in terms of connecting evacuees with other services. We could meet the most basic needs and challenged ourselves to do so, but we really had to reach out to other organizations, in ways we never did before, to help in a less ‘band-aid’ sort of way.” These findings illuminate the need to temper Bryson, Crosby, and Stone’s assumptions of normalcy in relationship to initial conditions, particularly with regard to the way this affects organizational planning for a broader and less predictable range of activities.

Sector failure or single-sector inadequacies. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone also associate the formation of cross-sector collaboration with the perception that individual sector efforts will fail or that “actual or potential failures cannot be fixed by the sectors acting alone” (2006, 46). Perceptions that shared enterprise was necessary were most poignant in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, as a variety of stakeholders from across all three sectors stepped in to fill acute needs. In southwest Louisiana and central Texas, cross-sector solutions were formed more deliberately. In Texas, resources were more organized from the inception, facilitated no doubt by the relatively distal relationship to the extreme impacts of the hurricane itself.

In the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, perceptions of failure were widespread and directed at government; as fieldwork centered on a neighborhood rebuilding effort, perceptions of administrative failure were focused primarily on the local level. Respondents expressed displeasure at the relative void of public services in the immediate aftermath of Katrina, but the continuing slow response to citizens’ needs for the most basic of services, including electricity, water, shelter, food, health care, and safety, resulted in ongoing confusion, duress, and what respondents described as “extreme displeasure.” The city of New Orleans, faced with both fiscal constraints and rising needs for basic services, laid off 252 city workers in the early days after Katrina, primarily at the senior management level. This resulted in staff shortages and a loss of professional local government expertise, leaving middle managers and inexperienced individuals to address one of the country’s most challenging urban rebuilding efforts.

This failure of city governance was illustrated in a December 2005, interview with a city of New Orleans

planning official who revealed that before the hurricanes, she had been in charge of community development plans. After Katrina, she found herself on the front line of city planning. When researchers inquired about the availability of data on the conditions of buildings in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, they not only were told that the city did not have this type of information but also were asked whether they would be able to complete such an inventory for the city—in effect engaging researchers in a de facto cross-sector collaboration. Other key informants revealed that the post-Katrina vacuum in city government resulted in initial rebuilding proposals from a set of private and political interests operating with limited city authority and inconsistent planning approaches. Respondents expressed concern that the Bring New Orleans Back Commission had a variety of separate and insufficiently linked agendas unconnected to a strategic master plan and operating outside the standard city review process. Primary contacts revealed that by September 2006, only three planners remained in the city's planning department. Thus, in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, not only did nonprofit and private entities supplement public planning resources, but also cross-sector collaborations among private and nonprofit organizations emerged to replace them. This gap in planning services is illustrative of a number of government failures, providing evidence that essential public goods, including having a reliable government partner in emergent planning collaborations, were absent.

In southwest Louisiana, nonprofit and public officials largely expressed failure in government at the federal level. In Iberia Parish, an elected official summed up this theme: "The Cajun people won't wait on the federal government. It was sad to see the delay and that FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] was so slow to respond," he said. He further pointed out examples of nongovernmental actors stepping in to fill this void: "Visiting volunteer groups also helped . . . the Red Cross and United Way played a big part. Churches gave out food, pillows and cots."

The experience in Vermilion Parish provides a different response to government failure. Similar expressions of frustration and lack of faith in governmental solutions were recorded from individual citizens, government officials, and nonprofit actors, but cross-sector collaboration took on a different character in this context. Individuals interviewed in this parish indicated that they were not formally collaborating across sectors in rebuilding efforts, but rather they were working within them, with linkages being more

implicit than explicit. One Vermilion Parish respondent noted, "Nonprofit organizations are working together to meet the needs. Local governments are also working together to correct current and future problems."

Existing or powerful linking mechanisms. The formation of cross-sector collaborations is associated also with the existence of "one or more linking mechanisms, such as powerful sponsors, general agreement on the problem, or existing networks" (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone 2006). Each area studied provided evidence to support this proposition. During a December 2005 interview with an administrator of the

New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative, it became apparent that this organization was considered a key linking mechanism, as it enjoyed both legitimacy and a strong existing network. The administrator explained that the agency's mission "is to work with community partners to revitalize New Orleans' neighborhoods through the increased production of quality affordable housing." The

collaborative receives its funding from federal and private sources and offers technical support, strategic planning assistance, and mini-grants to the nine neighborhood projects they supported before Katrina. The Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation, a key affiliate of the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative and a collaborator in this research and fieldwork, reported receiving both technical help and financial support from the latter. Although respondents reported some communication problems between the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative and the neighborhoods they served, and the collaborative experienced staffing problems because of the loss of their own employees to Katrina, this organization exemplified a high degree of structural embeddedness and proved to be a vital linking mechanism in post-Katrina cross-sector collaborations.

In addition to powerful sponsors and existing networks, Bryson, Crosby, and Stone also posit that "an important linking mechanism is initial agreement on the problem definition. Agreement can help clarify the stake or interest that an organization has in resolving the social problem and how much the organization needs others to solve the problem" (2006, 46). Father Perry Henry, pastor of St. Joseph's Church in the heart of the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, played two vital roles in cross-sector collaboration. The first role was providing a strong presence and holding a leadership position in an entity (i.e., the church) that

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enjoyed legitimacy, a central role in the community, and preexisting networks and relationships with private, city, and nonprofit partners. The second role was Father Henry's spearheading of an effort to implement a community development and strategic planning process in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood after Katrina and seeking assistance from university researchers to do this. Initial agreement was established among St. Joseph's Church, the Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation and other private, nonprofit, and city partners to specify and begin to address vital housing, health and human services, and economic development issues.

Similarly, in central Texas, a large, multisite human services agency indicated that "preexisting relationships helped our collaborations with other agencies work." A prominent corporate funder noted that working through existing relationships with funded agencies was a highly efficient way to organize a food drive, manage in-kind donations, and dispatch large numbers of employees as volunteers. Although a majority of respondents in this area expressed a need for a stronger statewide nonprofit networks and frustration over initial efforts to access and interpret federal and state resource requirements for evacuees, there was general and strong agreement that the state played an important information sharing and networking role. Numerous examples of distinct nonprofit networks, such as the management support organization in Austin, Greenlights for Nonprofit Success, and the United Way of the Brazos Valley's 2-1-1 referral service, served vital linking roles in specific communities in both emergent relief and longer-term assistance to evacuees.

Organizational characteristics. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) identify initial conditions in terms of their potential to stimulate or influence cross-sector collaboration, moderating individual sector shortcomings. The central Texas study suggests another important aspect of antecedent conditions: sufficient organizational capacity. Although the model addresses competitive and institutional elements as drivers or constraints and includes a number of structural and process elements, the aspect of organizational capacity is not specified by the authors. In the central Texas data, organizational capacity emerged as a key factor in providing relief as measured by nonprofit size, age, and annual expenditures. Having a formal volunteer program and previous participation in collaborations were also associated with participation in collaborative relief efforts.²

Process Components

Forging initial agreements. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone outline six process aspects within collaborations: forging initial agreements; building leadership, legitimacy, and trust; managing conflict; and planning (2006, 46). These aspects overlap somewhat with the model's initial conditions and structure and governance dimensions. Beyond the importance that initial agreements have in providing an impetus for collaboration, Bryson, Crosby, and Stone link formal agreements with accountability and outcomes. They also emphasize that although informal agreements can work, formal agreements are more helpful in fostering agreement on purpose, resources, formal leadership, and decision making, all of which lead naturally to the articulation of next steps and longer-term implementation strategies. They further argue that the formation of initial agreements is an iterative process in which the terms of the initial agreement are tempered as the collaboration changes.

In both New Orleans and southwest Louisiana, respondents indicated that it took several meetings and more than six months to come to any initial agreement about where and how to begin collaborative efforts. In the central Texas context, collaborations that were built on previously established agreements were reportedly more nimble in responding to the needs of evacuees. Other central Texas nonprofits with fewer or less formal existing networks indicated that their experience providing relief had shed light on the importance of either strengthening existing networks or developing and formalizing new or different networks. In keeping with Bryson, Crosby, and Stone's model, the Louisiana cases suggest that expending efforts to formalize initial agreements is useful.

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Building leadership, legitimacy, and trust. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone propose that cross-sector collaborations are more likely to be successful if they are led by committed sponsors and champions who play both formal and informal leadership roles at multiple levels within the collaboration (2006, 47). In the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, numerous respondents described Father Henry as modeling these characteristics, including demonstrations of "formal and informal authority, vision, long term commitment to the collaboration, integrity, and relational and political skills . . . considerable prestige, authority, and access to resources they can use on behalf of the collaboration" (47). In addition to his

pastoral role, Father Henry was involved in the creation of the Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation, headed by Sister Vera Butler, who is also well acquainted with and widely respected in the neighborhood. These leaders brought previous federal and city funding relationships, existing collaborative service arrangements with other nonprofits, and linkages with a host of private and governmental entities to the rebuilding effort. Also, Henry recognized that for the cross-sector collaboration to be effective, leadership needed to be fostered at multiple levels across and within the community. By bringing in university researchers to assist with community and urban planning, Henry helped build shared leadership at various points throughout the neighborhood. Reflecting on the role of the outside research partners, the following was reported in a related news article about the research team's focus:

[I]ntangible elements such as engaging residents in the urban planning process is an important step toward a new New Orleans . . . brings a human touch to a neighborhood that needs more than just bricks and mortar. We can have a very reassuring presence for the people who are nervous about all the changes that are about to take place. There are so many decisions to be made that we need to have grass-roots participation in the planning process. The federal government doesn't do that very well. (Malooley 2006)

Perceptions of government failure or inadequate relief and recovery efforts were widespread and described as serving to stimulate alternative relief and rebuilding solutions in the form of cross-sector collaborations. In the two Louisiana contexts, perceptions about the legitimacy, competency, and trustworthiness of nonprofits also played a role in which nonprofits could easily initiate or engage in cross-sector collaboration. Study respondents described the nonprofit organizations in the Tulane-Canal neighborhood as being much better organized and possessing greater service delivery experience than those in southwest Louisiana. Although new nonprofits developed in both contexts, there were clearly more experienced players in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood; despite their own problems with staff vacancies and damaged offices, these organizations were able to respond quickly to the immediate and acute recovery needs. As important, a number of nonprofit organizations in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood had worked together in the past and had worked with representatives of the city as well. These relation-

ships, along with perceptions of their competency, provided the collaborative foundation necessary to begin planning and rebuilding efforts.

Bryson, Crosby, and Stone note that "collaboration partners build trust by sharing information and knowledge and demonstrating competency, good intentions, and follow-through" (2006, 48). In central Texas, several funders and nonprofit executives noted how organizations with preexisting relationships were able to build on such relationships, particularly when they were built out of respect, trust, and some degree of familiarity. One funder described how trusting relationships facilitated swift action by a group of public and private supporters who wanted to streamline the distribution of funds for Katrina relief: "There were 90 people in the room and we put together a website. We all kicked money in, we all reviewed the process, because we wanted to do a quick response and offer a short-form application for all Austin agencies impacted by Katrina and Rita." Similarly, another funder indicated that it wanted to "build on agencies' core strengths and show them that we were a strong

partner in this relief effort, and a partner whose core competencies we trusted to manage the services to Katrina victims."

Managing conflict. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone indicate that although conflict is common in cross-sector collaborations, such collaborations are more likely to succeed when partners work to moderate power dynamics and actively manage conflict (2006, 48). In the Tulane/Canal neighborhood and in southwest Louisiana, a number of new nonprofits emerged in the aftermath of the storms. Although some of these new entities proved to be innovative and

filled important gaps, a number of respondents reported wariness and conflict in their interactions with the new agencies, viewing them with suspicion and questioning their motivations. Other respondents viewed the new agencies as "self-appointed" and misguided in their belief that they alone were "the ones who would provide services because they believed no one else would, or could, do it," suggesting that these new agencies suffered from naiveté and "did not understand the nonprofit landscape, especially in New Orleans, and basically just mucked things up—creating conflicts and even ignoring other organizations that had been working in the neighborhoods for years." In southwest Louisiana, several nonprofit and government respondents indicated that fraudulent organizations had sprung up and were preying on the

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vulnerabilities of storm victims. Thus, respondents in both New Orleans and southwest Louisiana expressed conflicts in potential collaborations with new nonprofits and with known entities having greater influence and power, especially in the formation of cross-sector collaborations.

On the other end of the spectrum, many respondents suggested that the traditional “big nonprofit players,” such as the Red Cross, did not maintain a large role in the long term. Large national nonprofits were described as filling significant gaps at the beginning of the relief efforts, but they largely departed when acute relief efforts gave way to longer-term rebuilding; smaller local organizations stepped in at this point and organized key local collaborative partners to get done what was needed. Small, socially embedded nonprofits demonstrated active moderation of conflict, power sharing, and partnership stimulation.

Planning. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone indicate that “cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed when they combine emergent and deliberate planning” (2006, 48) and when such planning involves stakeholder input and builds on the “distinctive competencies of collaborators.” Because of the extreme conditions experienced in New Orleans, most of the initial planning in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood was highly emergent and experimental in nature and decoupled from previous community and neighborhood plans. By January 2006, respondents noted that the anticipation of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) began to change local planning norms. Because the distribution of CDBG funds were predicted to be tied to neighborhoods with existing individual neighborhood plans, more deliberate collaboration and planning seemed to take place overall. In addition, respondents noted that nonprofit involvement in cross-sector collaboration emerged strongly at this juncture, for two reasons: the absence of strong city planning agents and the existing competencies of local nonprofits in stakeholder engagement. Yet respondents also noted that because most nonprofits were generally working on one aspect of a housing, health, or human service need, the anticipation of CDBG funds also stimulated collaboration across sectors, with nonprofits leading the initiatives.

Respondents in both Louisiana contexts identified network analysis and stakeholder involvement as particularly important to planning. Initial lists were made of all organizations working in the targeted neighborhoods in New Orleans, especially those involved in housing, health, human services, and economic development, and organizations

that had existed before Katrina were identified and contacted to evaluate their level of functioning in the post-Katrina environment.

Researchers and key local nonprofit actors also attended many of the subcommittee meetings of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission to learn who the key players and stakeholders were, understand their roles, and make initial linkages on behalf of Tulane/Canal neighborhood interests. Researchers then conducted detailed interviews to map out the partnerships and level of planning involvement of specific organizations. Finally, neighborhood meetings were held to begin systematic, broadly representative, and deliberative stakeholder planning. Data collected in this study revealed that nonprofits played a primary role in initiating, organizing, and keeping cross-sector collaboration functioning in both Louisiana contexts. In Vermilion Parish, however, only very limited collaboration occurred. This may be, in part, because community development, planning, and stakeholder engagement capacities were less developed there.

Structure and Governance

Structure in context and structural configurations.

Bryson, Crosby, and Stone identify “environmental factors such as system stability and the collaboration’s strategic purpose” (2006, 49) as driving the structure of cross-sector collaboration. An extension of this relates to the likelihood that collaborative structures will “change over time because of ambiguity of membership and complexity in local environments” (49) and in response to the primary tasks performed at the client level.

The Mid-City Collaborative, which emerged out of the Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation’s community and strategic planning process, had at its inception a core group of stakeholders, to include St. Joseph’s Church and the corporation. During its formative stage, the Mid-City Collaborative received support from the team of university researchers, along with seven other key professional resources that are defined as “important cogs in the redevelopment processes in New Orleans.” As needs evolved from complex, acute service needs to complex, dynamic rebuilding agen-

As needs evolved from complex, acute service needs to complex, dynamic rebuilding agendas, the number and variety of collaborative partners grew to include an increasingly diverse representation of private, public, and nonprofit interests.

das, the number and variety of collaborative partners grew to include an increasingly diverse representation of private, public, and nonprofit interests. Their initial plan specified two additional categories of organizations in the collaborative: partners and collaborators. Partners were defined as “charter collaborative members who work actively to

adopt the strategic plan, share resources in pursuit of the mission and vision (of the collaborative) and attract new members.” Collaborators were defined as “organizations that share a similar mission and vision, and exchange in-kind and other support in pursuit of these ends.” As the number of partners, collaborators, and professional resources continues to grow, the collaborative has been able to be more responsive to changes in its environment and better able to effectively address planning and development needs.

Governance. Other structural aspects of collaboration, particularly formal and informal mechanisms of governance, are linked to effectiveness. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone note that “contingencies such as network size and the degrees of trust among members influence which form is appropriate, and managerial choice is critical for matching the best form to conditions” (2006, 49). In the case of the Tulane/Canal neighborhood, it is useful to consider the role of a key network founder, St. Joseph’s Church, in the establishment of collaborative governance structures. The influence of St. Joseph’s Church and its leaders reveals it as a strong social mechanism that shaped the governance structure of several related entities by engaging in what Bryson, Crosby, and Stone summarized as “frequent, structured exchanges that develop network level values, norms, and trust” (49). Over time, St. Joseph’s has played a lead role in establishing the major community development collaborations in the Tulane/Canal neighborhood. For example, the church is a founding member of the Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation, and it is also home to Lantern Light, a faith-based organization that provides meals and basic necessities to the homeless and needy residents of the community. St. Joseph’s remains jointly engaged with Lantern Light and the Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation in community planning, which has resulted in a new cross-sector structure known as the Mid-City Collaborative. Although it exists as a separate, self-governing entity, St. Joseph’s continues to play an influential, yet collaborative, lead role in rebuilding efforts. A number of respondents reported associating St. Joseph’s focus on stakeholder engagement with a values orientation that directly translates into aspects of the structure and governance mechanisms of its collaborating agencies.

Contingencies and Constraints Affecting Process, Structure, and Governance

Collaboration type, power imbalances, and competing institutional logics. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone propose that “collaborations involving system-level planning activities are likely to involve the most negotiations, followed by collaboration focused on administrative level partnerships and service delivery partnerships” (2006, 50). This proposi-

tion is generally supported by findings from all three areas, yet the scope and complexity of the extreme events of Katrina and Rita complicate the interpretation. In the case of the Tulane/Canal Neighborhood Development Corporation’s strategic planning, the formation of the Mid-City Collaborative led to more involved collaborative efforts in planning a new community resource, the “Rebuild Center,” which will provide many of the services identified in the strategic plan. Negotiations were oriented toward systems-level solutions and were deliberative, extensive, yet highly cooperative among a range of stakeholders.

However, despite local examples that support the model’s propositions related to contingencies and conflict, the data also reveal that competing institutional logics resulted in greater conflict, failed negotiations, and unclear power dynamics, particularly between federal, state, and local officials and between public and nongovernmental actors. Indeed, as evidenced by the administrative failure critique, the scope and volume of these extreme events suggest that cross-sector administrative and service collaborations designed to provide information, distribute funds, and provide basic health, safety, and other human services were anything but “easy.”

Outcomes and Accountabilities

Public value and first-, second-, and third-order effects. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone argue that cross-sector collaborations can most effectively create public value by taking advantage of each sector’s relative strengths while moderating each sector’s characteristic weaknesses (2006, 51). In addition, cross-sector collaborations are more likely to contribute public value when they produce not only easily recognizable first-order effects but also second- and third-order effects, such as new learning or enhanced or extended partnerships (51). Findings from all three areas studied provide some support to these propositions.

A simple example that occurred in all three contexts was the distribution and utilization of voluntary and philanthropic inputs from individuals and private, public, and nonprofit entities. Although there were examples of nonprofits being overwhelmed with donations and not being able to adequately handle an influx of voluntary personnel or funding, cross-sector collaborations did provide a mechanism for the use and distribution of private and public inputs. Moreover, in successful examples of cross-sector collaboration oriented toward the collection and distribution of contributions, partners were able to do this in ways that enhanced public value. For example, in central Texas, survey and interview participants noted the importance of volunteers in the relief effort: 44 percent of organizations that participated in the relief effort utilized volunteers who had previously volunteered with

their agency, and 23 percent brought in new volunteers. Most organizations recruited only a limited number of new volunteers, primarily in the immediate aftermath of the hurricanes. In total, 64 percent said they used volunteer services for 12 weeks or less in the aftermath of the crisis.

Despite the positive contributions of volunteers, it was challenging to cope with the large influx of volunteers at the time of the crisis. For instance, a few nonprofit executives concluded that they had learned more about how to engage volunteers as a result of their disaster relief involvement. Others mentioned the experience had led to further learning gains, such as better communications systems, broader collaborations with other service providers, improved tracking and evaluation systems, plans for interventions in future disaster relief efforts, and emergency evacuation plans for their own organizations.

An example of second-order effects stems from the facilitation by university researchers and planners in the Tulane/Canal context, which extended to second-order effects in southwest Louisiana. The Community Foundation of Acadiana, which extended its service area to include additional parishes in southwest Louisiana, sought out a similar planning initiative to achieve its relief goals within a collaborative framework. The foundation established the South Louisiana Rural Recovery Fund to assist community members. Struggling with how to prioritize recovery needs, particularly in terms of awarding grants, foundation officials requested a replication of the process conducted for Tulane/Canal to help in their own community development and collaborative rebuilding efforts. Third-order outcomes related to reflective processes that helped to integrate lessons learned from collaborations into the process of forming next stage or ongoing agreements.

Resilience, reassessment, and accountability. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone also advise that partners in cross-sector collaborations are most likely to create public value when they can be characterized as being resilient and engaged in regular assessment (2006, 51). In this model, cross-sector collaboration is associated with the existence of an accountability system shaped by key political and professional constituencies and containing a monitoring system that tracks inputs, processes, and outcomes coupled with related data management and reporting systems (52). Although many of the cross-sector collaborations under examination in this article are emergent, several examples provide support for the proposition that accountability is associated with successful cross-sector collaboration.

For instance, in central Texas, a collection of some 90 private and public sector funders came together to

create an expedited funding system so that resources could be quickly dispatched to nonprofits engaged in post-Katrina relief. These funders developed a streamlined application process that contained elements of due diligence for financial and programmatic review in line with urgent relief and recovery goals. Although goals were fairly output oriented because of the short-term nature of the funding mandate, the relief and recovery goals provided the accountability orientation and served as the basis for final grant reports on the use of funds; to date, no one has compiled a final report of these funding initiatives. In terms of resilience and reassessment, the data suggest that nonprofits have been highly disappointed by government efforts and lack of response to the extreme events of Katrina and Rita, though well able to step in and meet recovery and rebuilding needs. Yet our respondents indicated that they were aware of their interdependencies with government and other private entities. For example, nonprofit partners dedicated to establishing the Rebuild Center, recognized that although all the of the organizations that will provide services at the center are nonprofit organizations, center partners still need to liaise with public officials for various regulatory and planning purposes. In addition, nonprofit respondents in all three contexts expressed awareness that they will continue to collaborate with government, whether it be in the form of contracts for services, reporting requirements, or meeting regulatory or planning obligations.

The Informal Sector: Individual Initiative, Self-Help, and Prosocial Behaviors

Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) address behaviors primarily in the context of participation in cross-sector collaboration by formal organizations. The current research suggests that this is a shortcoming of the model, particularly when cross-sector collaboration is taking place in the context of relief and recovery related to extreme events. During the extreme and turbulent time immediately following the hurricanes, a number of respondents reported individuals offering one-on-one assistance and the establishment of informal networks. In one central Texas community, a respondent described individual families volunteering to house Rita evacuees in their homes. This initiative was highly successful and carried out with very little initial support by central nonprofit or public actors. In another central Texas community, a large university had been established as a temporary shelter for evacuees in the days surrounding Hurricane Rita. Volunteers, organized by no official entity, spontaneously located themselves at major intersections and directed evacuees to temporary shelter. In New Orleans and southwest Louisiana, individuals were enlisted to help their fellow citizens to fill out forms for emergency financial assistance, advocate for an elderly woman's access to a FEMA trailer, and remove deserted vehicles

and other debris from city streets. In some instances, these informal initiatives became formalized. For example, in all three contexts, lawyers volunteered to help evacuees with a variety of daily living tasks, most centering on interpreting insurance, housing, and other federal and state benefits. This has stimulated the formation of ongoing discussion about the need for a local legal assistance resource in one community; in Tulane/Canal, these activities will be formalized through the Rebuild Center.

Over time, some of these person-to-person approaches became institutionalized. For example, in Bryan, Texas, there is a nonprofit agency whose primary mission is to serve as an intermediary for clients accessing the myriad and sometimes disconnected array of necessary public and nonprofit services. The Rebuild Center in Tulane/Canal will also provide vital “one-stop” service provision. Such efforts were, and continue to be, instrumental not only in helping persons affected by the hurricanes but also in streamlining and interpreting various state and federal guidelines so that other nonprofit agencies could operate more efficiently and responsively. It is important to watch such initiatives over time to see whether cross-sector collaborations integrate services that might evolve into either grassroots efforts or formalized individual prosocial behaviors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has revealed that cross-sector collaborative efforts in disaster response create and enhance public value. In the wake of overwhelming administrative failures, this reinforces previous findings that cross-sector collaboration is stimulated by and often necessary to compensate for weaknesses in one sector. This was demonstrated clearly by the necessity of cross-sector collaboration to fill in to provide acute and longer-term recovery assistance in the administrative void that followed the extreme events of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In addition, the research shows that nonprofit involvement in cross-sector collaboration was critical, particularly in light of the absence of adequate service provision conceived of by citizens as being of public value and of daily, basic necessity. This study also revealed that some aspects of cross-sector collaboration seem similar across three very different emergency recovery and relief settings; yet the research also reinforces Bryson, Crosby, and Stone’s (2006) model of sensitivity to cross-sector collaborations in their general and specific environments.

This research extends the work of Bryson, Crosby, and Stone in two important ways by exploring the elaboration of (1) the association of organizational capacity and participation in cross-sector collaboration, particularly as capacity relates to unique nonprofit attributes such as utilizing volunteers and receiving charitable donations; and (2) the influences that the

“informal” sector, including self-help, individual prosocial behaviors, and nascent groups, play in cross-sector collaboration formation and responsiveness. The research also suggests the need to link the literatures on nonprofit collaboration, collaboration under conditions of extreme events, and cross-sector collaboration. It would be helpful to further explore and refine Bryson, Crosby, and Stone’s model based on assumptions that emerge from greater integration of those literatures. This is particularly important because the current model largely assumes normal conditions versus conditions of extreme events, and as cross-sector collaboration is a key strategy in emergency management and relief. This research has revealed critical extensions to Bryson, Crosby, and Stone’s comprehensive model for cross-sector collaboration and the need to bridge the literatures and related research on collaboration and emergency management and relief. Extreme events change the assumptions for planning and implementation of cross-sector collaboration. Through further elaboration and planning for “non-normal” initial conditions, more incisive problem articulation and understanding, priming of a broader range of local partners, including participation by individuals, greater attention to organizational capacity, and readiness for cross-sector collaboration and emergency relief, both cross-sector collaboration practice and related research can be enhanced. This is particularly important as public, private, and nonprofit partners continue their attempts to better anticipate and address extreme events, such as disasters, issues of security, and other complex problems.

Based on the study’s findings, the following recommendations and implications for future policy, practice, and research are offered.

- There is a need to address local civic capacity across the three sectors and competencies for cross-sector collaboration. The creation of more flexible, short-term emergency funding streams delivered to and managed by local entities would be useful.
- Existing networks are vital to future collaboration in terms of the provision of information, resource and expertise sharing, and compensation for organizational and sector shortcomings. This was particularly evident in the arena of nonprofit associations and federations. Thus, investing in enhancements in current networks, especially in light of emergency planning efforts, is advised.
- In both Louisiana cases, evidence pointed to the critical role that broad-based participatory processes played in local planning, particularly in relationship to rebuilding. Moving forward, city and parish planning processes would be enhanced by incorporating the collaboratively generated neighborhood planning initiatives into the overall approach to city and parish planning. Moreover, local public officials

are advised to invest in efforts to strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities for planning and related forms of collaboration through investments in coalition building, support of emergent groups, and enhanced intermediary roles. In all three contexts of this study, the successful and less successful efforts to engage citizens in planning and other self-deterministic activities after the hurricanes reflected some of the most poignant lessons learned concerning cross-sector collaboration.

- In the Texas case, there was some general agreement that central state actors played a vital information role. In Louisiana, greater voids existed, partly because of insufficient information systems, and partly as a result of the scale of the initial damage. Therefore, it is necessary to expand and enhance information systems from central actors to local agencies. Nonprofit infrastructure organizations could help foster greater nonprofit involvement in state emergency task forces, with a clear understanding of intersections for nonprofits with federal, state, and local officials, and other key emergency agencies, such as the Red Cross. Attention to capacity building needs of nonprofits, including building competencies for cross-sector collaboration, volunteer management, and donations management are all vital areas.
- Private and corporate funders should establish funds to provide supplementary support for funded agencies and other area agencies expanding to respond to extreme events. Also, the establishment of stronger systems of collaboration among funders would be beneficial for their competence in collaboration, emergency relief and rebuilding. This was a gap in both Louisiana and Texas; yet in isolated instances, local funders played a key convening and assessment role. Greater formalization of collaborative roles and structures and deliberative planning during extreme events is advised.
- In several instances, large or prominent organizations played important convening, collaborative leadership, and information provision roles. This was particularly so in smaller communities. Therefore, it is important to foster ongoing relationships.
- It would be useful to study the longer-term effects of nonprofit involvement in cross-sector collaboration, as this is an underspecified and under-researched area. That cross-sector collaboration is currently a central rebuilding strategy in much of the emergency management literature reinforces the need for ongoing research and theory development. This recommendation is reinforced by the prominence of cross-sector collaboration as a key recovery or rebuilding strategy in all three contexts of this study.
- Greater strategic planning to explicitly include aspects of cross-sector collaboration is necessary generally; this research suggests this more so in relationship to wider scale planning for emergencies.

Public, private, and nonprofit organizations need to consider capacity constraints, a fuller range of partners, local preparedness, and various contingencies in relationship to cross-sector collaboration in such planning. And these plans need to be updated annually, as strategic challenges and environmental conditions, particularly those that impinge on cross-sector collaborative responses to extreme events, are not static.

What is most salient about the findings presented here is that a theoretical model helped frame and organize a vast array of formative data, and the results are illustrative of the reality of research informing the constraints of a theoretical model. As the theory shaped the analysis, so the findings inform and expand the theory. There is much work to be done in both dimensions as long-term studies on nonprofits' role in cross-sector collaboration post-Hurricanes continues to emerge and shape ever more helpful and accurate models.

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Notes

1. For brevity's sake, we will refer to the period under investigation as "post-Katrina," but this use should also connote relief and recovery efforts resulting from Hurricane Rita as well.
2. A small, positive relationship existed between participation in post-Katrina relief and total expenditure ($r = .27, p = .01$) and between participation in post-Katrina relief organizational age ($r = .15, p = .05$). Participation in relief efforts was also associated with the existence of a volunteer program, with a small but statistically significant relationship ($r = .16, p = .05$). A significant positive relationship between previous participation in networks and participation in collaborative relief efforts ($r = .28, p = .01$) was shown.

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