

Public Abstract

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Title:RURAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: AN INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL CASE STUDY

Preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation are the essential disaster management functions that characterize emergency management. Emergency management is a multi-organizational activity. The connections between these organizations form a network. Members of rural emergency services, often volunteers, may belong to more than one organization in the network. Thus the network is really a network of networks.

This mixed methods research collected empirical data about rural organizations, in one rural county in Missouri, which are part of the emergency management network. Three theoretical frameworks were examined to identify antecedents that produce the four C's of emergency management; communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. A critical analysis of network theory, organizational theory and community field theory revealed the inter-organizational activities that enable each of the four C's.

This study describes the characteristics of a rural emergency management network and seeks to explain the complex inter-organizational relations. The critical inter-organizational relationships; communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration, are necessary for community disaster resilience. Organizational social capital is produced from the four C's of emergency management, facilitating future interactions.