Manifest leadership styles in a Caribbean cross-sector network

Tracy Cooper
Department of Public Administration,
University of North Carolina, Pembroke, North Carolina, USA

Received 24 April 2014
Revised 23 September 2014
24 November 2014
Accepted 25 November 2014

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the leadership styles emerging within a cross-sector national disaster management network in the Caribbean.

Design/methodology/approach – Since little empirical research exists on leadership styles within multi-agency systems, particularly those focussed on disaster management, this exploratory study relied on a qualitative research design. In-depth interviews with the network's participants allowed for a better understanding of group dynamics and members' leadership approaches.

Findings – The analysis identified what and when certain leadership styles manifest themselves in the network based on the stages of the disaster management cycle. The findings also underscored the need for a combination of transactional and transformational leadership in a disaster management context.

Research limitations/implications – Although qualitative methods do not afford generalizability beyond the case study, they do provide depth of knowledge of an under-researched phenomenon and indicate a need for future comparative case studies and longitudinal research on cross-sector disaster management systems and leadership issues.

Originality/value – As one of the first studies to chart leadership styles that collaborative members practice in such networks in the Caribbean, this research contributes to scholarship on networks in general and leadership within disaster management networks in particular.

Keywords Caribbean, Leadership styles, Disaster management, Collaborative leadership, Cross-sector networks

Paper type Case study

Introduction

As cross-sector networks are increasingly perceived as essential when confronting complex public issues, it is important to understand how these arrangements are being led and the effects of the leadership styles that group members practice. This is particularly significant in disaster situations in which collective action is vital. And, while numerous entities are involved in the disaster response stage, just as many stakeholders should be engaged in the preparedness, recovery, and mitigation stages if the social capacities implied by relief activities are to be maintained (Berke and Campanella, 2006; Canton, 2007). Yet, governments typically have excluded nonprofit organizations (Benson *et al.*, 2001; Chandra and Acosta, 2009), businesses (Binder and Witte, 2007; Muller and Whiteman, 2009), and private citizens (Berke and Campanella, 2006; Burby, 2003) from the decision-making process concerning disaster management.

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to discover the leadership styles manifest in a multi-sector national disaster management network (NDMN). The study turned to the Caribbean since the region has utilized networked systems to address disaster management for decades (CDEMA, 2012; McDonald, 1985). Many island state governments, assuming full responsibility for the development and maintenance of their NDMN, have purposefully incorporated nongovernmental actors into these networks. This has broadened their reach, thereby potentially improving the implementation and sustainability of strategies at the regional, national, and

Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Vol. 37 No. 1, 2016
pp. 93-106

0143-7739
DOI 10.1108/LODJ-04-2014-0080

community levels (McDonald, 1985). Thus, this study contributes empirically to scholarship; it is one of the first to investigate and produce information about a Caribbean NDMN that, to some extent, has engaged stakeholders from all societal sectors in its planning, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts.

Furthermore, although disaster and network scholars (e.g. Canton, 2007; Linden, 2002) have discussed leadership as a key factor for collaborative success, "leadership in extreme contexts may be one of the least researched areas in the leadership field" (Hannah *et al.*, 2009, p. 897). Silvia and McGuire (2010) have started to examine "multi-actor leadership," but their current work is focussed only on the response stage. Additionally, research has largely overlooked the specific leadership styles that such diverse members employ in networked structures. This study begins to fill this gap in the literature. It is one of the first to chart the leadership styles that network members exhibit in each stage of the disaster management cycle.

The paper first briefly reviews the literature relevant to leadership styles in a disaster management context. It then describes the research methodology. This is followed by an analysis of the study's findings that highlights the need for a blend of leadership styles within a NDMN. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings.

Literature review

The disaster management cycle is broad and multi-faceted. It includes four stages that often overlap: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Preparedness means planning. "Effective planning requires an understanding of the nature of disaster, the risks facing the community, and the availability of community resources" (Canton, 2007, p. 225). It requires gathering information on a locale's economic status, governance structure, political situation, capabilities, and needs. Response involves providing immediate assistance (food, water, shelter, first aid) to disaster survivors, while recovery includes assessing damages, restoring utilities, rebuilding structures, and re-establishing economic activities and social norms. In the mitigation stage, prevention measures against future disasters, such as stricter building codes and behavior modifications, are considered and implemented (Benson *et al.*, 2001; Berke and Campanella, 2006).

Due to the challenging, complex nature of disaster management forcing numerous, diverse stakeholders to join together "to marshal the legitimacy, power, authority, and knowledge required to tackle any major public issue" (Bryson and Crosby, 1992, p. 4), a collaborative leadership style seems essential. Crosby and Bryson's (2005) *Leadership for the Common Good* framework emphasizes collaborative leaders will adapt their actions based on the circumstances that they confront: it acknowledges particular situations call for particular leadership skills and behaviors, reflecting contingency theory and situational theory. As such, these leaders will align their styles accordingly, combining or switching approaches, in order to generate cooperation, cohesiveness, and improved communication among group members (Avolio, 2005; Luke, 1998).

Few scholars (Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Friedrich *et al.*, 2009; Hannah *et al.*, 2009) have devised cross-sector collaborative leadership models. This study employed Crosby and Bryson's (2005) framework as a guide to analyze the findings since it includes components that are applicable to disaster management networks: the importance of certain leadership capabilities, teamwork, a system of reciprocity, and shared power. However, the study reviewed three different literatures – leadership, disaster management, and network – to comprehend better leadership in a disaster

management network given that some participants may employ leadership approaches other than a collaborative or participatory style.

Recalling Bogardus (1934), leadership style may be defined as the combination of an individual's traits, skills, and behaviors. Collaborative leadership may be defined as a style of action and responsibility shared among individuals in an attempt to guide others in an agreed-upon direction to achieve a common purpose (Avolio, 2005; Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Luke, 1998). van Wart (2013) has clarified that collaborative theory "emphasizes the need to support the health of communities and the environment for the good of all, and thus it is particularly well suited to the public and nonprofit sectors. It requires a long-term perspective in achieving many of the desired results" (p. 559). Thus, networked structures that rely on a participatory leadership style may help to reduce the chaos of response efforts and to overcome barriers encountered throughout the disaster management cycle.

With collaborative or participatory leadership, it is common practice for several individuals to take on leadership roles, separately or simultaneously, and for leaders to change or rotate (Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Luke, 1998; Silvia and McGuire, 2010). The same occurs in disaster events. During a disaster, "It is not unusual to see a transition in leadership over time as the need for specialized expertise changes" (Canton, 2007, p. 205). Multiple leaders can possibly strengthen a network since participants are charged with leadership functions based on their capabilities (Friedrich *et al.*, 2009).

The main contemporary theory from which collaborative leadership has emerged is transformational leadership. Burns (1978) first raised the importance of the connection between leaders and followers; he described transformational leaders as those who establish meaningful relationships and a common understanding with others in order to inspire them to reach their highest potential, grasp how important their work is to achieving organizational goals, and produce quality work. Importantly, transformational leaders recognize the need for shared leadership and, therefore, developing followers into leaders and using a participatory approach to decision making (Avolio, 2005; Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Luke, 1998).

Beck and Yeager (2001) have posited two transformational leadership approaches: developing and delegating. A developing style involves leaders helping "others analyze and solve their problems," and a delegating style means leaders entrust responsibility to others to make their own decisions (Beck and Yeager, 2001, p. 25). In this way, delegative leaders show confidence in those who have been assigned tasks. Moreover, Beck and Yeager (2001) have contended strong leaders will "find ways to distribute leadership among the team members" (p. 253). van Wart (2013) has asserted, "delegation can be leadership at its best" (p. 559). Leaders who delegate do not "abdicate responsibility; they merely empower others who share their vision to orchestrate the realization of that vision" (Beck and Yeager, 2001, p. 94). Additionally, Currie *et al.* (2011) have suggested distribution of leadership increases as a network matures. This sharing or distributing of duties generates "a sense of ownership" and, hence, a higher commitment from members to group activities (Beck and Yeager, 2001; Currie *et al.*, 2011; Linden, 2002; Nolte *et al.*, 2012).

However, the disaster literature shows a preference for a command-and-control approach, a transactional leadership style. Since no single organization has complete authority over any stage of disaster management, the ensuing ambiguity of authority has obstructed effective communication, coordination, and cooperation among stakeholders (Bigley and Roberts, 2001). Transactional leadership may assist with

mitigating these hurdles. Transactional leaders adhere to rules and procedures to realize agency mission and goals, supplying clear directions to subordinates to complete assignments and generally offering incentives for successful endeavors (Burns, 1978).

Beck and Yeager (2001) have delineated two transactional leadership styles, problem solving and directing, that allow leaders to maintain "control over the process and the end result" (p. 67). Leaders who use a problem-solving style "make decisions based on their followers input" (Beck and Yeager, 2001, p. 25), while leaders who employ a directing approach make decisions alone. Directive leaders provide guidelines on what tasks to perform and how to perform them. Because these leaders are "highly involved," they "can readily identify and respond to problems as they emerge" (Beck and Yeager, 2001, p. 48). Some scholars have maintained, "Team leaders and team members perform better when they have some degree of predictability to guide their interactions" (Beck and Yeager, 2001, p. 904; see also van Wart, 2013). However, Hannah *et al.* (2009) have noted contradictory research findings on directive leadership during extreme events; some studies have demonstrated directing is effective, while others have indicated this approach has resulted in a group's "inability to challenge assumptions, adapt and learn" (p. 904). Nonetheless, Beck and Yeager (2001) have asserted leaders must find an "appropriate balance" of styles, basically declaring a need for both transactional and transformational leadership styles within a networked setting.

Blending leadership styles

Agranoff and McGuire (2003) have endorsed a dual network system, recognizing the advantages of predictability provided by hierarchies and of flexibility offered by networks. This model may be most appropriate for managing the intricacies of disaster management. In fact, many governments utilize a hybrid configuration during the response stage: the Unified or Incident Command System (ICS).

The ICS outlines how numerous government and nongovernmental responders can join forces without abdicating their particular responsibilities by merging elements of a network into an ordered system (Canton, 2007). It allows for adaptability and spontaneity and for planning and stability. It incorporates a pre-set formal authority and an informal authority; command leader(s) at headquarters expect those on the ground to assess the situation and make decisions (Bigley and Roberts, 2001). This is possible through both vertical and horizontal communication and coordination arrangements to assist with information flow to ensure everyone can make appropriate, timely assessments. These "network interactions and operations may be more important than structure" (Silvia and McGuire, 2010, p. 271).

Participating organizations in a hybrid network form self-organize into a "pooled authority system that is based more on expertise than on position" (Agranoff, 2007, p. 87). Thus, the ICS is able to structure and restructure actions and relationships depending on the circumstances (Bigley and Roberts, 2001). This results in leadership changes or rotations and leadership possibly occurring simultaneously at all levels (Canton, 2007), echoing features of collaborative leadership. The ICS then generates an environment in which transactional and transformational leadership styles can work in tandem to produce a robust system. It embraces a delegative leadership style by sharing or distributing authority from headquarters to the field. It sanctions a directive leadership style through its vertical systems and supports a participatory leadership approach through its horizontal structures. Consequently, transactional leadership

"facilitates the conditions for" transformational leadership (Friedrich *et al.*, 2009, p. 935; see also van Wart, 2013). In other words, the ICS's integrated design is conducive to collaborative leadership. Collaborative leadership utilized within a hybrid network structure permits a blend of participatory, delegative, and directive leadership styles needed in the context of disaster management.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design in order to explore an under-researched social phenomenon: the leadership styles emerging within a government-led cross-sector NDMN in the Caribbean. As such, an analytical case study, which permitted an "in-depth perspective" (Creswell, 1998) on the network, was the strategy of inquiry to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What leadership styles are manifest within a cross-sector NDMN in the Caribbean?

RQ2. When do members employ certain leadership styles during the disaster management cycle?

The case revolved around numerous NDMN actors, making for a complex environment with intricate processes to be investigated. A case study was most likely to capture elements of such complexity robustly since it lends itself to in-depth interviews with diverse informants.

The selected NDMN for study seemed a representative case. Government has spent effort and finances in creating the network to serve as the central decision-making body for disaster management issues affecting the nation. The NDMN has been in existence in its formal structure for more than a decade and has had a relatively stable membership. It has been activated for several national disasters, including hurricanes, tropical storms, and flooding. Additionally, the island state is a member of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and, therefore, should adhere to the same procedures as the other nations that are members.

CDEMA coordinates response to catastrophes impacting its members when their capacity is overwhelmed, assists in establishing the individual NDMNs, and seeks to create a more comprehensive regional approach to disaster management (www.cdera.org). The current membership comprises: Anguilla; Antigua/Barbuda; Bahamas; Barbados; Belize; British Virgin Islands; Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Haiti; Jamaica; Montserrat; St Kitts/Nevis; St Lucia; St Vincent/Grenadines; Suriname; Trinidad/Tobago; and Turks/Caicos (www.cdera.org). Of these members, the nation for this research is considered by CDEMA officers as one of the most advanced in its disaster management efforts.

However, this research has limitations. It is possible the case study may not sufficiently represent practices in similar networks since each Caribbean NDMN has different characteristics and little public information is available for those that exist. Moreover, the interviews represent a partial segment of the experiences of other networks active during disasters. Interviewing only NDMN members limited the scope of the research; several participants have connections to regional and international actors also involved in disaster initiatives for the nation.

Data collection

After a review of the literatures, document analysis occurred. This involved an assessment of the following: the NDMN website; each network member's website and

internal publications (e.g. technical reports); the nation's Standard Operating Procedures volume for the disaster management system; national and organizational policies and plans (e.g. hazard mitigation and relief distribution); press releases; newspaper articles; and relevant laws.

Primary data were then collected from elite interviews with 25 individuals participating in the NDMN. Working with the network coordinator, every member was contacted via telephone and e-mail to schedule an interview. Respondents included senior-level officers from government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses as well as private citizens considered leaders in their community. Below is a partial listing of representatives who comprise the NDMN membership and examples of their tasks during response:

- Head of Government (assumes responsibility for comprehensive approach);
- NDMN Coordinator (oversees administrative issues; communicates with and between network members);
- Chief of Police (enforces laws; coordinates evacuation);
- Fire Chief (controls fires; oversees search and rescue);
- Chief Education Officer (manages emergency housing and shelter);
- Chief Officer, Public Utilities (clears evacuation routes);
- Nonprofit Executive Directors from the Red Cross and Salvation Army (administer first aid; deliver food/supplies);
- Director, Chamber of Commerce (directs private sector relief efforts);
- President, Transportation Association (handles transportation logistics); and
- Community Leaders with appropriate training (perform various duties at the national or local level, e.g., supply acquisition and allocation for assigned neighborhoods).

All interviews were conducted in the participants' offices to reduce the distance between the investigator and those being studied (Creswell, 1998). These face-to-face meetings, which ranged in length from 30 to 120 minutes, provided an opportunity to witness physical reactions that led to probing questions to capture the depth of the interviewees' experiences, gather detailed examples, and clarify unclear statements.

The interview guide consisted of semi-structured, open-ended questions in order to gain a better understanding of the intricacy of the case (Creswell, 1998). Its set of predetermined questions, which were created based on the literature and document analysis, ensured consistency in the information gathered from each participant. Some examples were: how are decisions made regarding the strategic direction for and critical tasks of the NDMN? Which members do you consider leaders within the NDMN? How and when did they become leaders? What skills and behaviors do those in leadership positions display that help and/or hinder the NDMN's progress?

Although the unit of analysis was leadership styles manifest in the NDMN, it was important to ask questions about the network's structure and functions, such as: what formal and informal rules and procedures have been created by the group and why? How do members specifically work together during each disaster management stage? These provided insights into group dynamics that may influence leadership approaches employed by NDMN members.

An analytical memorandum was prepared after completing each interview and used to reflect upon emerging ideas and any disagreements and relationships among those ideas generated from the questioning (Maxwell, 1996). These memoranda aided in highlighting unexpected information, updating codes, and determining next steps. Therefore, they served as an ongoing means of data assessment.

Importantly, anonymity was granted to the interviewees. Because the nation and NDMN have relatively small populations, someone familiar with the network membership possibly could identify participants based on the descriptions in the analysis. Hence, caution has been used in reporting data considered too revealing.

Data analysis

Data analysis began with a review of the interview transcriptions, analytical memoranda, meeting notes, and document summary forms. Connections and major issues emerging from this examination were linked back to the research questions. Data triangulation occurred to enhance the likelihood of capturing patterns and themes. It should be noted that a postmodern view of knowledge underpins this research: knowledge is a social construction. The constructivist ontology suggests and values that multiple views of reality exist. Thus, data triangulation is appropriate to ensure those multiple realities are valid and trustworthy within a constructivism paradigm (Johnson, 1997), assisting in obtaining an overall "truth" about the context being studied and validating the integrity and accuracy of the research data (Creswell, 1998; Johnson, 1997; Maxwell, 1996).

In addition to triangulation, credibility checkpoints that served to enhance the study's validity were peer debriefing and member checking (Creswell 1998; Maxwell 1996). Peer debriefing allowed subject-matter experts outside of the investigation to confirm the reliability of the research design, examine the findings, and improve coherence and clarity. Member checking offered interviewees the opportunity to assess the accuracy of accounts incorporated into the final analysis.

By assessing multiple viewpoints and finding agreement among varied sources of information (scholarship, in-depth interviews, websites, internal and external publications), themes were established. For example, when participants were questioned about current network challenges that may be affecting leadership approaches, the vast majority mentioned specific communication mechanisms and group decision-making processes. Corroborating evidence of these issues was located in the literatures, NDMN's annual report, and external reports produced by such agencies as the Overseas Development Institute and US Government Accountability Office. Consequently, communication was a theme related to network operations and leadership styles.

Data analysis was built upon grounded codes. Initial coding was descriptive to help summarize information in the transcriptions and identify related data. Once "tentative ideas about categories and relationships" were developed, analytical coding commenced to solidify the categorization of codes (Maxwell, 1996). Coding continued until information no longer added meaning to the categories, which resulted in three main categories of leadership styles that surfaced within the NDMN.

Reassessment of the interviewees' descriptions and examples of their own and other members' practices and tactics occurred to make certain data existed for each category. Constant comparison of each code took place to ensure consistency of the coding. Thus, an iterative process of considering and refining ideas and reexamining assumptions occurred throughout the research process. As meaningful clusters were determined, data were organized to present a clearer picture of the case being studied.

Findings: the NDMN's blend of leadership styles

The vast majority of respondents offered their own definition of leadership, explained their leadership skills and behaviors, described their preferred leadership style, and commented on other participants' approaches in the network. Based on their narratives, the NDMN exhibits a blend of three primary leadership styles: participatory, directive, and delegative. The NDMN also appears to be generating certain leadership styles based on its shifting structure throughout the disaster management cycle.

Preparedness stage: a participatory leadership style

Several interviewees noted stakeholder unity developed during the initial establishment of the NDMN under the guidance of the Head of government at that time. This official served in a visionary leadership role, working to ensure key stakeholders were involved in the decision-making process. He later expanded the network by forming National and Community Committees to increase involvement of all sectors and local neighborhoods, respectively. This committee structure encourages NDMN actors to make collective decisions about the resources required to perform sufficiently and about necessary plans, such as hurricane and earthquake response, shelter management, and donation policies. The resulting procedural guidelines provide a legal framework for authoritative action in various domains of public responsibility relevant to disaster prevention and management.

Most interviewees indicated a participatory leadership approach continues to prevail during the preparedness stage. Their usage of "participatory" leadership mirrored Crosby and Bryson's description of collaborative leadership. One contributor claimed:

> […] we operate as a team and that persons are dedicated and committed to work so that even outside of these substantive duties, in times of high risk, they are still there.

Another network player supported this by asserting NDMN members have created an atmosphere where teamwork is considered the norm. And, several other respondents highlighted how critical it is to view sharing responsibilities as a means of motivation for the group.

One volunteer aptly depicted himself as a participatory leader:

> To encourage people to work together even in the face of disagreements, a leader is someone that [sic] can weld together different points of view and earn the loyalty of all concerned towards implementation of the specific decision that has been taken.

This statement underscores the need for leaders to entwine various opinions in a way that a shared vision is understood and stakeholders recognize their need for each other.

Although some individuals described their leadership approach in their home agency as transactional, they have accepted and engaged in participatory behaviors in the NDMN to promote open discussion to achieve group consensus. One interviewee nicely conveyed the participatory style that he has witnessed in the network:

> It's a remarkable amount of openness, a remarkable degree of sharing, a remarkable degree of cooperation. And, I think people understood that they were all cogs of a sophisticated piece of machinery. And, the very function of [the NDMN] depended heavily on solidarity and cooperation.

In the setting described above, all delegates have the opportunity to be involved in the network's decision-making process.

On the other hand, a couple of participants declared a collaborative environment is not apparent in the NDMN on too many occasions. They mentioned that clashes have occurred in these open forums because of certain members' personalities and manner of communication. Both also gave examples when meetings were held without their knowledge or smaller groups met without informing the larger network of the issues discussed or the outcomes of the meetings. These representatives elaborated on the inherent tension among some members that have resulted from such actions.

Nonetheless, the NDMN volunteers who exhibit or support a participatory leadership style emphasized the importance of building positive rapport, teamwork, frequent two-way communication, and stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process. A few participants stressed the value of striving to accommodate the needs of others and being empathetic when the occasion dictates. One respondent recollected an experience that signified how participatory leaders must exhibit compassion and provide stakeholders with appropriate assistance to inspire them to accomplish individual and organizational goals. Most explained that the more involved persons are and the more appreciated they feel, the more committed they usually are in carrying out the group's decisions.

Recovery and mitigation stages: a directive leadership style

A NDMN actor offered this definition of a leader that describes the directive approach:

> […] one who can command the respect of the persons working under and can get […] a specific task done within a timeframe [and] can persuade an organization to move in one particular direction as opposed to another by showing the cost of benefits.

Like the member above, many participants primarily talked about clearly articulating policies, procedures, expectations, and recommendations to others in order to achieve the network's goals. They emphasized their preference for making decisions alone due to limited time and for efficiency.

According to respondents, directive leadership permeates the recovery and mitigation stages. One stakeholder recalled several occasions when decisions were made in a "dictatorial fashion." Although more than half of the volunteers revealed they would prefer to be included in all decisions, they acknowledged the necessity for an edit-like approach, at times, to ensure decisions are made and actions are taken in order for the NDMN to move forward.

Notably, few representatives expressed the same urgency for recovery and mitigation issues that they did for preparedness and response. Very few declared their organizations play a significant function during recovery, while only one delegate discussed her agency's role in mitigation efforts. Most interviewees admitted they do not prioritize these stages and rely heavily on the network Coordinator to push recovery and mitigation proposals. In fact, they are dependent on this central player either to perform the bulk of the work or to tell them what to do, permitting this individual a great deal of freedom to make decisions on behalf of the group.

The NDMN takes on a classic network form at these times: a strong central player, some clusters, and a few isolates. At least three members are self-imposed or group-imposed isolates: their organizations have a limited role in the activities related to these stages or to disaster management in general so they curtail their involvement in the NDMN. However, some National Committee Chairpersons and several designated first responders (i.e. protective services) have formed fairly active clusters; they meet and train together year round. Nevertheless, the NDMN Coordinator is the most engaged

member during these two stages and members' reliance on this individual has drastically reduced interaction among many participants, possibly thwarting the formation of dense ties between and among members.

Response stage: a delegative leadership style

The vast majority of respondents' accounts strongly suggested a delegative leadership style dominates the response stage. They indicated such an approach is required to carry out plans so they themselves are not inundated with tasks, embracing both joint decision making and directed reporting.

One volunteer's remarks portrayed the delegative style:

> If I'm on a deadline, I'll say, "Look, this is the deadline. Do you think you can make it?" And then I leave it to you. The next time I hear from you, either you have a challenge so you're coming back to me with it or it's done. I'm not going to be over your shoulder […] micromanaging you, I'm not like that.

This individual stated that by giving people leeway to make decisions, she is showing respect for others' capabilities. Another representative elaborated further on this leadership style; before handing over any tasks, she has made a point of carefully listening to individuals and then will assign the most appropriate responsibilities based on their abilities and interests.

As anticipated by the literature, the NDMN has adopted the ICS for response. Nearly half of the network actors credited the ICS's clear structure, procedures, and role assignments for members working in concert because it helps everyone to know when to switch agency command. The arrangement encourages delegative leadership. It is a networked system that has vertical and horizontal reporting structures to help ensure information is shared often and quickly. Diffusion of information is two-way unlike in the recovery and mitigation stages, thus, providing the NDMN with the capability for improved response. Additionally, some participants pointed out that the majority of volunteers work in hierarchical systems at their home agencies. This may be the reason that the NDMN structure is a more vertically oriented authority arrangement.

However, disaster relief and the delegative leadership style are complicated. As several interviewees discussed, response decisions must be made rapidly which may result in some individuals' perspectives being overlooked. This approach assumes some risk in disaster events: leaders entrust tasks to individuals they presume can manage the circumstances appropriately. Occasionally, this may not be the case. Below is a statement that illustrates this complexity:

> There will always be dissenting voices and so on, but usually it's by consensus that we, this is the route that we are going. Because that is why they try as far as possible to have people higher up in the service so that they can make those decisions because sometimes the decisions have to be made right away. You can't go back and forth asking.

This comment and similar ones revealed several network members prefer some structure in the decision-making process, especially during response. A delegative style recognizes the need for both group discussion and a final arbiter.

For the NDMN, a combination of leadership styles has emerged. Although all three leadership approaches are evident throughout the disaster management cycle, one style appears to dominate each specific stage. A participatory style prevails during the preparedness stage. The majority of interviewees conveyed that a productive,

collaborative environment existed. They recognized the need to work together to develop comprehensive national plans and procedures and to assess the resources and skills that participants bring to the group. For the recovery and mitigation stages, a directive leadership approach has been broadly accepted by the NDMN membership. Most respondents discussed their dependence on the Coordinator to ensure the implementation and continuation of recovery and mitigation initiatives. In response, the NDMN volunteers employ a delegative style. Multiple leaders operate at the national and local levels, engaging in participatory and directive leadership behaviors. Taken together, the network relies more on a transactional rather than transformational leadership style.

Discussion

This study has shown empirically that multiple leadership styles are desirable throughout the disaster management cycle, advancing the work of Hannah *et al.* (2009) by discovering leadership approaches employed by network members outside of the response stage. From the interviewees' narratives, the NDMN as a whole relies on three leadership styles. A participatory leadership approach occurs predominantly in the preparedness stage. Network volunteers interact and meet as a group most often at this time. In these forums, the interviewees have created what Crosby and Bryson (2005) have termed "a shared-power world."

However, a directive leadership style pervades recovery and mitigation. This may be, in part, due to the network structure; the Coordinator is the central player and many participants expect this individual to manage the group's tasks for these stages. Most respondents agreed that limited activity concerning recovery and mitigation issues would occur otherwise. Additionally, Currie *et al.* (2011) have argued the sharing of leadership should increase as the network matures. But, this research challenges that claim. The NDMN is nearing its maturity phase and still few members accept leadership roles or engage in recovery and mitigation initiatives on behalf of the network.

In the response stage, the interviewees revealed the NDMN displays a delegative leadership style, combining transformational and transactional leadership that are crucial in a disaster management context. This supports the literature: people expect leaders to be collaborative in networked settings (e.g. Crosby and Bryson, 2005) and directive in pressure situations (e.g. Hannah *et al.*, 2009). Yet, it does not fully align with scholarship declaring member interactions may have more significance than network structure (Silvia and McGuire, 2010, p. 271). Several volunteers discussed the open forums during the preparedness stage and the ICS in response as key contributors to the network's overall success. Many respondents stated often that they work strategically and operationally together best under this particular structure; the ICS has helped to minimize conflict and enhance group unity during response.

Another important finding indicates the NDMN members' leadership styles mirror the network's arrangement. By blending collaborative and dictating behaviors, participants have created a configuration in which features of a network and hierarchy co-exist; the NDMN's combination of structural elements promotes both adaptability and order. This finding aligns with the literature on the need for hybrid structures for public management networks (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003), particularly those responding to disaster events (Bigley and Roberts, 2001; Canton, 2007). Furthermore, it demonstrates transformational and transactional leadership styles can complement

each other in a dynamic setting. The participatory approach encourages flexibility, while the directive and delegative styles provide stability. This blending of styles can advance and potentially obtain the support for the decentralization required for a NDMN to be effective, as more governments seek to devolve their operations to the local level where the involvement of nongovernmental actors in disaster management initiatives will become increasingly critical.

Yet, as a government-led network, public officials within it can make decisions without consulting group participants. One interviewee offered an example of this when describing the current head of government's decision to dole out assignments to certain members without broader discussion. Provan *et al.* (2007) have argued this sort of unilateral action raises questions about the role that government may play in "shaping and constraining the structure of relationships within interorganizational networks" (p. 507). This is a legitimate question to ask regarding the NDMN. How have the NDMN chairperson, coordinator, and other government officers affected network relationships by employing a directive approach? Closer study of these members' roles and leadership behaviors is needed to address the concerns.

Conclusion

By employing Crosby and Bryson's (2005) schema as a guide and incorporating other relevant literature, this research was able to consider better the leadership styles manifest in a NDMN in the Caribbean. The NDMN presently leans toward a more hierarchical structure. Its composition seems to have evolved in this manner based on the members' predominant leadership styles and on their reading of how to react to changing circumstances. This has been somewhat institutionalized due to the network's use of the ICS.

Nonetheless, a central tension exists regarding how leaders navigate a collaboration in which different leadership styles co-exist. Network members must be able to find and maintain a balance between following an authoritative chain-of-command ladder that allows a few members to make final decisions and encouraging a participatory decision-making process that recognizes each individual's right to offer his or her views. The network manager especially must address the challenge of this duality successfully. This has broader portent. More research is necessary to understand how to manage better the interweaving relationships among diverse stakeholders and to know when certain leadership styles should be employed to maintain an effective hybrid governance network.

Additionally, this research has implications for the Caribbean. Collaborative decision-making gives participants with diverse perspectives an opportunity to deliberate on issues with national implications. The resulting work can influence the political process and improve coordination of relief efforts in the wake of disasters. Thus, it would be beneficial to pursue more data on other Caribbean NDMNs. Understanding the mechanisms that these networks use (Nolte *et al.*, 2012) to engage the for-profit sector, third sector, and private citizens may offer insights into ways to enhance local and regional capacity and develop stronger network systems. This may promote overall social comity and potentially result in more disaster-resilient nations. And, identifying the leadership approaches prevalent in the NDMNs may assist managers and other network members assuming leadership roles in adapting strategies to the group's reigning operational environments and in discerning when to change leadership styles to suit the circumstances and the stakeholders with whom they are interacting.

References

Agranoff, R. (2007), *Managing Within Networks: Adding Value to Public Organizations*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC.

Agranoff, R. and McGuire, M. (2003), *Collaborative Public Management: New Strategies for Local Governments*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC.

Avolio, B. (2005), *Leadership Development in Balance: MADE/Born*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.

Beck, J. and Yeager, N. (2001), *The Leader's Window: Mastering The Four Styles of Leadership to Build High-Performing Teams*, Davies-Black Publishing, Palo Alto, CA.

Benson, C., Twigg, J. and Myers, M. (2001), "NGO initiatives in risk reduction: an overview", *Disasters*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 199-215.

Berke, P. and Campanella, T. (2006), "Planning for postdisaster resiliency" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 604 No. 1, pp. 192-207.

Bigley, G. and Roberts, K. (2001), "The Incident Command System: high reliability organizing for complex and volatile tasks", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 1281-1299.

Binder, A. and Witte, J. (2007), *Business Engagement in Humanitarian Relief: Key Trends and Policy Implications*, Overseas Development Institute, London, available at: www.gppi.net/fileadmin/gppi/ODI-paper-binder-witte-2007.pdf (accessed January 5, 2014).

Bogardus, E. (1934), *Leaders and Leadership*, D. Appleton-Century Company, New York, NY.

Bryson, J. and Crosby, B. (1992), *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared-Power World*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Burby, R. (2003), "Making plans that matter: citizen involvement and government action", *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 69 No. 1, pp. 33-49.

Burns, J. (1978), *Leadership*, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, NY.

Canton, L. (2007), *Emergency Management: Concepts and Strategies for Effective Programs*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ.

CDEMA (2012), Homepage, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, available at: www.cdera.org

Chandra, A. and Acosta, J. (2009), "The role of nongovernmental organizations in long-term human recovery after disaster: reflections from Louisiana four years after hurricane Katrina", occasional paper, RAND Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA, available at: www.rand.org (accessed January 5, 2014).

Creswell, J. (1998), *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, SAGE, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Crosby, B. and Bryson, J. (2005), "A leadership framework for cross-sector collaboration", *Public Management Review*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 177-201.

Currie, G., Grubnic, S. and Hodges, R. (2011), "Leadership in public services networks: antecedents, process and outcome", *Public Administration*, Vol. 89 No. 2, pp. 242-264.

Friedrich, T., Vessey, W., Schuelke, M., Ruark, G. and Mumford, M. (2009), "A framework for understanding collective leadership: the selective utilization of leader and team expertise within networks", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 933-958.

Hannah, S., Uhl-Bien, M., Avolio, B. and Cavarretta, F. (2009), "A framework for examining leadership in extreme contexts", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 897-919.

Johnson, B. (1997), "Examining the validity structure of qualitative research", *Education*, Vol. 118 No. 3, pp. 282-292.

Linden, R. (2002), *Working Across Boundaries: Making Collaboration Work in Government and Nonprofit Organizations*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Luke, J. (1998), *Catalytic Leadership: Strategies for an Interconnected World*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

McDonald, F. (1985), "Establishing a national program of disaster preparedness, mitigation and prevention: the Jamaican experience", *Disasters*, No. S1, pp. 29-33.

Maxwell, J. (1996), *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, SAGE, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Muller, A. and Whiteman, G. (2009), "Exploring the geography of corporate philanthropic disaster response: a study of fortune global 500 firms", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 84 No. 4, pp. 589-603.

Nolte, I., Martin, E. and Boenigk, S. (2012), "Cross-sectoral coordination of disaster relief", *Public Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 6, pp. 707-730.

Provan, K., Fish, A. and Sydow, J. (2007), "Interorganizational networks at the network level: a review of the empirical literature on whole networks", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 479-516.

Silvia, C. and McGuire, M. (2010), "Leading public sector networks: an empirical examination of integrative leadership behaviors", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 264-277.

van Wart, M. (2013), "Lessons from leadership theory and the contemporary challenges of leaders", *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 73 No. 4, pp. 553-565.

Corresponding author
Assistant Professor Tracy Cooper can be contacted at: tracy.cooper@uncp.edu