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Spotlight on Critical Grassroots Public Administration Issues

Accountability in Governance Networks: An Assessment of Public, Private, and Nonprofit Emergency Management Practices Following Hurricane Katrina

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What is the most effective framework for analyzing complex accountability challenges within governing networks? Recognizing the multiscale and intersector (public, private, and nonprofit) characteristics of these networks, an accountability model is advanced organized around democratic (elected representatives, citizens, and the legal system), market (owners and consumers), as well as administrative (bureaucratic, professional and collaborative) relationships. This concept draws from 2005 events following Hurricane Katrina. Multiple failures of governing networks to plan for and respond to Katrina include a breakdown in democratic, market, and administrative accountability as well as a pervasive confusion over trade-offs between accountability types emerging from crises. This essay offers several useful recommendations for emergency management planners as well as for those who teach and research.

The disaster that resulted from the Gulf Coast landfall of Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005, may be understood as the result of multiple failures in the accountability regimes (Mashaw 2006) of the governance networks that were responsible for preparing and responding to it. The disaster exposed "failed systems of engineering, economics, public safety, logistics, recovery, and race relations" (Cigler 2007b, 64). These systemic breakdowns were promulgated by poorly coordinated responses between all levels of government (Ink 2006) and across the public, voluntary, and private sectors (Edwards 2009; Ink 2006; GAO 2006), as well as individual leaders' failures to execute sound, professional judgment (Kettl 2005). Drawing on the plethora of studies of the response and recovery following Hurricane Katrina undertaken since 2005, we argue that Hurricane Katrina exposed some of the biggest breakdowns of governance networks in modern history, and

highlight the need for further theoretical and empirical development of analytical tools to identify and assess how and where failures of accountability lead to failures in performance.

While Hurricane Katrina provides essential lessons regarding emergency management responses to catastrophic disasters, the case also raises questions relating to how accountability functions within governance networks more generally. Certain network characteristics may be said to persist across any interorganizational network implicated in the policy stream. In this paper, we introduce an accountability model that considers the kinds of multisector, cross-jurisdictional, collaborative arrangements often found within governance networks. The first half of the paper introduces this conceptual model. An operational definition of governance networks is provided, drawing links to the existing accountability and network governance literatures.

In the second half of the paper, we apply the accountability framework to a number of studies that were conducted of some of the governance networks implicated in the response and recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina. We discuss how trade-offs between accountability types may have led to failures in network performance and offer some recommendations for emergency management practitioners and policy makers.

Defining Governance Networks

We find interorganizational networks described across much of the policy implementation (Hill and Hupe 2006) and intergovernmental (O'Toole 2000) literatures. Interorganizational networks have also been implicated in the literature pertaining to policy networks (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan

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1997; Rhodes 1997), public–private partnerships (Linder and Rosenau 2000), third-party governance (Salamon 2002), governance networks (Klijn and Skelcher 2007; Koliba, Meek, and Zia 2010; Sørensen and Torfing 2005), cross-sector collaborations (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone 2006), and public management networks (Agranoff 2007). All of these literatures describe networks as possessing the capacity to involve public, private, and voluntary sector actors, often spanning international, national, regional, state, local, and individual levels or planes (Guo and Acar 2005). They also assume that government agencies need not serve as the "lead organization" (Provan and Kenis 2008) or a major "hub" in the network. Governance networks are relatively stable patterns of coordinated action and resource exchanges involving policy actors crossing different social scales, drawn from the public, private, or nonprofit sectors and across geographic levels, who interact through a variety of competitive, command and control, cooperative, and negotiated arrangements for purposes anchored in one or more facets of the policy stream (Koliba, Meek, and Zia 2010).

Many have noted how the shift from a monocentric system of government to a polycentric system of *governance* raises serious accountability challenges (Acar, Guo, and Yang 2008; Behn 2001; Mashaw 2006; Page 2004; Posner 2002; Scott 2006). Because it can no longer be assumed that the state possesses the same kind of authority that traditionally has been ascribed to public organizations, governing these interorganizational networks creates new accountability challenges. These challenges arise when states are displaced as central actors, when market forces are considered, and when cooperation and collaboration is recognized as an integral administrative activity.

Discerning the accountability structures amid the complexity that emerges in cross-sector, cross-jurisdictional arrangements requires us to consider the dynamics at work when the accountability structures of one network actor comingle, compete, or complement the accountability structures of other network actors. As a result of unpacking these dynamics, we may be able to ascertain the extent to which "hybrid accountability regimes" (Mashaw 2006, 118) emerge within governance networks.

A Governance Network Accountability Framework

Accountability may be construed as "the obligation to give an account of one's actions to someone else, often balanced by a responsibility of that other to seek an account" (Scott 2006, 175). Obligations are structured and/or enforced through the adoption of explicit standards and implicit norms (Kearns 1996) and through a recognition and responsiveness to particular individuals, groups, or organizations (Mashaw 2006). Kearns defines *explicit* standards as being "codified in law, administrative regulations, bureaucratic checks and balances, or contractual obligations to other organizations" (1996, 66). In essence, explicit standards are reified "artifacts" that provide stable parameters used to structure coordinated action.

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Such standards often are put into writing and appear as contracts, regulations, laws, performance standards, and formal rules and are explicitly stated within performance measures. Kearns defines *implicit* standards as "ill-defined and, perhaps, shifting notions of what constitutes responsible or appropriate behavior" that "are rooted in professional norms and social values, beliefs, and assumptions about the public interest, the public trust, and how (and to whom) organizational behavior should be explained . . . they can involve powerful sanctions for nonperformance or noncompliance" (1996, 66–67). Implicit norms exist as "theories-in-use" (Argyris and Schön 1996) that rely on the active participation of actors to create, recreate, enforce, and object to them. Implicit norms may be understood as a weaker accountability tool because they are often predicated on tacit knowledge. Implicit standards may include principal–agent norms (Milward and Provan 1998), democratic values (Sørenson and Torfing 2005), policy goals (Stone 2002), and reciprocity and trust (Behn 2001). Those *to whom* accounts are rendered will inevitably prioritize different combinations of policy goals, performance measures, and other desired procedures and outcomes, placing value on and rendering judgment of performance indicators differently (Radin 2006).

Romzek and Dubnick's (1987) model of accountability is arguably the most influential framework used to analyze the accountability structures of governmental organizations. Drawing on a study of the space shuttle *Challenger* explosion, they illustrate four different accountability structures at work within NASA, and among government actors in general: political, legal, bureaucratic, and professional. In their 2 x 2 accountability model, Romzek and Dubnick conjoin four accountability frames to considerations of external and internal control and high and low degrees of control. They suggest that degrees of control may be understood in terms of the strength of ties. Presumably, stronger ties elicit higher levels of control. Within governance networks, the degree of centrality and the relative strengths of the "controlling" entities are often highly contextual and contingent on the positionality of the organizational actors within the governance network.

Table 1 lays out the governance network accountability model that will be introduced and applied in this manuscript. The basic elements of accountably outlined here are applied to eight different accountability types situated within one of three accountability frames.

Within a governance network framework, power is interpreted in terms of the vertical and horizontal nature of relationships between actors "to whom" and "from whom" accountability is being rendered (Bardach and Lesser 1996). Each accountability frame is considered in light of the relational power that exists between actors within governance networks. By building on these assertions, we seek to give shape to the theoretical and practical applications of "narratives of accountability" (Scott 2006) that need to be developed for governance networks. An accountability framework applied to governance networks must account for its democratic anchorage; the possibility that market-oriented businesses, corporations, or firms

Table 1. Governance Network Accountability Framework

Accountability Frame	Accountability Type	To Whom Is Account Rendered?	Strength of Ties	Explicit Standards	Implicit Norms
Democratic	Elected representative	Elected officials	Strong (weaker when "lame duck")	Laws, statutes, regulations	Representation of collective interests, policy goals
	Citizen	Citizens	Weak (stronger during elections)	Maximum feasible participation, sunshine laws, deliberative forums	Deliberation, consensus, majority rule
	Legal	Courts	Strong	Laws, statutes, contracts	Precedence, reasonableness, due process, substantive rights
Market	Shareholder/ owner	Shareholders/ owners	Strong	Profit, performance measures	Efficiency
	Consumer	Consumers	Weak	Consumer law, product performance measures	Affordability, quality, satisfaction
Administrative	Bureaucratic	Principals, supervisors, bosses	Strong	Performance measures, administrative procedures, organizational charts	Deference to positional authority; unity of command, span of control
	Professional	Experts, professionals	Weak (stronger when capacity to revoke licenses exists)	Codes of ethics, licensure, performance standards	Professional norms, expertise, competence
	Collaborative	Collaborators, peers, partners	Weak	Written agreements, decision-making procedures, negotiation regimes	Trust, reciprocity, durability of relationships

are implicated in and by network activity; and the interplay of both bureaucratic and collaborative ties within network structures.

Two familiar dichotomies posed within the public administration and political science fields are useful here: the politics–administration dichotomy (Goodnow 1900) and the distinction between democracy and markets (Stone 2002). That it takes a combination of political and administrative accountabilities to effectively govern public institutions has been a widely accepted assumption in public administration (Appleby 1943). However, the division between political and administrative functions in public administration theory is still widely assumed (see Romzek and Dubnick 1987; Rosenbloom 1983). Stone (2002) draws a distinction between the market and the polis (democracy) as a means of understanding how policy is framed through goals, problems, and solutions. Distinctions between democracy and markets have been interpreted through neoliberal, neocorporate, neoconservative, and critical theory lenses, all of which may be useful in determining the apparent trade-offs existing between them (Miraftab 2005). Out of a recognition of these trade-offs, we construct a three-pronged theory of accountability for governance networks encompassing democratic, market, and administrative frames.

Democratic Frame

Romzek and Dubnick refer to political accountability as responsiveness to the needs and concerns of political constituents and public stakeholders. Political accountability structures rely on public access to governmental decision-making processes directly through open meeting laws, freedom of information acts, maximum feasible participation requirements, and sunshine laws, or indirectly through the representation of elected officials. In essence, political accountability confers the vestiges of "democratic anchorage" on public bureaucracies. The depth and breadth of the democratic anchorage of a governance network is said to depend on the roles of elected officials and public administrators and the extent to which the network

expands the capacity for citizens to access networks and benefit from the outputs and outcomes of network activity (Sørensen and Torfing 2005). In democratic systems, political accountability may be framed as "democratic" accountability through which elected representative and citizens serve as the actors *to whom* accountability must be rendered. The standards and norms used by citizens and elected officials to hold public bureaucracies accountable may be understood in terms of the laws and regulations passed by elected officials, the rights of citizens to exercise their voice, and the kind of norms often ascribed to deliberations about public policy (Stone 2002).

We refine Romzek and Dubnick's sense of political accountability by narrowing in on the critical roles that elected representatives and citizens play, recasting political accountability as the democratic frame through which *elected representative accountability* empowers elected representatives to serve as the principal actors in the legislative and executive branches of democratic governments. Although voted into office by citizens, elected representatives become the principal of public bureaucracies through their powers to allocate resources, mandate certain actions, or monitor the day-to-day administration of the executive branch. Elected representative accountability is built on stronger formal ties that have been established through constitutional law and the separation of powers.

Citizens, by contrast, may directly hold public organizations accountable through the horizontal (and essentially weaker) ties forged through maximum feasible participation regulations, sunshine laws, and deliberative forums. The importance of *citizen accountability* for the democratic frame of governance networks is recognized within the literatures pertaining to citizen participation and public administration (Cooper 1984), deliberative democracy (Fung 2006), participatory governance (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary 2005), and collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash 2007). It has been widely noted that citizens possess relatively weak controls over other

actors operating within a governance network, with their positions strengthened during election periods.

Romzek and Dubnick suggest that a *legal accountability* structure stresses the role that judiciary and quasi-judiciary procedures play in ensuring the execution of sound and reasonable judgments within an organization. Although they differentiate legal from political accountability, we follow Mashaw's (2006) lead in equating legal accountability with a democratic frame of reference. Legal accountability is ensured through laws and other explicit standards such as due process, substantive rights, and legal agreements found in binding contractual arrangements (Rosenbloom 1983). Presumably, all types of organizations and individuals are held to some measure of legal accountability, often predicated on adherence to the "rule of law," constitutional law, civil and criminal laws, and/or legislative mandates. Legal accountability distinguishes itself through the centrality of the legal system and the roles that judges and juries play as principal actors within it. Also, it is important to note that public managers have been recognized as taking on "quasi-judicial" roles as well (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary 2005; Rosenbloom 1983). Legal accountability is mediated through a legal system that can enforce strong measures of control by applying the reified laws that are in place.

Market Frame

A market frame may be understood by differentiating between capital and production markets (Mashaw 2006, 122). The profit-making obligations of businesses dominate private sector accountability structures (Mulgan 2000). In the private sector, accountability applies to owners and shareholders who have rights to call the company's managers to account for the company's performance, and, secondarily, to customers whose main right is to refuse to purchase (Mulgan 2000, 569). Thus, a market frame of accountability may be divided into two distinct but interrelated components: shareholder accountability and consumer accountability (Scott 2006). It should be noted, however, that this interpretation of corporate accountability structures does not take into consideration that a broader interpretation of "stakeholder" accountability exists in U.S. constitutional law (Nace 2005)—the role of labor unions and collective bargaining, and more recent considerations of corporate social responsibility and the "triple bottom line" (Fox, Ward, and Howard 2002).

Legal scholars have advanced the "shareholder primacy norm," through which "[c]orporate directors have a fiduciary duty to make decisions that are in the best interests of the shareholders" (Smith 1998, 278). Shareholders, or in the case of privately owned businesses, owners, are thought to be motivated by the maximization of profit. *Shareholder accountability* calls for the alignment of performance measures with profitability. Shareholder accountability requirements push companies to undertake the most efficient set of practices possible in order to maximize profits. Shareholders and owners exist as principals within the corporate governance structure and therefore, may be said to exert strong control over the operations of the business.

Consumer accountability is a market-based accountability predicated on the ability of consumers to choose between alternative, competing goods or services. Through a consumer's choice or refusal to purchase, the consumer may be understood as holding a corporation accountable. "The central mechanism of this modality is competition. Thus, a standard is set through the interaction of buyers and sellers, which also forms the basis for monitoring and rewarding compliant behavior through loyalty and for punishing deviant behavior through exit" (Scott 2006, 178). Mulgan observes that

> While a customer may hold a private sector provider accountable in the case of a faulty individual purchase or contract, he or she has no general right to demand that the private provider offer services that meet his or her perceived needs. In a competitive market, the main mechanism of responsiveness is consumer choice, the capacity of the consumer to exit to an alternative provider. (2000, 569)

Within the context of governance networks, consumer accountability may be understood within the New Public Management edict to treat "citizens as customers." Existing as atomized individual consumers of goods and services, consumer accountability exhibits relatively weak measures of control.

Administrative Frame

An administrative frame of governance network accountability may be viewed in terms of the vertical and horizontal ties within hierarchical bureaucracies and flatter collaborative arrangements. The administrative frame encompasses the implementation of policies and decisions (Chandler and Plano 1982) and is directed at the relationships between actors who, by virtue of their positional authority within (and across) organizations, interact with each other to achieve some collective ends. The administrative frame focuses on the processes, procedures, and practices that are employed in the administration and management of formally organized social networks. Our chief concern here is distilling administrative relationships down to their basic processes and exploring how accountability may be framed administratively in terms of the dynamics operating between principals and agents, professionals, and collaborators.

Bureaucratic accountability structures are characterized by hierarchical arrangements through which there are clear relationships between subordinates and superiors who rely on the classical principles ascribed to hierarchical, bureaucratic structures such as the "unity of command" and "span of control" (Fayol 1949). These principles may be embodied within the formal operating standards and procedures in place, along with stated rules and regulations. Bureaucratic accountability structures rely on an adherence to intraorganizational rules and procedures and, more informally, "principal–agent" norms (Milward and Provan 1998). This form of accountability stresses the importance of authority embodied in vertically arranged relationships within formal organizations. Individual nonprofit organizations may rely on bureaucratic accountability structures, as do hierarchically arranged businesses. This form of accountability is premised on the capacity of principals to exert strong measures of control over their agents.

Within the context of Romzek and Dubnick's accountability framework, *professional accountability* structures rely on the skills and expertise of "professionals" to inform sound judgments and discretion. They assert that "[p]rofessional accountability is characterized by

placement of control over organizational activities in the hands of the employee with the expertise or special skills to get the job done" (1987, 187). Professional accountability may also be maintained through compliance with profession or industry best practices, rules, or codes of ethics. Professional practice has been equated with ethical behavior, competence, discretion, and responsiveness. Professional accountability is manifested through networked relationships between other professionals and the means by which they associate with one another. Professional accountability is generally premised on the development of weaker measures of control (with the noted exception being the capacity of professions to sanction those in violation of professional codes of conduct or revoke licenses).

Both individual network actors and governance networks as a whole (Agranoff and McGuire 2003) are predicated on the relative strength or weakness of the horizontal ties forged between actors. When two actors enter into a horizontal relationship, they are not beholden to the traditional principal–agent dynamics of vertically arranged relationships. Instead, social network theorists have equated horizontal relationships with cooperative behaviors and norms of trust and reciprocity (Thompson 2003). *Collaborative accountability* binds actors as peers or partners (Mashaw 2006). Acar, Guo, and Yang (2008) refer to the existence of accountability between peers as "partnership" or "community" accountability. Even within the most hierarchically arranged organizations, workers interact with each other as peers or partners organized around collective endeavors, a fact that is particularly documented within the literature on teamwork and small group behavior (Langfred and Shanley 2001) and discussions of "clan governance" (Ouchi 1980).

Horizontal ties may be understood within the context of social capital and the normative foundations of trust that give shape to social networks. Thompson describes how trust is a fundamental norm of social networks, observing that it is "established to precisely economize on transactions costs" (2003, 32). He goes on to add that "trust implies an expected action . . . which we cannot monitor in advance, or the circumstances associated with which we cannot directly control. It is a kind of device for coping with freedoms of others. It minimizes the temptation to indulge in purely opportunistic behavior" (46). However, the application of game theory to the study of cooperative behavior reveals that "the foundation of cooperation is not really trust, but the *durability* of the relationship." Axelrod's study of the iterated prisoner's dilemma underscores the need for networked actors to challenge such behaviors in an effort to bring about cooperative behaviors (1980, 184). He cites how the "durability" of the relationship is built up over time through what he views as a "trial-and-error learning about possibilities for mutual rewards" and imitation of past successful relationships (1980, 182; see also Hanaki et al. 2007). The "reputational capital" of network actors becomes a key element within the establishment of durable, horizontally aligned relationships (Kreps and Wilson 1982). Reputation becomes an important element in the bargaining, negotiating, and mutual adjustment activities undertaken in networked relationships (Morris, Morris and Jones 2007, 95). The capacity of one collaborator to punish a fellow collaborator suggests that horizontal ties may be built on stronger measures of control than previously thought.

We suggest that governance networks will likely draw on a combination of some or all of the accountability types identified here

(summarized in table 1), ultimately creating hybrid accountability regimes (Mashaw 2006). These regimes are structured by the sectoral characteristics of network actors, with state actors bringing with them the democratic anchorage associated with representation and citizenship, and private sector actors bringing a market frame of owners and consumers. These regimes are structured as a complex array of vertically and horizontally aligned relationships, some of which persist through the operational characteristics of bureaucracies and collaboratively arranged social networks. There are substantive challenges to defining the hybridized accountability regimes of governance networks as the aggregate of discrete accountability types. We argue that these discrete types combine, comingle, and compete with each other, often forming the basis of trade-offs. Where trade-offs are evident, confusion over which accountability type trumps another is bound to persist, a point articulated by Romzek and Dubnick (1987). We will now draw on this typology to explore the hybrid accountability regimes at work within the governance networks responsible for the response and recovery activities in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, paying particular attention to the networks used to process requests for assistance.

Accountability and Governance Networks Responses to Hurricane Katrina

The disaster resulting from the landfall of Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005, was estimated in 2006 to cost $96 billion in current dollars of property damage, 1,330 lost lives, and involved the evacuation of 1.1 million people. Eighty percent of New Orleans was submerged under 20 feet of water (Derthick 2007, 37). Studies of the governance networks responsible for the maintenance of the levee system highlight the apparent confusion over who had what authority in maintaining the complex, patchwork levee system (Derthick 2007, 39). Derthick highlights the confusion that existed among the Orleans Levee District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and elected officials over who had responsibility for levee maintenance. It would appear that the failed levee system brings to light the fact that a competent governance network with the chief function of maintaining the levees did not exist in this case.

Derthick observes that some governance networks developed prior to Katrina were effective, particularly the network that put together and implemented the "contraflow" plan that led to the unidirectional flow of traffic out of the city. Between 1 million and 1.2 million people out of a population of 1.4 million were successfully evacuated (Derthick 2007, 38). In the months prior to the landfall, 1.5 million *Louisiana Citizen Awareness and Disaster Evacuation* guides were distributed through media outlets, the Red Cross, and area Walmarts, Home Depots, and Lowes, pointing to a successful public information campaign mounted through a network involving actors from across sectors. The major oversight within the evacuation planning and implementation network was the lack of a plan for the evacuation of residents who had no access to transportation in order to flee the area (Derthick 2007, 38).

Kiefer and Montjoy observe that "[b]y the summer of 2005, several overlapping networks for disaster management were in place in southeastern Louisiana, largely in response to federal stimuli" (2006, 125). At the interstate level, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), essentially the coordinating mechanism between states, mobilized more than 220 different governmental,

nonprofit, and business entities (Kapucu, Augustin, and Garayev 2009). Of the total 66,000 people deployed to the Gulf coast, 6,000 were employed within the first 36 hours of landfall (Waugh 2007, 108). Comfort (2007) estimates that at least 535 different organizations (57 percent of which were public, 16 percent were nonprofit, and 27 percent were private) were involved in at least some aspect of the response and recovery efforts. These statistics do not account for the thousands of individual ad hoc rescuers (Brinkley 2006) and emergent response groups (Majchrzak, Jarvenpaa, and Hollingshead 2007) who risked their own lives to save their fellow citizens (Brinkley 2006).

However, the House Select Committee that studied the processes and procedures used to coordinate and allocate assistance found the response lacking, identifying the following problems:

- Lack of coordination between organizations across all layers and sectors
- Communication failures in faulty equipment, poor system designs, untrained operators, unmet budget requests, lack of planning, and poor management
- Information gaps across departments and between jurisdictions
- Inadequate training, particularly joint training between groups
- Delays in medical care as a result of "deployment confusion, uncertainty about mission assignments, and red tape"
- Underutilization of the private sector, especially with respect to evacuation needs
- Lack of emergency and temporary shelter
- Failure of initiative "at all levels [of government] to take a proactive approach to the crisis" (Ink 2006, 801–2).

Reports distributed by the White House, the House Select Committee, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and some analytical case studies (GAO 2006; Ink 2006; Kiefer and Montjoy 2006; Roberts 2008) all single out the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the "lead organization" during the response and recovery phases of crisis. However, FEMA had lost experienced, professional staff during the lead up to Katrina (Cigler 2007b, 69). FEMA also removed itself from most mitigation and preparation activities associated with hurricane planning in the years leading up to the summer of 2005 (Cigler 2007b). Once Katrina made landfall, FEMA was chiefly responsible for coordinating the flow of supplies and services to the region, including the procurement of buses to be used to remove victims stranded at the New Orleans Super Dome and Convention Center. The buses, however, failed to come because "they had to be procured from contractors all over the country, hundreds or even thousands of miles away" (Derthick 2007, 42). Derthick concludes that "FEMA did not know what it could deliver or when and made promises that were unreliable" (42). This held true not only for the buses, but also for the supplies that FEMA *did* control: generators, food, water, and ice (42). Figure 1 illustrates the standard procedures employed to respond to requests for assistance used during the crisis.

As the lead organization within the response and recovery activities, FEMA was responsible for approving requests and tasking network actors with fulfilling the requests. The Red Cross was responsible for taking the requests that filtered up to it through local government and other voluntary organizations.
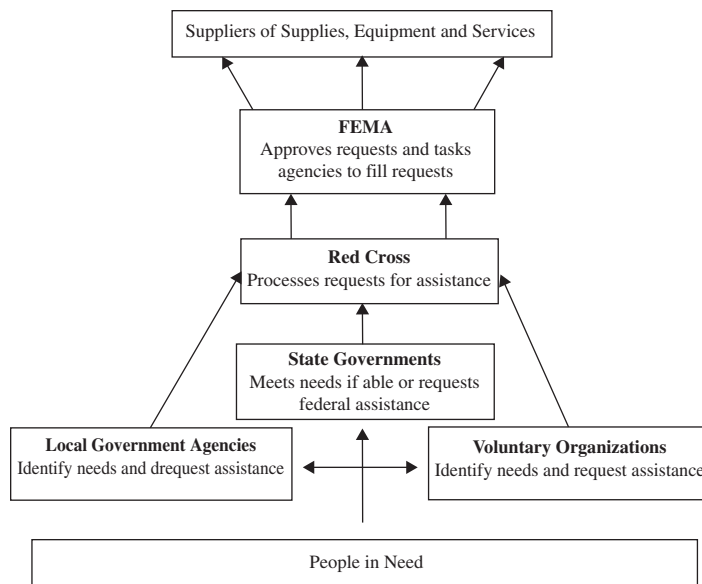
Source: U.S. Government Accountability Office (2006).

Figure 1 Standard Process for Requesting Assistance

A GAO study (2006) of the procedures used to process requests for assistance discussed the relationship between Red Cross and FEMA at length. Each of these findings is described in table 2.

FEMA was not the only coordination node for the flow of supplies and services. The EMAC network, coordinating largely through state-level emergency management agencies and governors' offices, had challenges pertaining to the channeling of supplies and services to the region as well (Kapucu, Augustin, and Garayev 2009). Waugh notes that "[r]equests for assistance were delayed when governors and their staffs did not understand the EMAC system" (2007, 108), adding that "[p]oor communication between state emergency management offices, including governor's offices, local agencies meant poor situational awareness and poor response to local needs. (110). We may view all of these challenges in light of accountability types introduced earlier.

Accountability Failures and Trade-Offs in Governance Networks

This exercise reveals that many of the governance networks responsible for the response and recovery needs following the landfall of Hurricane Katrina suffered from failures in accountability across all types. The general lack of coordination and failure of initiative may be understood as a problem in the *representative accountability* structures at work. Generally, elected officials, federal, state, and local legislatures, and governmental agencies saw other political actors as chiefly responsible for the coordination and initiative needed to successfully respond to the landfall of a Category 4 hurricane (Forgette, King, and Dettrey 2008; Martinko et al. 2009; Schneider 2008). The resulting failure of initiative led to substantive "intergovernmental challenges" (Cigler 2007b). That a disaster of this magnitude had been anticipated, yet local, state, and national elected officials failed to collectively address the visibly crumbling levee system, points to failures in the very checks and balances to be found in a democratic accountability frame.

Table 2 Failures in Request for Assistance: FEMA–Red Cross Relations

- **Failure to clarify roles and responsibilities.** Conflicts arose between FEMA and the Red Cross regarding the role of the FEMA ESF-6 coordinator and to whom the nonprofit Red Cross should report. As a result, the two organizations spent time negotiating operating procedures rather than focusing solely on coordinating mass care services in the early days of the hurricane response effort (GAO 2006).
- **Failure to have a standard process for requesting assistance.** Although the system for processing requests outlined in figure 1 was predetermined, the mechanisms for filtering requests from local governments and voluntary organizations to the Red Cross were not fully developed ahead of time (GAO 2006, 11). The failure to articulate procedures within this stage of the processing system led to a great deal of confusion between actors within the network.
- **Rotation of Red Cross personnel led to a lack of continuity.** The Red Cross relies heavily on volunteer personnel, many of whom take leaves of absence from their workplace to devote time to public service. The average stint for Red Cross volunteers in disasters of this nature range from a few days to a few weeks. Volunteer staff members were placed in key positions within the processing system. With no clear system in place for filtering requests from the public to FEMA, it was left to individual Red Cross volunteers to devise informal means of getting FEMA's attention and seeing to it that requests were processed in a timely manner. As volunteers cycled out of these key positions, their knowledge and investment in seeing that these requests were processed left with them (GAO 2006).
- **Failure to involve Red Cross officials in important policy meetings.** Frequent "policy meetings" were convened within the FEMA command center. During these meetings, FEMA and other key government officials discussed the response and recovery efforts and addressed problems. Although Red Cross officials were allowed to attend these meetings, they were not permitted to participate in them (GAO 2006, 13), resulting in missed opportunities to coordinate responses and engage in joint problem solving.
- **Failure to have predetermined contractual arrangements with providers of emergency goods and services.** The GAO found that "[t]here was inadequate planning and preparation in anticipating requirements for needed goods and services…, a lack of clearly communicated responsibilities for contracting activities across agencies and jurisdictions…[and], insufficient numbers and inadequate deployment of personnel to provide for effective contractor oversight" (GAO 2006, executive summary).

Stivers (2007), Jurkiewicz (2007), and others (Bullard and Wright 2009) have examined the critical roles that institutional racism and classism played in undermining the political authority of the poor, black residents who made up the disproportionately high percentage of the most effected victims. They argue that there is a relationship between the perceived powerlessness of this population and the widespread failure in *citizen accountability*. In essence, poverty and racism led to the social and environmental vulnerability of certain segments of the population, which likely contributed to the weakening of citizen accountability in this case. A number of studies have recently been published looking at the relationship that race and other variables play in shaping how citizens ascribed blame in the case of Katrina. Forgette, King, and Dettrey (2008, 686) found that those who were most environmentally and socially vulnerable to disasters such as Katrina were more likely to ascribe blame for the failed responses to the federal government. Other studies have concluded that citizens' prior partisan affiliations and political ideologies had a great degree of influence over how citizens ascribed blame in both a regional (Forgette, King, and Dettrey 2008) and a national (Malhotra 2008) context. The factors of race, class, and vulnerability, as well as partisanship and political ideology (Gomez and Wilson 2008), complicate the capacity that citizen accountability can play in instances such as these.

The general lack of coordination may also be considered a breakdown in *legal accountability*, particularly when the matter of contracting practices are taken into consideration. Understood within the context of the system used to process requests, the failure to have predetermined contractual arrangements with providers of emergency goods and services in place led to confusion regarding which contractors to work with, how to structure these contracts, and who had authority over them. Ironically, the requirements to follow existing contractual procedures, as in the case of the procurement of buses, suggests ways in which existing legal accountability structures may get in the way of expediency, particularly in times of crisis.

> *Consumer accountability* often does not exist within emergency contexts. Victims seeking assistance often do not have the luxury of finding alternative suppliers of needed goods and services.

The role of the for-profit, private business sector in the response and recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina should not be understated (Cigler 2007a, 4). As victims of and responders to disasters, local businesses and regional and national corporations had a key role to play in providing supplies and services needed for the response and recovery efforts. However, The House Select Committee studying the response and recovery efforts cited failures in the delivery of key resources from private vendors (Ink 2006). Subsequently, reports of profiteering were cited (Dreier 2006). The failure to have predetermined contractual arrangements with providers of emergency goods and services may have exacerbated the problems associated with the sluggishness of response. The systems in place for Gulf Coast states may be compared to those in place in Florida. Kapucu's (2008) comparison of these systems suggests that Florida benefited from predetermined contracts with providers of goods and services. *Shareholder accountability* plays a major role in determining the extent to which private businesses are willing to enter into such agreements. With the proliferation of "just-in-time" inventories, the need to maintain efficient levels of inventories may compete with the need to stock inventories in cases of emergencies (Cigler 2007a). A trade-off between shareholder interests and citizen interests may need to be weighed in this case. Ultimately, distinctions between donated goods and services, and making goods and services available for purchase and contracts should be made.

Consumer accountability often does not exist within emergency contexts. Victims seeking assistance often do not have the luxury of finding alternative suppliers of needed goods and services. There are no means for consumers to "vote with their feet" or pocketbook in cases of emergencies. The inherent monopolies associated with response and recovery efforts essentially render consumers impotent. Institutional racism (Cigler 2007b; Stivers 2007), class and social vulnerability (Forgette, King, and Dettrey 2008; Jurkiewicz 2007), and environmental vulnerability (Forgette, King, and Dettrey 2008) weakened the capacity for the consumers of public goods and service to exercise their individual and collective will.

Breakdowns in the *bureaucratic accountability* structures can be recognized in the general observations concerning the lack of coordination, gaps in information, communication failures, slow delivery of goods and services, lack of clarity about roles and authority, and failure of initiative (Ink 2006). Within the context of the systems used to process requests for assistance, the problematic principal–agent relationship between FEMA and the Red Cross may be cited. The controversy regarding the place of the FEMA ESF-6 (Emergency Support Function) coordinator within the chain of command may be construed as FEMA adhering to bureaucratic accountability structures too rigidly, as the time it took to negotiate this chain of command resulted in serious delays. This phenomenon also appears to be the case in the delays associated with the federal Transportation Security Administration's requirements to screen all equipment, supplies, and personnel that needed to be airlifted into the region (Derthick 2007).

The turnover of key Red Cross and FEMA personnel made it very difficult to sustain institutional knowledge, rules, and procedures. Long-term volunteers tend to go through stages of development that ultimately led to substantial fatigue (Wymer and Starnes 2001). A recent study of the recruitment and retention of Red Cross volunteers in one local chapter suggests that it is only through long-term service that volunteers "appreciate the [broader] organization's mission and principle and find their allegiance to the organization as a whole" (Hustinx and Handy 2009, 202). We can surmise that in situations in which there is a need for a strong command and control structure, giving short-term volunteers with little understanding or appreciation of organizational mission substantial administrative responsibilities is extremely problematic.

The loss of key career emergency management professionals within FEMA was cited as a major challenge facing the response and recovery efforts (Kettl 2005), leading to a breakdown of *professional accountability* structures. A lack of expertise, inadequate training of key emergency management personnel, and the failure of initiative may all be linked to a dearth of professional expertise and, by inference, professional accountability. The turnover in Red Cross and FEMA personnel and, in some cases, the lack of professional expertise of those processing claims for assistance may be viewed in terms of professional accountability.

Garnett and Kouzmin observe that FEMA director Michael Brown failed to "widen his decision circle," exhibiting signs of "group think" (2007, 174). At the same time, the Homeland Security Operations Center and New Orleans Mayor's Office suffered from "information bias" that contributed to poor situational awareness (174–75). A study of the administrative performance of the EMAC in Mississippi and Louisiana found a dearth of professional development training for key emergency management personnel (Kapucu, Augustin, and Garayev 2009, 21). These oversights suggest the failure of certain network actors to involve, and therefore be accountable to, professional emergency management practitioners.

Finally, the failures in the governance networks associated with the response and recovery efforts need to be considered within the context of failures in *collaborative accountability*. The House Select Committee's observations regarding the lack of coordination, communication failures, information gaps, and failures of initiative may

also be considered within the context of the effectiveness of horizontal ties (Ink 2006). Squabbles over jurisdictions and responsibilities may be considered problems between peers or partners (a matter of collaborative accountability).

The failure to clarify roles and responsibilities, as in the case of the ESF-6 coordinator, may be understood as a discrepancy between FEMA and the Red Cross as to which accountability mechanisms were at work. In the traditional command and control system, FEMA edicts regarding its view of the chain of command would not be questioned. However, this arrangement may also be framed as a "partnership," with Red Cross personnel having a say in how best to organize the systems in place to process claims. The GAO's observation that key Red Cross officials were excluded from active participation in important policy meetings coordinated by FEMA suggests conflicting perceptions of the Red Cross's relationship to FEMA. Moynihan's (2009) study of incident command systems is relevant here and may be used as a framework to analyze the proper governance structures needed in times of emergency. With the turnover of Red Cross and FEMA personnel, few opportunities existed for FEMA and Red Cross workers to build cooperative, durable relationships. Recalling Axelrod's iterated prisoner's dilemma, neither party in these exchanges expected to continue interacting with the other. The incentives to cooperate did not exist. Putting people in charge of important roles and functions that require extensive time and follow through into temporary roles would appear to be a recipe for systems failure. In the case of Florida's emergency management system, existing networks of service providers spanning all three sectors are often maintained over time, creating the context for the establishment of durable relationships (Kapucu 2008).

As a result of our application of the governance network accountability framework to the failed responses following landfall of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast, we are left to draw a number of conclusions concerning accountability within emergency management networks.

1. Strike a balance between bureaucratic and collaborative accountability structures in designing emergency management networks. Studies of effective agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard (Baker and Refsgaard 2007) and more resilient regions such as Florida (Kapucu 2008) point to the important role that collaborative accountability plays in emergency management situations. Others have suggested that greater centralization of command in the early phases of emergency response is needed, whether it is understood as a centralized incident command center (Moynihan 2009) or more broadly as an enhanced capacity of the federal government to exert control (Jurkiewicz and O'Keefe 2009). The FEMA and Red Cross arrangements discussed in this article suggest that the effective "mixed-form" governance networks (Koliba, Meek, and Zia 2010) implicated in emergency management situations will be structured through a combination of command and control and collaborative administrative authorities. Such hybridized structures should be clarified and built up over time. Moynihan (2009) describes this as the "network diversity" of emergency response.

2. Focus on developing the collaborative management skills of emergency management professionals. Having interviewed some key emergency management professionals implicated in the response

and recovery efforts pertaining to Hurricane Katrina, Getha-Taylor (2007) underscores the need to focus on improving the collaborative capacities of emergency management administrators and volunteers. She asserts that public managers in emergency management networks need to "lead by example," "focus on relationships," engage in more training in collaborative management skills, and recognize when and where collaboration leads to effective outcomes. It is imperative that collaborative managers operating in emergency management networks become aware of the skills and knowledge needed to build trusting and durable relationships with fellow collaborators, and therefore a more robust governance network.

3. Rethink federalism in emergency management? The accountability challenges associated with the response and recovery networks implicated in Hurricane Katrina have been framed as questions pertaining to federalism (Birkland and Waterman 2008; Roberts 2008). In a recent "Letter to the President-Elect Regarding Katrina," Jurkiewicz and O'Keefe (2009) assert that the political culture of Louisiana is so problematic that strong federal intervention is called for if a repeat of the Katrina disaster is to be avoided. The placement of FEMA in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has been identified as one of the major contributors to the agency's failed performance (Birkland and Waterman 2008; Roberts 2008). Whether FEMA ultimately stays in or is removed from the department, the need to build the agency's collaborative capacity has been widely noted (Edwards 2009; Getha-Taylor 2007; Roberts 2008). Describing what a "new FEMA" must do, Edwards observes that it "must have the capacity to link to state and local agencies and support the increased capacity to handle their own problems" (2009, 66). Birkland and Waterman (2008) distinguish between "exceptional" and "normal" disaster situations, suggesting that a stronger federal role is needed when disasters reach a certain scale. The need to mobilize national resources in order to meet the needs of stricken regions would appear to call for a clearly articulated and implemented federal role built on its capacity to collaborate with states, local governments, nonprofits, and businesses.

4. Have elected representatives avoid playing the "blame game." In a study of citizens' attribution of blame following Hurricane Katrina, Maestas et al. (2008) found that the messages of blame framed by journalists and elected representatives across local, state, and federal government played a significant role in how citizens ascribed blame. They conclude that "in systems where policy in the same area is carried out by multiple levels of government, political actors [elected representatives] have incentives to shift blame to actors at other levels, further complicating the public's task in assigning blame to the appropriate targets" (2008, 609). As long as these kinds of dynamics persist, the capacity of policy makers and public administrators to approach emergency management from the kind of systems perspectives needed is severely undermined.

5. Deepen our understanding of the role of public–private partnerships in emergency management networks. The line between humanitarian aid, purchased goods, and contracted services needs to be more clearly drawn and evaluated based on the hybridized

accountability regimes presented here. The extent to which public–private partnerships are shaped through grants, contracts, or reciprocal partnership agreements needs to be evaluated based on the types of resources each actor brings to the network. Implications for the accountability regimes that guide network activities need to be monitored.

The ongoing conversation within the field of public administration about the lessons learned from the case of Hurricane Katrina has not, until now, been couched in terms of the lack of, or trade-offs between, accountability structures. The clearest demarcation of such trade-offs in this case occurs between bureaucratic and collaborative accountability structures, which may be construed as a matter of vertical versus horizontal alignments. The tensions that arose between the various levels of government as to who had authority and responsibility for what functions may be understood in the context of this trade-off.

Conclusion

Just as Romzek and Dubnick's study of the *Challenger* disaster yielded insights into the accountability frameworks at work within government agencies, we hope that this article has shed light on the complex realities at work within governance networks involving actors spanning sectors and geographic scale. The public administration field has an important and unique role to play within the analysis of all forms of governance networks because of its central concern for the quality of democratic anchorage that exists within and around them. Ascertaining the public value of such networks needs to be considered not only as a matter of qualitatively and quantitatively defined outputs and outcomes, but also in terms of the accountability regimes in place to ensure that the public interest is being served.

By studying the range of explicit standards and implicit norms that shape the hybridized accountability regimes of governance networks, researchers may better understand how accountability structures impact network dynamics. The extent to which the critical actors operating within governance network understand *to whom* accounts need to be rendered can be determined through the traditional tools of observation and survey found in the social sciences. We believe that the governance network accountability framework introduced here can be factored into "agent-based" models (North and Macal 2007). We also believe that the trade-off problems that are apparent here can be modeled as complexity issues because emergent structures and function arise when trade-off preferences are not clearly defined in law, constitution, or practice.

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