

FORMATION AND LIFESPANS OF EMERGENT RECOVERY GROUPS IN  
POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS

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Samantha Lea Montano

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**Title**

Formation and Lifespans of Emergent Recovery Groups  
in Post-Katrina New Orleans

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**By**

Samantha Lea Montano

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with  
North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Jessica Jensen  
Chair

---

Dr. Carol Cwiak

---

Dr. Daniel Klenow

---

Dr. Nicholas Bauroth

---

Approved:

4/1/14  
Date

---

Dr. Daniel Klenow  
Department Chair

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## ABSTRACT

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, numerous groups emerged to address recovery related needs in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes. The phenomenon of emergent groups is widely noted in the disaster literature, but there has been little empirical research focusing on these groups. And, the existing literature discusses emergent groups primarily in the context of response. This study sought to explore the factors related to formation of emergent recovery groups (ERGs) and allow ERGs to have an extended lifespan. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews with founders of twenty ERGs that formed to work in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes. It was found that the factors related to group formation were the same factors that contributed to the continued existence of the ERG including post-event community situational context, unmet needs, a group driver/leader, ability to network, level of integration, and resources.

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## DEDICATION

To New Orleans – her natives, transplants, and admirers.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DRC .....	Disaster Research Center
ERG.....	Emergent Recovery Group
FEMA .....	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GNO .....	Greater New Orleans Area
IA .....	Individual Assistance
IRB.....	Institutional Review Board
IRS .....	Internal Revenue Service
LTRC .....	Long-term Recovery Committee
PA .....	Public Assistance
PDD .....	Presidential Disaster Declaration
PDE.....	Presidentially Declared Emergency

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Following disasters, affected communities require considerable assistance. This assistance is commonly provided by a variety of pre-existing organizations from government, the private sector (i.e., businesses and nonprofits), and individuals. Disaster assistance is also provided by newly formed groups.

Disaster research suggests that the emergence of groups post-disaster is normal and that the assistance they provide is ultimately beneficial to impacted communities. A significant amount of work has noted groups that temporarily form and undertake various response activities—activities intended to save lives, property, and/or the environment immediately after disasters (e.g., groups form to conduct search and rescue in impacted neighborhoods). The fact that groups emerge and undertake recovery activities—activities intended to restore, reshape, and/or rebuild various parts of the community that have been impacted by the disaster (e.g., groups form to rebuild homes)—has been mentioned in the literature, but there has been very little empirical work exploring what leads to the formation of these groups or how long they last.

This study explored both of these gaps in the literature focusing on the formation of emergent recovery groups (ERGs) and factors that led to their continued existence. This study addressed the following specific questions:

1. What factors led to the formation of ERGs post-Katrina?
2. What factors drive the continued existence of post-Katrina ERGs?

The goal of this research is to contribute to the emergency management body of knowledge regarding an overlooked aspect of disaster recovery—emergent groups.

## **Background**

This chapter provides background needed to understand this study's research questions and evaluate the study's significance. First, the impacts from Hurricane Katrina and subsequent events and the context in which they occurred are discussed. Second, the United States recovery system at the time of Katrina is then explained including the role that a variety of individuals and groups must play in recovery given this system. Finally, the concept of emergent groups is introduced in the context of post-Katrina New Orleans.

### **Katrina, Subsequent Events, and Impacts**

Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana as a Category 3 storm on the morning of August 29, 2005. The impacts of the storm were widespread—138 parishes and counties along the Gulf Coast were devastated (Brookings Institution, 2005; Townsend, 2006). The most significant impacts occurred in areas that experienced not just the hurricane itself but also subsequent flooding. At Katrina's peak, a 15-½ foot storm surge funneled between the manmade Intracoastal Waterway and the Mississippi River–Gulf Outlet (Campanella, 2008). The storm surge overtopped some levees and pressured others to the point of breaching (Campanella, 2008; Townsend, 2006) resulting in widespread flooding<sup>1</sup>.

Eighty percent of New Orleans was submerged in up to 20 feet of contaminated floodwaters (Bevc, Nicholls, & Picou, 2010; Townsend, 2006; Waple, 2005). The city's infrastructure and utilities including the, drinking water system, airports, electricity and communication services, and majority of highways were either damaged or destroyed (Townsend, 2006; Waple, 2005). An estimated 1,450 deaths resulted from Katrina and subsequent flooding in Louisiana (Dash, 2010; Jonkman, Maaskant, Boyd, Levitan, 2009).

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<sup>1</sup> Hurricane Katrina can be understood throughout this study to reference both the Hurricane itself and the failure of the federal flood protection system.

Evacuated residents that returned to the city found destroyed homes (Brunkard, Namulanda, Ratard, 2008; McCarthy, Sastry, & Pollard, 2006), a changed job market (Liu, Fellowes, & Mabanta, 2006; McCarthy, Sastry, & Pollard, 2006), and a lack of basic services (Liu & Plyer, 2007; McCarthy, Sastry, & Pollard, 2006).

### **The Context in Which Impacts Occurred**

Under the best of circumstances, New Orleans would have faced a long and complex recovery from these impacts. Recovery is defined as “the differential process of restoring, rebuilding, and reshaping the physical, social, economic, and natural environment through pre-event planning and post-event actions” (Smith & Wenger, 2006, p. 237). Local government bears primary responsibility for managing the overall recovery process in the United States (see for example: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2011; Smith, 2011). And, ideally, local government manages the process in a holistic way that links recovery for individuals and households, organizations, and government and pursues sustainability at each opportunity (see for example: Alesch et al., 2009; Natural Hazards Center, 2005; Smith & Wenger, 2006; Smith, 2011). Yet, due to pre-event vulnerabilities, the city did not have the resources to navigate this process even minimally without considerable assistance much less holistically. Even so, the system recognized the unique nature of Katrina and every organization stretched their every day activities to attend to the event (see for example: Gray & Herbert, 2007; Morris, Morris, & Jones, 2007; Smith, 2011).

The milieu of vulnerability of New Orleans was considerable pre-Katrina. Vulnerability can be understood for the purposes of this study to be the aspects of the ecological, economic, political, social, and constructed environments that render a people and/or place prone to impacts

from a hazard. This definition is consistent with the ideas presented in Bankoff, Frerks, & Hilhorst (2004).

The area evidenced severe ecological vulnerability due to decimated wetlands, a complex and poorly maintained flood prevention system, and the fact that 49% of the city was below sea level (Campanella, 2008). The area also had a fragile economy (Brookings Institution, 2005; Phillips, 2009; Townsend, 2006), a weakened housing market (Brookings Institution, 2005; Phillips, 2009) and crumbling infrastructure (Bevc, Nicholls, & Picou, 2010; Gall & Cutter, 2012; Phillips, 2009; Townsend, 2006). The education (Eargle, Esmail, & Das, 2010; Gall & Cutter, 2012; Hill & Hannaway, 2006; Phillips, 2009) and healthcare systems (Christensen, Weinstock, & Williams, 2006; Gall & Cutter, 2012; Kutner, 2010) were also insecure and inadequate pre-Katrina.

New Orleans was also politically vulnerable pre-Katrina (Brookings Institution, 2005; Gall & Cutter, 2012; LoveKamp, 2010). The city of New Orleans had a history of political corruption and a lack of trust between residents and government officials (Brinkley, 2006; McQuaid & Schleifstein, 2006; Van Heerden & Bryan, 2006). The city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana had long failed to collaborate (Gall & Cutter, 2012; Government Accountability Office, 2010; Smith, 2011) and the entities had a history of fighting over funding and control (Burns & Thomas, 2008). The impacts from Katrina and subsequent flooding combined with the pre-existing vulnerabilities left New Orleans' city government unable to independently manage the recovery process and without the support of the state.

Unfortunately, most residents within the city were in no better a position to go about restoring, reshaping, and rebuilding the parts of their lives that were impacted. It is common for individuals to address disaster impacts with their own resources after disaster and/or resources



from friends and family (see for example: Bolin & Trainer, 1978; Chappell, Forgette, Swanson, & van Boening, 2007; Hurlbert, Haines, & Beggs, 2000; Ibanez et al., 2003; McDonnell et al., 1995). Yet, many, if not most, New Orleans residents were unable to go about the recovery process on their own or with the help of kin.

Post-disaster, individuals can address disaster impacts autonomously by utilizing their savings, investments, insurance payouts, etcetera (see for example: Bolin & Trainer, 1978), but in New Orleans many did not have these resources upon which to rely. Twenty-three percent of the population in New Orleans lived below the poverty line, compared with a national average of 12% (Dash, 2010). There was also extreme racial stratification in poverty rates—84% of blacks in New Orleans fell below the poverty line in 2000 (Brookings Institution, 2005; Dash, 2010). The result of this segregation was that “neighborhoods that were more than 75% black” also tended to be areas of concentrated poverty (Dash, 2010, p. 109). And, the city’s minorities and renters lived in some of the most ecologically vulnerable parts of the city. As Dash (2010) wrote, “almost three fourths of minority residents and little over half of renters lived in the floodplain.” (Dash, 2010, pg. 108). Thus, many New Orleans residents who suffered the worst impacts due to where they lived did not have resources for recovery activities.

Social networks of friends and family that individuals might normally turn to for assistance in hard times were damaged by the storm. Research has shown that when an individual’s kin network is widely distributed geographically (see for example: Airries, Li, Leong, Chen, & Keith, 2008; Beggs, Haines, and Hulbert, 1996; Messias, Barington, & Lacey, 2012) and not densely concentrated (see for example: Airries, Li, Leong, Chen, & Keith, 2008; Beggs, Haines, and Hulbert, 1996), the network is more likely to be a source of post-disaster assistance for the individual. Kin networks were highly concentrated and not widely distributed

in New Orleans, (Forgette, Dettrey, Van Boening, & Swanson, 2009). In fact, multiple generation households were common (Phillips & Jenkins, 2008). Thus, multiple individuals within kin networks were themselves significantly damaged and were therefore unable to be a significant source of assistance for many individuals impacted by Katrina.

Neither the city of New Orleans nor many of the individuals within it were in a position to engage in recovery alone. Considerable assistance would be required; and, it would need to come from many sources. These sources included ERGs.

### **Recovery Assistance in the United States**

The United States evidences what Comerio (1998) terms “a limited intervention model” of recovery assistance. Nations that reflect the limited intervention model provide limited assistance from the federal/national level to lower levels of governments impacted by disaster. There is an expectation that individuals and households will exhaust their own resources before government intervenes.

After most events in the United States, the federal government provides no assistance to impacted local and state governments even when assistance is requested (Smith, 2011). It is only in rare instances relative to the total number of events that occur in the United States each year that formal federal assistance is made available through what is known as a Presidentially Declared Emergency or Major Disaster (PDE or PDD, respectively) (Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). Most of the assistance made available through these declarations is for emergency measures taken to save lives, property, and/or the environment when the event is imminent or immediately after impact (Sylves, 2008). Typically little assistance is provided for recovery (Liu, 2010; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). When assistance is provided for recovery the majority is directed toward debris management and rebuilding government buildings, services, and public

infrastructure (Liu, 2010; Sylves, 2008). Moreover, federal aid can only be used to return what has been impacted to its pre-disaster state—no better (Liu, 2010; Sylves, 2008).

It is uncommon for Individual Assistance (IA) to be provided in the wake of disasters. When IA is provided, it is limited in amount and what it addresses (see for example: Bolin & Trainer, 1978; Smith, 2011; Sylves, 2008). When federal assistance is made available to individuals, there is often a gap between the impacts, individual's experience, and the aid provided (Morrow, 2000; Phillips, 2009; Smith, 2011; Zarkour & Harrell, 2003).

This recovery system was available post-Katrina. Assistance through a PDD was made available to the city for both emergency measures and recovery needs; and, assistance was made available to individuals. Yet, the assistance available was not adequate and the amount, timing, and management of the assistance to government has been critiqued. Federal recovery assistance in the wake of Hurricane Katrina has been described as counterproductive, uncoordinated, inconsiderate of local needs, and more (Gall & Cutter, 2012; Liu, 2008; Smith, 2011; Smith & Wenger, 2006; Westrum, 2006). And, the assistance for individuals and households has been described as overly bureaucratic, inflexible, time consuming, and confusing (Liu, 2010; Norris-Tirrell & Clay, 2006; Smith, 2011).

The needs left unaddressed after federal assistance was provided were always going to be many and deep. Unmet needs were related to individuals and households (see for example: Bolin & Stanford, 1998; Boris & Steuerle, 2006; Chandra & Acosta, 2009; De Vita 2008, Kapucu, 2007, Phillips & Jenkins 2008), the environment (see for example: Evans-Crowley & Zimmerman-Gough; Phillips, 2009), and historical and cultural restoration (see for example: Al-Nammari, 2008; Spennemann & Graham, 2007), to name a few. Yet, as Comerio (1998) pointed out, the recovery system was not designed to be comprehensive or to make impacted

communities and the individuals within it whole—the United States’ approach is a limited one. The system assumes that there will be needs not met by the federal government and that these needs will be addressed by a combination of individuals and organizations (Smith, 2011).

In fact, it is common for individuals to help after disaster (see for example: Barsky, Trainor, Torres, & Aguirre, 2007; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980; Fernandez, Barbera, & van Dorp, 2006a, 2006b; Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2002; Lowe & Fothergill, 2003; Smith, 2011). It is also common for businesses to become engaged giving financial and in-kind donations (see for example: Crampton & Patten, 2008; Muller & Whiteman, 2009; Neal, 1994; Zhang, Rezaee, & Zhu, 2009) and to contribute to the work of rebuilding communities (see for example: Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2008; Smith, 2011). Additionally, a wide range of pre-existing nonprofits become active in supporting recovery (see for example: Auer & Lampkin, 2006; Chandra & Acosta, 2009; De Vita et al., 2008; Fremont-Smith, Boris, & Steuerle, 2006; Gajewski, Bell, Lein, & Angel, 2011; Palttala, Boano, Lund & Vos, 2012; Phillips & Jenkins, 2008; Pipa, 2006). The literature also suggests that new groups that did not exist pre-disaster form to address disaster-related needs (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Form & Nosow, 1958; Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a, 1984b; Taylor, Zurcher, & Key, 1970).

### **Emergence**

For the purposes of this study, emergence can be understood to be a post-disaster phenomena wherein a behavior, task, activity, structure, or group that did not exist pre-disaster is developed to meet a perceived, or actual, unmet need. The focus of this research will be on just one aspect of this definition, emergent groups, specifically, ERGs. Formation of an ERG can be understood to mean multiple individuals coming together post-disaster working together on recovery tasks directed towards a common goal. Preliminary research has been conducted on

emergent groups; yet, there are a number of shortcomings associated with this preliminary research. First, there is insufficient research focusing on emergent groups in disasters (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980; McEntire & Drabek, 2002; Quarantelli & Stallings, 1985; Smith, 2011). Second, the research that exists on emergent groups has focused on those that form to address immediate needs to save people, property, and/or the environment in the wake of the event (i.e., emergent response groups) as opposed to those that form to address needs related to restoring, reshaping, and/or rebuilding that which has been damaged or destroyed by a disaster (i.e., ERGs). Third, the methodology of existing research is of varying quality. Thus, research has yet to repeatedly and systematically examine the factors that lead to the formation and/or lifespans of ERGs; and, the focus of this study is both warranted and needed.

Post-Katrina New Orleans is an ideal setting to begin research on this topic. The impacts from Katrina, the pre-existing vulnerabilities of the city and people within it, and limited federal recovery assistance in the face of significant need suggested that a wide variety of individuals and groups would need to be engaged in meeting disaster-related needs. Among the groups that became involved were ERGs. The literature has noted the presence of emergent behavior and groups related to response activities post-Katrina (see for example: Rodriquez, Trainor, & Quarantelli, 2006) and has even mentioned the emergence of groups with respect to recovery (see for example: David, 2006; Irazabal & Neville, 2007; Smith, 2011). This literature suggests that a significant number of ERGs may have formed as a consequence of Hurricane Katrina to address Katrina-related needs. This research found that ERGs did indeed form post-Katrina as the literature suggested. Representatives of the ERGs that formed post-Katrina were able to provide rich, deep data regarding how their respective ERGs formed, what their groups looked like, and what characterized the lifespan of their group.

## **Significance**

As has been demonstrated, post-Katrina New Orleans was an ideal case study for examining ERGs. Significant unmet needs resulting from widespread losses combined with a limited and insufficient government recovery system made a variety of organizations—including emergent groups—critical players in meeting the shortfall. Yet, there was a lack of research on how ERGs emerge, particularly within the context of recovery, and what leads them to continue to exist. This research began to fill this gap in the literature.

It is hoped that the findings of this exploratory research will facilitate discourse among disaster researchers and emergency management educators about the topic of ERGs and that it has provided a foundation for future research. The findings of this research can also, potentially, help local government emergency managers and the communities they serve by providing information about when these groups may form, the activities in which they may engage, and what makes them last. It is hoped that local governments might use this information to plan for the emergence of recovery groups and integrating them into the community's overall recovery post-disaster.

## **Conclusion**

A diverse array of groups formed to address the overwhelming array of needs left in the wake of Katrina. This research sought to address a gap in the literature by exploring the conditions that lead to the emergence of ERGs and the factors that lead to their continued existence. The second chapter presents the theoretical foundation for this study. The third chapter outlines the research design for this study. The fourth chapter describes the characteristics and types of ERGs in the study. The fifth chapter discusses the findings related to the factors of ERG formation. The sixth explains the factors related to the continued existence of the ERGs in this study. Chapter Seven discusses how the findings of this study expand knowledge about ERGs.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two reviews the theoretical foundation for this study. The first section discusses emergence as a post-disaster phenomenon. The second section discusses conditions that facilitate the formation of emergent groups. The third section reviews the characteristics of emergent groups once they form. The fourth section outlines the research on the lifespans of emergent groups. The final section critiques and identifies gaps in the existing literature on the topic of emergence.

### **Post-disaster Collective Behavior**

Social science research on collective behavior after disasters began in the 1950s. Military and defense organizations were concerned about how they might best go about controlling the populace in the wake of a domestic attack stemming from WWII (Quarantelli, 1987). Social science researchers received funding from the organizations to explore collective behavior under stress in disasters based on the assumption that their findings could be extrapolated to human behavior after a domestic attack (Quarantelli, 1987). Contrary to the expectations of military and defense organizations, research did not find that people needed to be protected from themselves or each other post-disaster. Humans were not found to panic or engage in widespread looting or other forms of anti-social behavior as had been expected (see for example: Auf der Heide, 1989; Barton, 1969; Drabek & McEntire 2002, 2003; Drabek, 1986; Fischer, 1998; National Research Council, 2006; Tierney, Lindell, & Prater, 2001).

People seemed to engage in primarily pro-social behavior after disasters. In fact, after most disasters a temporary period was identified wherein people helped one another and engage in pro-social behavior (see for example: Barton, 1969; Casper, 2011; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980; Mileti, 1989; Quarantelli, 1986; Quarantelli, & Dynes, 1987; Rodriguez, Trainor, & Quarantelli,

2006; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Stephens, 1997; Wenger, 1992). People appeared to help one another without regard for pre-disaster social divisions (see for example: Menninger, 1952; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1972; Thompson & Hawkes, 1962) and on the basis of significant consensus regarding what should be done and in what order post-disaster (see for example: Dynes, 1970; Fritz, 1996; Wenger & Parr, 1970). This temporary period came to be known as the “altruistic” or “therapeutic” community (Barton, 1969; Dynes, 1970; Fritz, 1996; Fritz & Mathewson, 1958; Martin, 1964; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1976).

Two sub-phenomena have been found to be associated with the therapeutic or altruistic community post-disaster—convergence and emergence. Researchers suggest that both sub-phenomena are normal and natural parts of the post-disaster environment (see for example: Barton, 1969; Destro & Holguin, 2011; Fernandez, Barbera, & van Dorp, 2006a, 2006b; Forrest, 1978; Lowe & Fothergill, 2003; McEntire & Drabek, 2002, 2003; O’Brien & Mileti, 1992; Perry & Lindell, 2003; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1985b; Wenger, 1991, 1992). It has been noted time and again that, after disasters, people, materials, and information converge from within, and areas surrounding, the impact zone with the intent to help (see for example: Auf der Heide, 1989; Barton, 1969; Drabek & McEntire 2002, 2003; Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980; Fischer, 1998; Fritz & Marks, 1954; Fritz & Mathewson, 1957; National Research Council, 2006; Tierney, Lindell, & Prater, 2001). Another manifestation of therapeutic or altruistic communities is the formation of emergent groups (see for example: Bardo, 1978; Campbell, 2009; Drabek, 1987; Dynes, 1970; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Quarantelli, 1996; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Scanlon, 1998; Sutton, 2002; Tierney & Dynes 1994).

Ample references to emergent groups can be found in field studies throughout the past century (see for example: Anderson, 1970; Bates, et al., 1963; Form & Nosow, 1958; Fritz,



Rayner, & Guskin, 1958; Jagoda, 1980; Kendra, Wachtendorf, & Quarantelli, 2002; Mussaru, 1974; Prince, 1920; Quarantelli, 1979; Taylor, Zurcher, & Key, 1970; Wolensky, 1980). The groups form through a social process wherein individuals interact to determine what has occurred, what the needs are, and how they collectively might address them (Kreps & Bosworth, 1994; Forrest, 1978; Neal & Phillips, 1995; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The groups then engage in addressing one or more unmet needs using a structure to organize themselves that had not existed pre-disaster. Research identified the hallmarks of emergent groups as including

- 1) *ephemeral in nature* (Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Smith, 1997; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Voorhees, 2008);
- 2) *did not exist pre-disaster* (Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Fritz, Rayner, & Guskin, 1958; Stallings, 1978);
- 3) *developed a post-disaster structure* (Drabek, 1986; 1987; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Forrest, 1978; Smith, 1997; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985); and,
- 4) *developed to address a function that other organizations were not addressing, or at least not adequately given the extent of need* (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Forrest, 1978; Form & Nosow, 1958; Fritz, Rayner, & Guskin, 1958; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings, 1978; Wenger, 1992; Zurcher, Taylor, & Key, 1970).

Over time, the term emergence came to be applied to more than just groups.

Research focusing on how pre-existing organizations respond has found that various kinds of emergence occur within them. It is now thought that any pre-existing organization might develop new structures to contend with disaster-related issues (see for example: Brouillette & Quarantelli, 1971; Dynes, 1970, 1974; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Dynes & Tierney, 1994;

Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2002; McEntire & Drabek, 2002; Quarantelli, 1966; Quarantelli, 1984a; Wachtendorf & Kendra, 2004; Wenger, 1987). They might engage in emergent tasks that they had not planned to address pre-disaster using tools they may or may not have planned to use (see for example: Brouillette & Quarantelli, 1971; Dynes, 1970, 1974; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Forrest, 1974; Mendonca & Wallace, 2004; Mendonca, Beroggi, & Wallace, 2001; Quarantelli, 1984a; Webb, 2004; Webb & Chevreau, 2006). Individuals within the groups might engage in emergent roles they never had, or, at least, never had planned to, previously (see for example: Kreps, Bosworth, Mooney, Russell, & Myers, 1994; Webb, 2004; Webb & Chevreau, 2006).

The emergence within the groups may be intended to reproduce a structure no longer available or accessible, adapt a structure or task in light of the post-disaster environment, or to innovate a solution to an unforeseen issue (Wachtendorf, 2004). Coordinating networks might also emerge across some or all of the organizations involved in response (see for example: Drabek, 1983; Drabek, Tamminga, Kilijanek, & Adams, 1982). Based on this evolving understanding of emergence, the concept can now be understood to be a post-disaster phenomenon typified by the development of a behavior, task, activity, structure, or group to meet a perceived, or actual, unmet disaster-related need.

### **Emergent Groups**

Emergent groups engage in a variety of activities (Dynes, 1970; Drabek, 1986, 1987; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Forrest, 1978; Smith, 1997; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Their activities typically fall into three categories: damage assessment, operations, and coordination (Dynes, 1970; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Groups frequently form to collect and distribute information regarding disaster impacts. Individuals also commonly form groups to engage in activities such as search and rescue,

distributing food, and assisting with sheltering (Stallings, 1978). Finally, groups may emerge to help address the overall coordination of response in the community. Often, coordinating groups will include representatives from pre-existing organizations and will act as a forum for these pre-existing organizations to communicate (see for example: Dynes, 1970; McEntire & Drabek, 2002; Quarantelli, 1984a; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The activities of emergent groups in emergency times have been found to be predominately beneficial to the communities they formed to serve (see for example: Auf der Heide, 1989; Barton, 1969; Drabek & McEntire 2002, 2003; Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980; Fischer, 1998; Fritz & Marks, 1954; Fritz & Mathewson, 1957; Fritz, Rayner, & Guskin, 1958; Mileti, 1989; National Research Council, 2006; Quarantelli, 1984a; Tierney, Lindell, & Prater, 2001; Wenger, 1992). The aforementioned activities appear to be associated with response—or the period following a disaster where in actions are taken to save lives, property, and/or the environment. It would seem that the activities are not all applicable to recovery—or the process of restoring, reshaping, and rebuilding that which was impacted by the disaster.

### **Conditions for Group Formation**

The literature suggests that a range of factors are related to the formation of emergent groups. The factors fall into two broad categories including those associated with the post-disaster environment and perceptions of the individuals that form the groups. The literature would suggest that the greater the number of conditions present after a disaster, the greater the number of groups that will emerge. It must be noted that the literature does not differentiate between conditions that lead to emergent response group and ERG formation.

When certain conditions are present in post-disaster environments, groups are more likely to emerge (Dynes, 1970; Quarantelli, 1987). Specifically, the likelihood of emergent group

formation increases as associated impacts increase (Dynes, 1970; Kreps, 1978; Neal, 1983; Quarantelli, 1980, 1984a, 1984b, 1995; Stallings, 1978), inter-organizational coordination decreases (Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Palmer & Sells, 1965; Parr, 1970; Quarantelli, 1966; Stallings, 1978), authority lapses (Drabek, 1986; Palmer & Sells, 1965; Parr, 1970; Quarantelli, 1966; Stallings, 1978), and demands exceed response capabilities in impacted jurisdictions (Auf der Heide, 1989; Palmer & Sells, 1965; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b, 1995; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Inadequate inter-organizational coordination may be due to organizations failing to accomplish tasks (Auf der Heide, 1989; McEntire & Drabek, 2002; Parr, 1970; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Wenger, 1992), communicate (Parr, 1970), share information (Quarantelli, 1966; Stallings, 1978), or refusing to collaborate (Parr, 1970). An absent or insufficient authority structure may include a lack of a command post to coordinate the scene (Parr, 1970), confusion or disagreement over a legitimate source of authority (Barton, 1969; Parr, 1970; Quarantelli, 1984a), or the failure of authority figures to acknowledge the problems that exist (Quarantelli, 1984b). The combination of hazard- and response-generated needs may overwhelm the existing response structure (Dynes, 1970, 1983; Dynes and Tierney, 1994; Forrest, 1978; Majchrzak, Jarvenpaa, Hollingshead, 2007; Neal and Phillips, 1995; Parr, 1970). Pre-existing organizations may themselves be impacted or unable to act (Parr, 1970), disaster-generated tasks that cannot be met by existing organizations may occur (Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Dynes, 1970; Parr, 1970; Quarantelli, 1966; Scawthorn & Wenger, 1990), or there may have been too few organizations in the community pre-disaster (Parr, 1970; Quarantelli, Dynes, Haas, 1966). A lack of prior experience (Bardo, 1978; Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Palmer & Sells, 1965; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a), preparedness (Bardo, 1978; Drabek, 1986; Palmer & Sells, 1965; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a), and planning (Drabek & McEntire, 2002;

Parr, 1970, Quarantelli, 1984a; Scawthorn & Wenger, 1990) can also contribute to an overwhelmed response structure.

Second, community perceptions of the situation and how it is being handled can contribute to group emergence. The perception most strongly related to group emergence is that an unmet need exists, regardless of why (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Form & Nosow, 1958; Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a, 1984b; Zurcher, Taylor, & Key, 1970). There is often a belief that the unmet need requires immediate action (Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a) and is not being addressed or not being adequately addressed by pre-existing organizations (Auf der Heide, 1989; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985, 1987). Disagreement with the actions, or inactions taken by pre-existing groups (Neal, 1983; Phillips, 1993; Quarantelli, 1984, 1987; Simile, 1995), feelings that existing groups do not hear the needs of the community members (King & Stivers, 1998; Neal & Phillips, 1995; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b), or a shared negative perception of existing groups (Neal, 1983) may contribute to the perception of unmet needs. Community members may feel a collective responsibility to assist in meeting the need(s) (Armstrong & Rosen, 1986; Bolin & Bolton, 1986; Marincioni, 2001; Quarantelli, 1996; Wenger, 1992; Woelfel & Fink, 1980) or a desire to seek ownership of the situation (Berke & Beatley, 1997).

### **Characteristics of Groups Once Formed**

There has only been one systematic, empirical study of characteristics related to emergent groups (i.e., Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b). Some characteristics can be established based on the study as well as observations that have been mentioned in case studies of disasters. The characteristics can be categorized into those related to group membership, internal structure, and external coordination. It has been noted wherever a distinction was made between the characteristics of emergent response groups and other emergent groups.

Emergent groups vary greatly in size. Groups active in response tend to be small with many only having five or so members (Dynes, 1970; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Emergent groups in non-emergency times also tend to be relatively small in nature, averaging around 100 total members (Quarantelli, 1984b, 1986; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Groups members usually share an understanding of what needs to be addressed and how (Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry 1974, 1975, 1976). Members of emergent groups are typically from the local area impacted by disaster—depending on the goals of the group the members may be neighborhood- or community-based (Dynes, 1970; Quarantelli, 1986b; Wenger, 1992). When members of emergent groups are “local,” there is a strong sense of place, members start with local knowledge and continue to gain more through their involvement in the group, and members will stay longer in the community (David, 2006; Wenger & James, 1994).

Generally, minorities are not well-represented in emergent groups (Quarantelli, 1984b). Emergent response groups have varying demographics, while groups in non-emergency times have distinct characteristics (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The core members of ERGs tend to be white, middle-class women between the ages of 30 and 40 years old (David, 2010; Fritz, Rayner, & Guskin, 1958; Neal & Phillips, 1990; Quarantelli, 1984b).

A group of dedicated members who have a special interest in the success of the group form the core of the organization. These members are likely to be the first to join, dedicate the most time to the group, and remain active longer than the other types of members (Quarantelli, 1984b). The core members tend to do most of the group’s work, have a clear division of labor, and highly specific tasks (Quarantelli, 1984b). Supporting members supplement the efforts of the core members who rely upon them to accomplish specific tasks. Supporting members may or may not consider themselves to be active members of the group; and, the extent to which they

participate with the group varies (Quarantelli, 1984b). Other individuals associated with emergent groups are what Quarantelli (1984b) terms “nominal supporters”. These individuals do not identify as group members but fulfill some need within the group by offering “expertise, information, and resources” (Quarantelli, 1984b, p. 24).

Emergent groups are not structured like pre-existing groups largely due to the fact that they do not have a formal organizational structure when they first form (Dynes, 1970). The extent to which they self-organize depends in large part on the task at hand, the external environment, and the group’s lifespan – the longer they exist the more likely they are to develop an organizational structure (Campbell, 2009; Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1984b). Some groups never formalize a structure (Dynes, 1970; Quarantelli, 1984b). They are temporary, have fluid boundaries, and often lack a chain of command or clear division of labor (Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1984b; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The absence of a rigid organizational structure allows emergent groups to be flexible (Casper, 2011; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Wachtendorf & Kendra, 2004); however, the lack of clear structure can pose challenges to inter-organizational coordination and clarity of authority within the group (David, 2006; Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1984b; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Wenger, 1992). The emergent groups do not have the same structures that pre-existing groups have and they have not had the benefit of pre-planning or other opportunities to become familiar with pre-existing group structures. For these reasons, emergent groups may find it difficult to work with other involved organizations, groups, or public officials and vice versa.

### **Lifespans of Groups**

Researchers typically describe emergent groups as forming and disbanding quickly (Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Forrest, 1978; Stallings, 1978). The lifespan of emergent groups

includes four phases: 1) origination/formation (Campbell, 2009, Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1984b; Ross, 1980; Saunders & Kreps, 1987), 2) legitimization (Quarantelli, 1970, 1984b; Ross, 1980) 3) institutionalization (Campbell, 2009; Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976; Quarantelli, 1984b; Ross, 1980), and 4) suspension (Saunders & Kreps, 1987; Taylor, Zurcher, Key, 1970). There is little quantification of the lifespans of these groups overall much less with respect to the individual phases.

It seems that the groups emerge and formalize, at least with respect to the core members of their group membership (Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry 1976), while continuing to evolve their shared ideology (Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry 1976). At some point, the group may develop a semblance of a formal organizational structure (Forrest, 1978; Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry 1976; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The group may become legitimate, i.e., recognized as a group by other organizations (Quarantelli, 1970; Ross, 1980; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). This is often coupled with visibility, sometimes with the assistance of the media (Quarantelli, 1987; Weller & Kreps, 1970). The group may or may not be institutionalized, or considered a new organization (Campbell, 2009; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985) that takes on the characteristics of volunteer organizations, pressure groups, public interest groups (Campbell, 2009; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985).

There is great variation in the length of existence of emergent groups (Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Suspension of the group can occur over any span of time (Kreps, 1983) from a few days to many years (Campbell, 2009). Some groups disband when the tasks have been achieved, needs are met, or are goals accomplished while others evolve their goals and continue to seek to meet needs related to them (Dynes, 1970; Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976;



Stallings, 1978). The potential to evolve goals seems more likely among groups that institutionalize (Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976).

The literature extensively identifies emergent groups as ephemeral and unlikely to institutionalize (see for example: Campbell, 2009; Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Forrest, 1978; Stallings, 1978). Of course, emergent response groups form to undertake ephemeral tasks so the idea that they might never institutionalize is unsurprising; as is the idea that institutionalization among emergent groups in preparedness or recovery is much greater since the activities they undertake may continue for a longer amount of time or require institutionalization.

Although there is some semblance of linear movement through these phases, groups may disband when the task is over (Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1974; Stallings, 1978) and groups do not necessarily follow the order presented here. The shared ideology (Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976; Lucas, 1969), the evolving structure (Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976), and membership (Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976) represent moving parts, the interaction of which, are hard to anticipate at any given time (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Moreover, a variety of resources seem to influence how a group moves through these phases including whether they have the space and equipment required to accomplish their activities (Quarantelli, 1984b, 1987), leadership (Forrest, 1978), prior social networks (Dynes, 1970; Neal, 1983; Quarantelli, 1966, 1987) including neighbors, kinship, and friendships (Neal, 1983), interaction with other organizations involved in addressing disaster needs (Perry, Gillespie, & Mileti, 1976; Quarantelli, 1987; Stalling & Quarantelli, 1985), knowledge and information (Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a, 1987) in terms of previous disaster experience (Quarantelli, 1987), specialized knowledge among group members (Dynes, 1970; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b), members with knowledge of structural organization (Forrest, 1978), and access to individuals with key knowledge or

information (Quarantelli, 1984). Relatedly, research has found that the media can be an important influence on emergent group lifespan, in terms of providing information about the situation and potential needs to members of emergent groups and in terms of having media recognize the emergent group (Quarantelli, 1987; Weller & Kreps, 1970).

### **Critique of the Literature**

There are a number of problems with the existing literature on emergent groups. First, there are several issues related to the conceptualization. There is no adherence to any one definition of emergent groups across the literature. Definitions of emergent groups typically refer to emergent groups in only response, i.e., emergency times (see for example: Bates et al, 1963; Form & Nosow, 1958; Quarantelli, 1984a; Taylor, Zurcher, & Key, 1970). And, while a few researchers offer definitions of emergent groups during non-emergency times (see for example: Quarantelli, 1984b; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985), these definitions are not widely accepted or even commonly noted. Additionally, the characteristics of emergent groups have remained loosely defined. For example, many authors include only citizen groups under the heading of emergent groups, while others refer to both citizen and governmental emergent groups without distinguishing any potential implications (see for example: Green & Ireland, 1982; Neal, 1982; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b). Furthermore, there is significant variation in the terms used to discuss these groups throughout the literature including for example spontaneous organizations, emergent citizen groups, emergent nonprofits, mass assault, and social change groups. There is frequently a lack of distinction or definition given for terms such as “groups” and “organization” (see for example: Campbell, 2009; Dynes, 1970; Voorhees, 2008) or “formalization” and “institutionalization” (see for example: Campbell, 2009; Haas & Drabek, 1973; Quarantelli,

1984b). The meaning of these terms presumably matters and the lack of consistency associated with their use and definition is an issue.

It is rare to find an article that distinguishes between response and recovery or the emergent groups associated with these periods (see for example: Forrest, 1974; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). It is known that emergence occurs in response and recovery (Campbell, 2009; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985), but the literature often does not clarify whether it is referring to emergent response or recovery groups. When a distinction is made, it tends to be related to emergent response groups despite the inherent difficulty associated with studying these groups due to "...the temporary nature of their existence and the spontaneity of their founding" (Voorhes, 2008, p. 4).

Research on ERGs is scarce but needed (Campbell, 2009; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b; Smith, 2011). There are only a few empirical studies (Forrest, 1974; Neal, 1983; Quarantelli, 1984b) and a handful of conceptual pieces explicitly on the topic of ERGs. And, the majority of conceptual papers written on the topic of emergent groups (identified as emergent citizen groups) were based on a single data set collected by the Disaster Research Center (DRC) (see for example: Green, 1983; Green & Ireland, 1982; Green, Neal, Quarantelli, 1989; Neal, 1982, 1983; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b, 1987; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). While there is no indication that the data collection process that led to the data set was flawed, it is important to acknowledge that much of the writing on ERGs is based on the same data set and that as a consequence the empirical foundation of our knowledge about emergent groups is not as strong as it might appear.

### **Conclusion**

Emergent groups are present in most disasters; Hurricane Katrina is no exception. A significant amount of literature suggests emergent behavior occurred in post-Katrina New

Orleans (see for example: Barsky, Trainor, & Torres, 2006; Brezina, Kaurfman, 2008; Constable, 2008; David, 2009, 2011; Rodriquez, Trainor, & Quarantelli, 2006; Tierney, Bevc, & Kuligowski, 2006). There has been little research, however, regarding ERGs post-Katrina (for notable exceptions see: David, 2009, 2011; Rodriquez, Trainor, & Quarantelli, 2006) despite consistent calls for the need for additional research on emergent groups (see for example: David, 2009, 2011; Dynes, 1970; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1980; Quarantelli, 1970, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings, 1978), particularly research that explores emergent response and recovery groups separately (Green, Neal, & Quarantelli, 1985; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b). This study will begin to address existing gaps in the literature by exploring the conditions that lead to the emergence of recovery groups in post-Katrina New Orleans and that propel their lifespans. Next, Chapter Three will describe the methods that were employed in this study.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Chapter Three consists of six sections that present the research design for this study. The first section outlines the methodological approach. The second section details the population and sampling procedures. The third section explains the process of data collection. The fourth section specifies the data analysis procedures that were utilized. The final section considers the limitations of this study and the measures that were taken to minimize the impact of those limitations on the value of this study.

### **Methodological Approach**

Qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis are designed to explore research questions that quantitative methods cannot or where a quantitative approach to examining the question would be inappropriate. When a lack of foundational research exists, qualitative methods enable the researcher to uncover information critical for creating this foundation in a way that quantitative methods cannot—making it ideal for exploratory research (Creswell, 2007; Morse, 1991).

There is no one agreed upon definition of qualitative research; it can be thought of as a broad approach that has certain defining characteristics (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Qualitative research methods approach the empirical world by seeking descriptive data (Creswell, 2007; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). This method is “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture” (Creswell, 2007, pg 1-2). Qualitative methods can be used to study “...person’s lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movement, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pg.11). The qualitative method considers

“how people think and act in their everyday lives” and views “settings and people holistically” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p.7-8). This type of research is characterized by its flexibility throughout the entire process; research questions, methodology, and approaches are all subject to potential changes as more data is gathered (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2013; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

The nature of the research questions that were explored through this study in conjunction with the paucity of research on emergent recovery groups (ERGs), suggested a qualitative approach was best suited for this study (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Snape & Spencer, 2003). The utilization of qualitative methods allowed the researcher to explore the factors that led to ERG formation and the factors that led to their continued existence. The findings from this study will hopefully inform future, more extensive, and, potentially, quantitative research (Creswell, 2007).

### **Data Collection**

The researcher sought and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before conducting interviews. Consistent with the flexible nature of a qualitative research design (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) one of the research questions evolved over the course of the data collection process. See Appendix A for IRB approval, IRB amendment, and why an amendment was sought. Data collection was conducted using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. As Taylor and Bogden (1998) discuss, in-depth interviews strive to establish how an individual constructs their reality. In-depth interviews allow the researcher to answer questions such as how a participant understands themselves, others, and the world (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Interviews were conducted consistent with the Rubin & Rubin (2005) Responsive Interviewing Model. Semi-structured interviews conducted in keeping with the Model are characterized by a few main

open-ended questions and are supplemented by the use of follow-up questions and probes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The following main open-ended questions were asked:

- Tell me about Hurricane Katrina.
- How does your organization relate to Katrina?
- Tell me about the process of establishing your organization as a legal nonprofit.
- Describe your organization today.

Appendix B provides the complete interview guide the researcher utilized. Throughout the interview the researcher used additional follow-up questions and probes as necessary. See Appendix C for a list of topics the researcher sought to learn about within participant responses to each of the main questions asked. The researcher used the list related to each question as a basis from which to ask follow-up questions and probe for further information.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population for this study included all ERGs that formed post-Katrina that met the following criteria:

- Formed, as a group, post-August 2005;
- Unaffiliated with a pre-existing organizations including religious institutions when it formed;
- Formed to work in Orleans or St. Bernard Parishes; and,
- Formed to focus on a need related to recovery.

There is no way to know how many groups are a part of the population for this study.

This study used a purposive sampling method supplemented by snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique used to locate the best participants to answer the research questions (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). Participants that are selected using purposive

sampling are chosen because they have the appropriate knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the data (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). The researcher purposively sampled groups that met all of the aforementioned criteria within Orleans or St. Bernard Parishes.

The most severe and complicated of impacts occurred in the parishes with the lowest socio-economic status including Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes (Airriess, Li, Leong, Chen, & Keith, 2008; Liu, Fellowes, & Mabanta, 2006; Liu & Plyer, 2007). The flooding damaged or destroyed 71% of homes in Orleans Parish (i.e., 188,251) along with 81% of homes in St. Bernard Parish (i.e., 25,123) (GNOCDC, 2006). And, out of the estimated 1,450 deaths related to Katrina and subsequent flooding in Louisiana, 73% were lost in Orleans Parish and 17% in St. Bernard Parish (Brunkard, Namulanda, Ratard, 2008). The range and depth of need in the wake of these events in these areas makes it more likely that the ERGs that formed in these areas did so because there was so much need.

The researcher found groups that met the aforementioned sample criteria in four stages. First, the researcher used her previous experience with qualifying ERGs. The researcher spent several years working in various capacities with groups in and around the Greater New Orleans area post-2005. The researcher contacted these ERGs first. It should be noted that individuals working with these groups did not know the researcher had any connection to their respective organization or any other in New Orleans. On a few occasions the participant, during the interview, asked the researcher if she had been to New Orleans. This was typically when a participant was explaining geography or cultural aspect of New Orleans and was asking to gauge the researcher's understanding of the Greater New Orleans (GNO area). In this case, the researcher informed the participants that she had previously gone to school in the city of New Orleans. This information allowed rapport to quickly build between the researcher and the



participants. Building rapport and trust with participants is one of the main tenants of in-depth semi-structured interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Second, the researcher used her pre-existing knowledge of additional groups that met the criteria to expand the sample. Through her previous work in the GNO area, the researcher was made aware of many ERGs that she did not directly work with herself.

Third, the researcher utilized online search engines to find additional groups that met the criteria. There is no database in existence that allowed the researcher to filter organizations based on the ERG criteria. However, assorted lists of organizations that had at some point done recovery work in Louisiana can be easily found online through a Google search. Over ten such lists were acquired. Examples include lists from online nonprofit clearinghouses such as GuideStar and Charity Navigator in addition to lists from organizations within Louisiana such as the state VOAD. The researcher used these lists as a starting point to identify additional contacts at groups that might be asked to participate. Contact information for the potential participants were sought online through the organization's website.

Fourth, and finally, snowball sampling was utilized. The technique of snowball sampling requires the researcher to identify future participants at the recommendation of current participants (Taylor & Bodgan, 1998). As the researcher conducted interviews with qualifying ERGs, she asked for referrals of other qualifying groups. This sampling technique was being employed so that a) the researcher was aware of as many qualifying ERGs as possible and b) the researcher was able to reach out to additional groups beyond those contacted in the first three steps because the information collected from those groups did not result in data rich and detailed enough to reach theoretical saturation.

It must be noted that the unit of analysis for this study were ERGs while the unit of data collection were individuals associated with those groups. Individual participants were invited for interviews after it was established they were the founder, or a founding member of a qualifying group. For the purpose of this study, it was important to speak with individuals who were there when the group formed—those with first-hand knowledge of how the group began, how it transitioned over time, and the decisions that lead to the group’s continued existence were in the best position to provide data directly related to the research questions for this study.

Participants were invited by e-mail to participate in a phone interview. See Appendix D for the invitation e-mail. An information sheet with additional details about the study was included as an attachment to the invitation e-mail. See Appendix E for the information sheet. Within 2-3 days of sending the invitation e-mail and having not heard back, the interviewer followed-up with a phone call if a phone number could be found. See Appendix F for this narrative. The interviewer asked at the end of each interview if the participant was willing to do a follow-up interview. Follow-up interviews were not utilized because the researcher felt additional information or verification was not necessary to complete or better understand the data provided by participants, given the specific research questions.

The researcher conducted twenty interviews with participants representing twenty separate ERGs. The information about the participants and the ERGs that they represented is presented throughout the three results chapters that follow in particular Chapter Five. In qualitative research, it is appropriate to stop the data collection process when theoretical saturation is reached (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Glaser, 1995; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical saturation is reached when continuing data collection will not lead to the discovery, expansion, or refinement of new concepts or themes (Strauss &

Corbin, 1998). The researcher is not confident that theoretical saturation related to her research questions was reached (although there was remarkable consistency interview-to-interview). Interviews ceased because the researcher could not find additional individuals to participate in this study.

The researcher had a surprisingly difficult time finding ERG founders to participate in this study. This can be attributed to six distinct reasons. First, it has been over eight years since Hurricane Katrina. Many ERGs that may have met the criteria for inclusion in this study are likely no longer existing. Tracking down the individuals in ERGs that no longer exist was difficult, and, ultimately, fruitless. The difficulty was heightened for those ERGs that never had an online presence. Second, the recommendations received from snowball sampling were often for groups that the researcher already knew about and had already invited for participation. Third, it was discovered that many groups that formed post-Katrina were just extensions of pre-existing groups. Fourth, there were six groups that were contacted and declined participation. Fifth, there were around fifteen groups that did not respond to inquiries. And, finally, the researcher could not find current contact information for five groups that potentially met the criteria.

The interviews were digitally recorded. The recordings were stored on the researcher's personal computer and shared only with the transcription company assisting with this research. The recordings will be deleted by the researcher after the data is no longer of value to the researcher's work. The files were deleted by the transcription company following the researcher's approval of the transcription document. When the transcriptions are no longer needed for analysis purposes, they too will be destroyed.

There are no anticipated consequences to participants if their participation in the study should become known. Yet, the utmost effort has been taken to protect the identities of participants and the organizations for which they work. Participant and organization names were only collected for data tracking purposes and have not been used in reports of the data. When the researcher has used quotes in the reports of the data, names, organization names, locations, and any other identifying information has been removed.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was undertaken throughout the entire study in keeping with the Responsive Interviewing Model presented in Rubin and Rubin (2005). Consistent with the Model, the researcher took notes both during and following the interviews. Following data collection, the first phase of analysis included transcribing the interviews and initial and focused coding of the recorded interviews. In the second phase, the researcher analyzed the coded data.

During the interviews the researchers took notes regarding quotations that appeared significant, the atmosphere of the interviews, and potential concepts and themes (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p. 205). Before utilizing a transcription service, the researcher transcribed the first six interviews herself and drafted memos related to emergent themes.

Initially, the transcripts were coded line-by-line, allowing additional themes and concepts to be identified in the data beyond those found during focused coding (i.e., the first six interviews the researcher transcribed). Line-by-line coding requires the researcher to review each line of the transcribed interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The concepts that were found were then clarified and synthesized to establish the narrative. Following line-by-line coding, focused coding was used to establish themes from the interviews that were relevant to the research

questions. Focused coding includes reviewing the concepts and themes and arranging them into codes that will be used to mark relevant passages throughout the transcripts (Charmaz, 2006).

Themes and concepts that are used may come from the existing body of literature or from the interviews (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p. 210). In this study, the researcher first drew themes and concepts from the data without considering the previously suggested factors in the literature. Once themes and concepts were identified through focused coding they were compared to factors identified in Chapter Two to ascertain the extent to which they are similar. The product of this study will hopefully serve as a foundation for other researchers to continue the study of ERGs so a greater understanding of these groups can be developed. The second phase of analysis presented by Rubin & Rubin (2005) seeks to form a theory based on a thorough examination of the coded data. The ideal, ultimate outcome is the development of a theory. The researcher was not able to reach this phase within the scope of this study.

### **Limitations**

The research design articulated in this chapter does not allow the findings that result from the research to be generalizable (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Purposive and snowball sampling both have the potential to lead to biased information (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). And, snowball sampling can lead to participants who have had similar experiences (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003) and as a result the data may not reflect the full range of conditions for forming and formalizing than are important. Moreover, the participation rate of those invited was relatively low as well as the total sample size. All of these issues suggest that this study's findings should be interpreted with caution.

Additionally, a significant amount of time has passed since many of these groups were formed. It is possible that participants have not remembered or have misremembered

information. Forgetting is a common issue for qualitative researchers that are asking their participants to recall past events (Aaron, 1966; Dakin & Tennant, 1968; Gordon, 1976). There are tactics that researchers use to assist participants in remembering events that have happened in the past (Gordon, 1976). One of these methods is starting with broad questions that return the participant to the points in time the research is interested in gathering. The researcher employed this technique by beginning the interview with two broad questions designed to bring them back to their personal experience with Hurricane Katrina before moving into questions regarding their emergent group. The researcher is unable to do anything about the lapse in time; however, Gordon (1976) suggests that the researcher should at least acknowledge that time has passed and consider it as a factor while interpreting the results of the data collected. This has been done throughout the reporting of the data. These limitations, although unfortunate, cannot be avoided given the population that is being studied and the nature of the research questions.

Despite these limitations this study has contributed significantly to the existing literature on emergence. The intention of this research was to explore the factors related to the forming of ERGs and the factors contributing to their continued existence to establish a foundation for future research that may lead to discovery of a generalizable theory.

Two checks were relied upon to ensure the quality of the research. First, the researcher followed a known and reputable process of data collection and analysis as articulated by Rubin and Rubin (2005). Following this established methodology gave the process credibility. Second, the researcher relied on Guba's Model of Trustworthiness and the four concepts it suggests are important to consider when evaluating the rigor of qualitative research (Krefting, 1990) to check her work. Truth value is the confirmation that the research is credible, which can be tested by comparing findings to other similar studies. Applicability concerns the ability for findings to be

generalizable. As discussed, this study is not generalizable, a reality that is common to qualitative research and which Krefting (1990) acknowledges. Consistency is concerned with establishing if the findings of the study can be replicated; however, because qualitative research recognizes the presence of multiple realities variability is expected and acceptable. Finally, neutrality requires high levels of objectivity throughout the methods process to ensure the least biased findings possible. In an effort to implement this model, the researcher kept these checks in mind throughout the data collection and analysis process.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has explained the research design for this study. Specifically, the proposed population/sampling, data collection, and data analysis procedures were outlined and explained. Potential limitations were addressed. The methodology facilitated the collection and analysis of rich data to address the research questions. The next chapter, the first of three results chapters, discusses the characteristics and types of ERGs in this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CHARACTERISTICS & TYPES

This study sought to explore the factors leading to the formation and extended lifespans of emergent recovery groups (ERGs). In this pursuit, characteristics of the ERGs were gleaned. Understanding the factors related to group formation and extended lifespans requires that the reader first understand the basic characteristics of these groups. The first section explores where and when groups formed and worked. The second section discusses the types of ERGs that formed. The third section describes the structures of the ERGs. The fourth section describes the tasks the groups undertook. The final section reviews the resources groups utilize as they evolve.

### **Lifespans of Groups in the Sample**

All twenty ERGs represented in this study were formed and institutionalized, as measured by receipt of 501(c)(3) status, by the beginning of 2008. Group formation and institutionalization began to occur as early as September 2005—within weeks of Hurricane Katrina making landfall. In fact, ten of the ERGs formed before January 2006. Institutionalization of these ERGs occurred between the final months of 2005 and early-2008. Four of the ERGs included in this study have shut down or are currently inactive. Of these four ERGs, the first shut down in September 2009 with the others following through 2013. The remaining sixteen are still active today.

ERG lifespans were a minimum of three years. The majority (n=16) of the ERGs are still in existence today. The length of time these groups remain active runs counter to the bulk of the existing literature which identifies ERGs as ephemeral, lasting only a brief amount of time (Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Smith, 1997; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Voorhees, 2008). The lifespans of these ERGs from formation to suspension where applicable, is depicted in Figure 1.



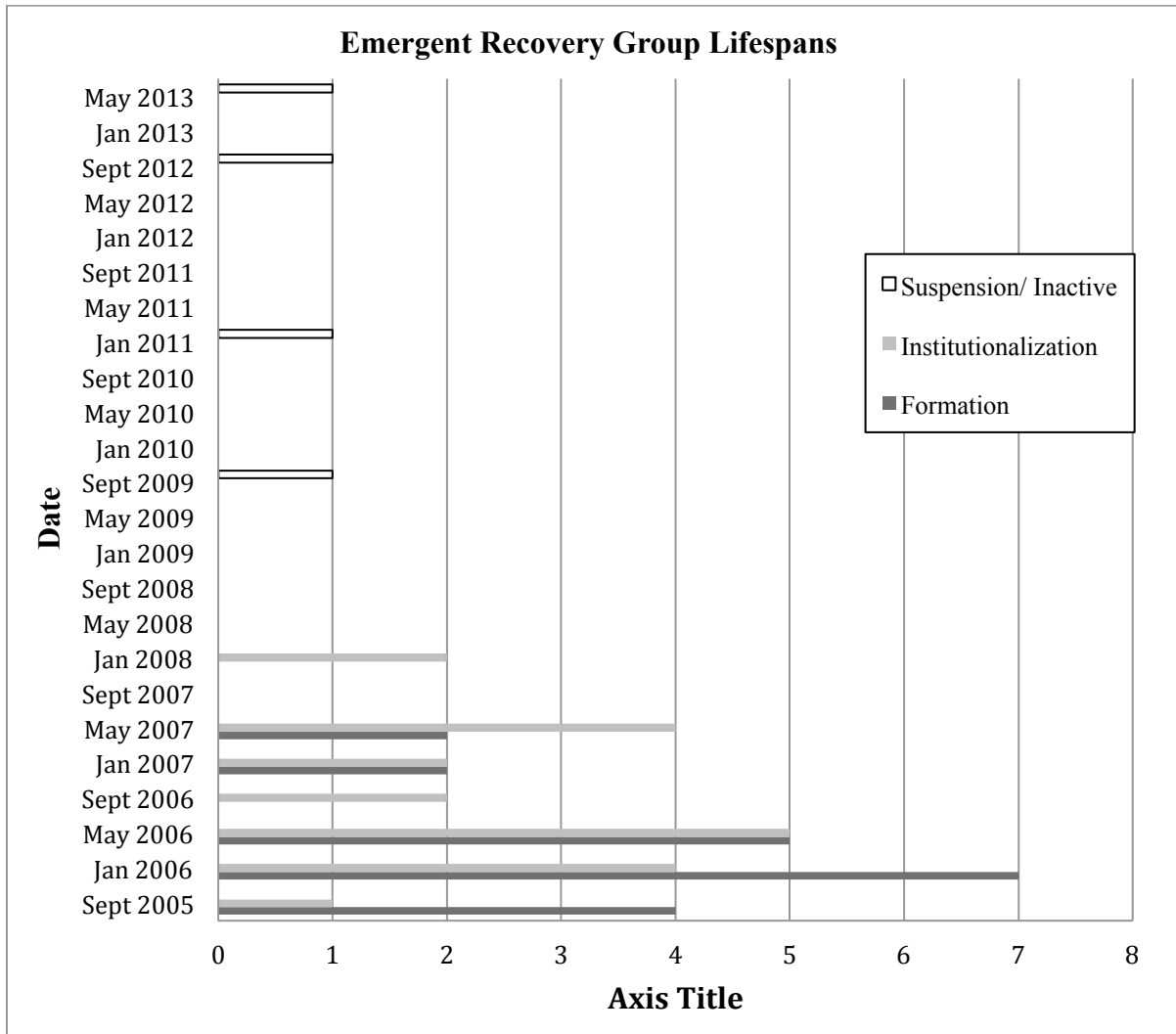


Figure 1. Lifespan timeline of emergent recovery groups.

The longer lifespan does, however, align with Campbell’s (2009) study of ERGs post- 9/11 and a suggestion made by Quarantelli (1984b). Interestingly, the drivers of the organization did not report considering the longevity or sustainability of the ERG when they first formed. As one driver said, “I don’t know that I could say that there was a long-term strategy from the beginning in terms of how we were going to ensure that this thing, this organization, keeps going.” And another, “We didn’t think about that [the lifespan of the group] for a long time. And, probably the reason why was that we were doing this very temporary thing.” And another, “We only

thought we'd be open for 1-2 years. I mean we just didn't know it would take so long. We were very naive about how long it would take. We hadn't been through it."

We realized it was a work in progress and many of our successes and transitions were just organic transitions. The vision was to help people and there was really no timeline involved in that commitment. I just vowed that I was going to come here and help. And I really had no... everything was done in a very immediate, temporary way that has now spanned over 8 years. And, looking back, it's not like in calmer times... when you start with a business plan and funding sources and once you figure out generally how to put it all together in a way that it's sustainable, then you create it. That really wasn't the case here. There was a need that we saw that was grave and otherwise not met except for what we mustered up. We basically hit the ground running and just adapted as the currents dictated.

The first step taken to benefit the future of the organization was in coordination of and filing for 501(c)(3) status; yet, the benefit was by default because this status was not sought with the purpose of ensuring the organization's longevity but for other reasons that will be discussed later.

ERGs were formed to work in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes to address recovery-related tasks. Seventeen of the groups included in this study formed within Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes. The remaining three groups were formed outside of Louisiana, with the intent to address needs in these two parishes. Most ERGs based their operations in a single neighborhood. Yet, the majority of groups did not stay within the confines of their base neighborhood. Groups partnered with organizations outside of the neighborhood they were based in and brought in outside organizations to work in their base neighborhoods. Ultimately only four of the twenty groups ended up limiting their activity to only one neighborhood.

### **Types of ERGs**

In the existing literature differences among ERGs tend to be discussed solely, or primarily, in terms of the types of activities they undertake (Dynes, 1970; Stallings, 1978;

Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Yet, this research revealed four types of ERGs that differ in the driver of group formation and the point at which they institutionalize. The “driver” refers to the individual, typically the founder, or group of individuals that initiate ERG formation.

Institutionalization can be understood to mean an ERG has an identified organizational structure. Institutionalization was recognized in this study by receipt of 501(c)(3) status from the federal government or the entity becoming recognized as a nonprofit in the state of Louisiana.

Recognition as a nonprofit at the state and federal level requires that applying entities outline their organizational structure and how their organization will operate (Internal Revenue Service, 2014; State of Louisiana, 2014). These four types differ most obviously by the driver of their formation—either an individual founder or a group—and the order in which group formation and institutionalization took place. Lifespan of the groups did not seem to vary by these types.

Type 1 groups form most like what the literature would have led one to expect—several individuals come together in the wake of a disaster, form a group, and subsequently institutionalize (see for example: Dynes, 1970; Parr, 1970; Quarantelli, 1984a). The individuals in these groups come together based on pre-existing social relationships or find each other through word-of-mouth or geographical proximity following the event. The groups form and work together before seeking nonprofit status. If there is a single, identifiable leader they emerge from within the group after it has formed—they do not bring the group together. Over time, the members that led the group’s formation and institutionalization may leave the group and their roles may be taken over by others. Other individuals may join the group to take on new roles as the group extends and expands.

Type 2 groups consist of a driver group that forms based on pre-existing relationships or through encountering like-minded individuals after the event. Type 2 groups differ from Type 1

groups in that they institutionalize before anyone outside the driver group becomes involved in the ERG. Following the institutionalization of the group, other individuals join and take on new roles as the group continues to extend and expand.

Type 3 groups are driven by an individual founder. The founder typically has identified an unmet need, has an idea of how to address it, and begins to act. During the process of forming the ERG, the individual finds others to join them in their pursuit. Once others have become involved in the group the decision is made (typically by the founder) to institutionalize the group. Following institutionalization, the group continues to expand and extend over the group's lifespan.

The formation of type 4 groups is also founder-driven although in this case group formation and institutionalization occur simultaneously. Although Type 4 ERGs do not identify as groups pre-institutionalization, there are typically a nominal number of individuals, usually friends, who assist them at different points in the development of the group (e.g., a friend helping to create their website). In the process of institutionalizing, others become affiliated with the group. Most commonly, the driver must seek out individuals to be on the board of directors in order for the group to file 501(c)(3). Yet, typically, the ERG remains heavily founder-driven over the course of its lifespan with temporary volunteers making up much or all of the group.

Despite their differences related to the formation and institutionalization the conditions related to group formation were found to be the same for all types of groups during data analysis. The four types of ERGs identified in this research are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

*Emergent Recovery Group Types According to Driver of Group Formation and Institutionalization of Group*

<b>Institutionalization Relative to Formation of Group</b>		
<b>Driver of Formation</b>	<b>Pre</b>	<b>During</b>
<i>Group</i>	Type 1 (n= 3)	Type 2 (n=2)
<i>Founder</i>	Type 3 (n=8)	Type 4 (n=7)

The literature has found that emergent groups that institutionalize, i.e., are recognized and develop a group structure, first form as a group (Campbell, 2009; Forrest, 1978; Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976; Quarantelli, 1984b; Ross, 1980 Saunders & Kreps, 1987; Taylor, Zurcher, Key, 1970). This study found that eleven groups followed this anticipated trajectory. Yet, nine groups, still a significant number, formed their group in concurrence with institutionalization, a phenomena unaddressed in the literature. Of the eleven groups that came together pre-institutionalization only three ERGs formed organically, with no individual serving as the driver of group formation. These groups formed without a leader. In all cases, however, a leader emerged from within the group at a later point in the ERG’s lifespan.

Unexpectedly, it was often the case that a founder began working on recovery-related tasks and activities independently of any group. It was through their activity or seeking help to support that activity that others joined them and an actual group began to form. Fifteen groups were entirely founder-driven to the point of institutionalization. To the researcher's knowledge there has been no other literature that has reported similar findings. In the case of these groups, the founder, had an idea of how to address a recovery need, developed a plan, and filed for 501(c)(3). In fact, the founders did not identify themselves as a group before institutionalization

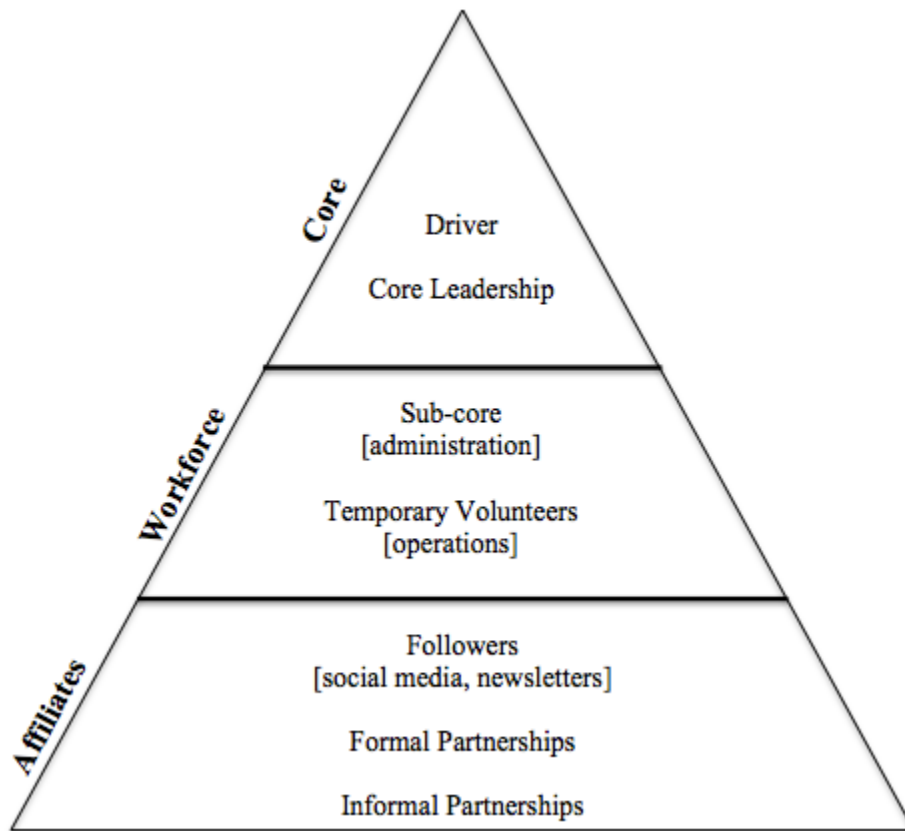
(to the extent that they even considered themselves a group after institutionalization). The founder of the ERG can be thought of as the driver of group formation.

### **Structure**

The existing literature states emergent groups develop a structure post-disaster (Drabek, 1986; 1987; Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Forrest, 1978; Smith, 1997; Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). This finding was supported by the data; and, further was found that the ERGs extend and expand their structures throughout their lifespans. Groups extended their structure by adding individuals to take on different functional roles for the ERG. The ERGs expanded their structure in terms of the number of people fulfilling functional roles for the group.

The existing literature considers group structure although it does not suggest that ERGs actively expand and extend the individuals associated with the group. Instead, the literature identifies the structure of emergent groups in terms of the level of involvement of different people and groups in the ERG and the tasks they undertake. Stallings & Quarantelli (1985) found that emergent group structure, when formed in non-emergency times can be thought of as a “three-tier or circular structure” (p. 96) consisting of a core, supporting members, and nominal supporters that contribute to tasks the group undertakes. The data confirmed this breakdown of membership to an extent but offered a much more nuanced understanding of group structure both in terms of level of involvement and tasks. Additionally, this research revealed the circular imagery to be less appropriate than the tiered imagery. Not only is tiered imagery more appropriate but so too are different labels for the various types of individuals and groups associated with the ERG.

The tiered imagery is most appropriate as it reflects the hierarchical nature of decision-making and responsibility within the ERG as well as the diminishing level of day-to-day involvement in the group as one moves from higher to lower tiers. The three elements of group structure as identified in the literature can be further divided by task and can be categorized as administrative support (e.g., grant writing), workers (e.g., volunteers, individuals completing specific skilled tasks for the groups), and group affiliates (e.g., donors, social media supporters, and other entities the group forms partnerships with). The structure of the ERGs represented in this study is presented in Figure 2.



*Figure 2.* Emergent recovery group structure.

With the exception of the ERGs all being started by a driver there is no one order in which these tiers become involved—they develop as needed. Over time, as the driver of the ERG becomes more established and as they seek to extend and expand the group, the structure

evolves. One driver explained how her organization extended from just her driving the organization to including other core leadership in the form of a staff member and then further expansion of the core leadership to include more staff members.

Then we brought in staff, a case manager, who really helped people that were falling through the cracks - many elderly and people who had mental health issues. They were a really, very big part of our center and we got six case managers. So we really had a structure in place. We had regular hours. Open at 9am in the morning closed at four everyday. People knew they could count on somebody being there. You know, we were like a business. We had volunteers living there every week. So it really began to take form as a real model of recovery, which was very different from my house. In my house it was just, um, looser, you know. It was a home. And I was solely by myself. Now I have a full staff and that's a big difference.

Another driver explained adding layers to the group structure over the span of several years.

Well, at the beginning it was just me. And, we had a really small staff, and of course the thing that was always, the thing about being a youth organization that is about organizing student voice is that there has to be some sort of decision making process that involves the youth...So we evolved bit by bit by bit...we of course had to form a board and one of the things the board wanted immediately were policies. So, we, because of the fact that 2-3 years into our operation, we suddenly had a board, we began hammering out those policies. Eventually, you know, the basis of the thing was really and remained pretty much the same although we kind of formalized it.

One driver explained how his ERG recently expanded by changing who volunteered with the group.

We started as a very locally focus organization now we've expanded to take locals and out-of-towners and then we grew to increase our capacity to have more out of town volunteers because of special seasons. That demand outweighed local demand.

A driver explained how the number of people involved in one program the ERG ran has less people involved now than in the past.

A very important program we have is something called the [program name]... it's a group of ... right now, it's about twenty five people, at times it was almost a hundred but now it's about twenty five people who are on standby...



As suggested through these examples, the structure of the ERGs in this study tended to fluctuate over the lifespan of the group.

### **Core**

What Stallings & Quarantelli (1985) called the “core” was revealed through this research to include two distinct elements: 1) the group driver and 2) the core leadership. The group driver can either be an individual or a group of people. In almost every instance, when an individual driver initiated the formation of the ERG, the driver remained the leader of the group throughout their tenure with the group. Single driver led groups typically formed a core leadership in the process of group institutionalization.

When multiple individuals drove ERG formation those individuals became the core leadership. One driver explained the core leadership as the driver of the group.

The board drove it... This board was a top-flight board. They were doers and thinkers. They were very strategic, and believe me we had a lot of good conversations in those boardrooms. We all had the same heart. You're talking about people that are highly educated, very experienced in management, that have been very proactive ... It was a very invigorating, exciting time for everybody.

In some cases, a single leader did emerge from within this driver group; while, other times, the group's development continued without a specific leader. One driver explained how out of the group he became the one that drove the ERG over its lifespan, “I would never say that I founded it. I usually just say that I was a volunteer the most and ended up sticking it out the longest.”

Another driver explained, “I'm not sure how many people were at that first get-together. There might have been 5-6 people there. And, of those, I would say, two actually, including myself, became members of and driving forces of the group.”

As the group continues to expand and extend a number of new people may become involved with the core leadership.

The returning residents that shared the vision became part of the nucleus of what we formed. I think... I think... it was about twelve members of each community. Residents stepped forward to form the first executive board of this nonprofit.

There was the core group, then we added to it. There were people, again, there was just so much engagement at the time. It was very easy to get people involved in something, especially something that was positive. It was very easy. We had lots of volunteers. Once I received [nonprofit] status I brought some of those neighborhood folks into my board.

Well, I think, our board really has done most of the work over the years. And that's a revolving group of people. I, along with one other founding board member just rolled off the board after six years on there... So, I think the board members were really kind of the workhorses.

At times, the driver group of the organization and/or the core leadership also serves as the board of directors.

“All I needed is the names of two people that are working with you that can be the treasurer and the secretary” and so I said, [employee name], how bout you”. [employee name] was my volunteer coordinator and a friend of mine from Metairie who had come to help and she said, “okay, sure whatever”.

It took... It was a total of about six months before I came back. Opening up a nonprofit is a little bit of a tedious process. You need people that are unrelated to sign up as directors. So I had a few people that I worked with, that volunteered with me that were interested in providing their name and signature to open up a nonprofit.

The core leads the majority of the day-to-day operations for the ERG. Those within the core of the ERG all work on administrative tasks. The findings of this study concur with the pre-existing literature that there is a clear division of labor within the core leadership (Quarantelli, 1984b). Examples of how labor was divided follow.

[Person A] became the person who was our volunteer seeker, if you like, he did a lot of internet work to let people know that we were organizing trips to the Gulf Coast and encouraging people to volunteer with us. [Person B]...she was actually the clerk at the time. You know taking the minutes and keeping track of things.

There is a director, and there is a financial a business manager, and there are heads of programs. They really do have the right to ultimately make the decisions. You know, it's a small organization and you know those things don't often get

into conflict, but again, the director maintains the right to make ultimate decisions.

Individuals tend to have specific job titles within the core leadership and individuals in the core dedicate large amounts of time to the group. This finding too is consistent with prior research (Quarantelli, 1984b). One driver gave the example of one of the members of the core leadership in her ERG.

My first employee is still with me today. She became the Director of Administration at the Center, which she ran. She was there everyday. She was kind of the glue of the Center because I was so in and out all the time.

Prior research found that the ERGs core leadership often remains active with the group for great lengths of time—frequently their entire lifespans—and are extremely dedicated to the group (Quarantelli, 1984b). The same was true of the core leadership of ERGs post- Katrina that are represented in this study. One driver said, “And now I have a very devoted staff and they do a lot of over time when it’s needed and put all their energy in it” and another stated, “That’s when we created the board. It is roughly the same board that it is today. The board has not changed which is pretty cool.”

It seems the driver of the group stays with the group for the greatest amount of time, followed by those in the core leadership. For example, one driver said, “So the people that were part of the core team evolved over time. I guess I’m the only one that stayed from the beginning to the end.” The driver, except on rare occasion, stays with the ERG for its entire lifespan. Individuals within the core leadership have, at times, been with the ERG since its formation or they have joined the group once it was established.

The individuals in the core leadership come to be with the ERG either by seeking out a position with the ERG, or are asked to join by a driver. They may assist drivers in making the decisions for the group. One driver explained his core leadership group.

I really have a great team. My program manager has worked for [the group] for four years and we make a lot of decisions as a group. We develop things as a group. So we sit together and we always evaluate what we do and the success we have and evaluate what is the best way to continue. How can we be even more efficient? How can we have other things?

Yet, while the drivers of the ERGs that have core members do value their input, this research shows that overall final decision-making about the actions of the ERG are made by drivers with approval from the board of directors.

### **Workforce**

Moving to the second tier of Stalling & Quarantelli's (1985) structure are the supportive members. The literature describes these members as being a "less active outer core" (Stallings & Quatantelli, 1985, pg. 96). Again, this research found a more nuanced understanding of this group. A more accurate way of describing them would be the workforce. There are two main groups within the workforce, the temporary volunteers and the sub-core. The majority of ERGs in this study utilized a rather extensive temporary volunteer base to do the "hands on" labor of the organization (e.g., volunteers rebuilding homes, assisting to care for animals in a shelter, or staffing programs for the groups clients). Temporary volunteers were found to be a critical resource that allowed the ERG to complete tasks.

I just felt that everyday that volunteers were coming. I had to get ready. They brought tons of energy and life and hope. They picked me up everyday. And volunteers, they were the key critical component to our recovery all over the city. If it weren't for the volunteers we'd never, we'd probably look like we did four years ago. We'd never have made this progress without them because there was nobody else.

I'd hate to think about New Orleans today, if it wasn't for the volunteers. They come through universities, churches, high schools, some even elementary schools have come and did the best they can with their time.

These temporary volunteers have no tangible influence over the decision-making of the group.

Temporary volunteers usually volunteer only one or a few isolated times with the ERG and are

typically led by individuals in the sub-core. These temporary volunteers can be from inside or outside the community. Typically, they are affiliated with some other organization or group (e.g., church groups, corporate volunteer days, or school-related volunteer days). Many drivers of the ERGs reported volunteers from all over the world working with their groups. One such driver said,

Basically the organizations that we partner with the strongest to house volunteers, are run by the faith-based community. So more times than not, the volunteers that we get in support of our food pantry are members of a church group from somewhere in the country. They could be from New York State, or Texas, or California, or Minnesota, virtually from anywhere. You know, from Canada. In the past we've had volunteers from all over the world -- from New Zealand, from Germany, from the UK. There was more of that world-wide volunteerism while this was more on the forefront nationally.

Recently, the phenomenon of “voluntourism” has been noted in the literature (see for example: Brown, 2005; Corti, Marola, & Castro, 2010; Daldeniz & Hampton, 2010).

Voluntourism is when individuals or groups travel to a destination to perform volunteer work in place of taking a recreational vacation. A common example of voluntourism is individuals that participate in “alternative spring breaks”. Each spring there is a large number of college students from all around the country who look for locations to spend their weeklong mid-semester breaks volunteering instead of vacationing. Since Katrina, New Orleans has been a destination for many such groups. While their service is valuable, this massive influx of people lasts for only a few weeks. One driver explained, “universities that come down to do spring break in New Orleans often contact us and work with our students for their week as part of their activities”, another driver said, “We’re a favorite place for alternative Spring Breaks. We’ve had some of them come back for six years in a row.” To the extent that these temporary volunteers have any further interaction past their volunteer experience with the ERG, it is in a limited way such as joining their social media following.

Throughout the lifespan of the ERG the drivers expanded the amount of people that were in the tiers. One driver gave the example of how the workforce tier of his organization expanded, “I started to ask my friends to help and pretty soon it was too much for my friends too. That’s how all the volunteering started.” Although it varied group-to-group, several drivers reported utilizing over 20,000 temporary volunteers annually. Their contributions to the group are invaluable since they do what the core does not—the work that allows the ERGs to fulfill its mission.

Over time, a "sub-core" may form. The sub-core does not come about until after the group has formed. The sub-core consists of individuals who are not typically at the organization day-to-day, but frequently volunteer with the organization. The individuals in the sub-core typically only spend a few months to a year with the group. They tend to be more transient individuals such as Americorps volunteers or college students. They do not make organizational decisions, but may take on some type of authority role (e.g., oversee temporary volunteers). One driver explained the role of the sub-core,

We have our “supervisors” which are called “Leads” and they’ve been trained basically to run the whole [facility], deal with the public, whatever. We’ve got about a dozen of those. And there’s always a “Lead” on duty at anytime on any shift. Our shifts are from 9am-9pm. And we split them up into six hour shifts or even three hour shifts crossing over each other. So that there’s always somebody there that can wrangle volunteers and run the [facility]. But the “Leads” are really great.

The sub-core provides important assistance for the ERGs. For example, one driver explained how those in the sub-core helped the group, “They came two days a week and they helped me with the program and they basically helped build up the program... they helped with everything, helped staging events, and so on.” Individuals in the sub-core tend to be temporary even though they may have responsibilities associated with their title that remain a part of the group structure.

The sub-core takes direction from the driver of the group or the core leadership. They are typically individuals that the driver or the core leadership has specifically sought out and decided to bring into the organization. The sub-core takes on tasks that require significant knowledge of the ERG and/or the task on which they work. These tasks often require a level of experience that an individual gains while working with the group for more than just a single time. For example, a sub-core individual may be in charge of leading volunteer groups or assisting in administrative type work.

One example that several drivers gave of individuals that make up the sub-core of the organization are local college students that complete their college's service learning requirement by working with the ERG. One driver explained, "We do a lot of service learning with Tulane and Loyola and other universities." Another driver said,

My organization is located within a four-mile radius of three major universities – Tulane University, Xavier University, and Loyola University. And for example I am partnered with the three of them and they provide me with service learners, work study students, and AmeriCorps VISTA.

These service-learning students typically spend a few days a week with the ERG over the course of at least a semester. This reoccurrence in volunteering makes these individuals a more reliable volunteer for the ERG than temporary volunteers.

Other sub-core members find the group and ask to become involved with the group on a long-term basis.

Some of those people, after I started [the group] actually came down and were long term volunteers with [the group] and you know, sort of a gap year between high school and college, they were all high school kids when we went down. After they graduated from high school some of them came and stayed with us for various periods of time and continued to work.

There were a few volunteers that wanted to move to New Orleans, and I extended that they could stay, I had a volunteer house, where volunteers would stay in New

Orleans. So I offered for them to stay there for free if they took care of the program when I was not around.

Those in the workforce tier of the ERGs in this study performed a great amount of work for the group.

### **Affiliates**

The final tier that the literature describes is the nominal membership. This group is described as, “remaining in the periphery” (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985 pg. 96). Again, this finding was confirmed by the data in this study but nuances were revealed. More broadly, the bottom tier can be thought of as group affiliates. There are two main groups within this category including followers and partnerships.

The first, supported by the literature, includes those who “sign petitions, pay dues, receive a newsletter, or attend an occasional meeting” (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985 pg. 96). These individuals while still in the periphery are active in their support of the ERG. The ERGs in this study confirmed these findings.

They didn't pay dues or anything but we just called them members. Now, today, we call them supporters but at that time, we called them members and put the petition on the website and asked all of our family and friends to sign and in one ... we got two hundred signatures so now we must be somebody. We have a mission, we have a website, we have two hundred members. Well, we're on the map and that's how we started. Now, we're over twenty five thousand.

Yet, this research would expand the findings of the literature to include individuals that follow an ERGs online presence through social media, list serves, or the ERG's websites. These individuals can be thought of as “followers” of the ERG. Followers of the group appear to be passive in their interaction with the ERG. The online following of these groups can be quite large ranging from a few hundred to over 30,000 individuals. As one driver said “we've got a real huge Facebook following”. The tangible impact of these followers on the ERG is unclear. This



phenomenon is not unique to ERGs but is likely to be inherent to the nature of social media. It was clear that social media was a tool used by groups to share information on their work, find volunteers, and gain a broad interest in their group.

Second are organizational affiliates. Organizational affiliates can be thought of as individuals or other groups that have either a formal or informal partnership or affiliation with the ERG. Examples would include other nonprofits that work in similar geographic areas or have similar missions such as environmental groups supporting the mission of one another or home rebuilding groups sharing tools. Every single group that was included in this study utilized partnerships with other recovery nonprofits in the area.

The existing model of emergent group structure categorized these individual as “nominal”. This study suggests that some within this tier are more meaningful than the title of “nominal” would lead us to believe. The term Affiliates seems to better capture the extent of the involvement of some within this tier (i.e., formal partnerships) while still including individuals (i.e., social media followers) whose involvement is in fact more nominal. The term also still captures the notion that individuals and groups within this tier tend not to do tasks that are related to the ERGs mission or participate in the organization’s day-to-day functioning.

As depicted in Table 2 group structure can be thought of along two dimensions including 1) the extent individuals or groups of the structure is involved in the group and 2) by the tasks and activities the different individuals or groups of the structure address.

Table 2

*Emergent Recovery Group Structure*

Element	Extent of Involvement		Tasks Undertaken
	Duration of Involvement	Formality	
<b>Core</b>			
<i>Drivers</i>	Lifespan	Formal	Vision and overall functioning of the group
<i>Core Leadership</i>	Many years	Formal	Day-to-day administrative/ operations
<b>Workforce</b>			
<i>Sub-core</i>	6 months-1 year	Formal	Administrative
<i>Temporary Volunteers</i>	Few hours – 1 week	Informal	Operations
<b>Affiliates</b>			
<i>Followers</i>	Varying	Informal	Unknown
<i>Formal Partnerships</i>	Varying	Formal	Varying
<i>Informal Partnerships</i>	Varying	Informal	Varying

**Tasks**

Stallings & Quarantelli (1985) identified three categories of tasks within response that emergent groups address, damage assessment, operations, and coordination. Again, these categories do not quite encapsulate the findings of this study. Damage assessment is a response activity, not recovery, so it is unsurprising that it did not apply here. Furthermore, the categories of activity suggested by Stallings and Quarantelli (1985) have not even been used to describe response activity by other disaster scholars; yet, scholars have consistently used other labels to capture categories of activity in which people engage, and those categories happen to fit with the findings of this study. Disaster literature identifies needs that arise in response as fitting into two distinct categories--hazard-generated needs, response-generated needs (see for example: Albaladejo, 2000; Auf der heide, 1989; Quarantelli, 1981). Hazard-generated needs are those that are a direct result of the interaction of the hazard and the social, natural, and build environment

such as a need to rebuild homes, remove debris, and environmental restoration. The majority of ERGs in this study formed to address hazard-generated needs. One participant formed a group to address the needs of pets and animals that were left behind when their owners had to evacuate; “We started the shelter only because there were no vets left here to house the animals we were left with”. Individuals and households needed assistance rebuilding their homes following Katrina, and one participant explained forming a group to address the rebuilding needs in the Lower Ninth Ward, “I’d bring students down from different parts of the United States and I’d put them to work during the day on different houses, mostly in the Lower Ninth Ward, mostly things like painting and construction.” In addition to tasks such as these, ERGs engaged in response-generated needs.

Response-generated needs result from individuals and groups working to meet hazard-generated needs such as a need to house and coordinate the volunteers that came to help, the need to coordinate information related to various recovery services, and the need to synchronize the activities of various groups that do recovery work. Two groups formed to provide support to existing nongovernmental organizations. One driver said, “They [pre-existing nonprofit employees] didn't have their facilities any longer, a couple of people had lost their homes, that kind of thing... [they could] find resources, find staff, find money [at the group].” Another driver said,

We were doing all things. You know what I mean? Not all things, I don't want to sound like God but we were doing a multitude of different things. We were coordinating volunteers, we were feeding people, we were getting building permits. I mean there's not like one organization that just does building permits, no one was doing that. I picked up the slack for what was not happening elsewhere.

One group found there was a need for nongovernmental organizations to come together to coordinate the influx of aid coming into the area.

All the NGO's started all the rebuild organizations into a way that leveraged a lot of the resources a lot better, because cases would come in, and Red Cross would say, "Here's five-thousand," but it took ten-thousand. The Methodists would say, "I'll give you free labor." The Lutherans say, "I'll give you a professional estimate." They'd all work ... It was a very good, interfaith system that was created, that was very effective.

Another group found there was a need for residents to come together and talk about coordinating their individual recovery needs and help each other coordinate.

So it just rested on my heart that we needed a hub so that people could come together to see what they wanted their community to look like if they decided to come back. That's what the whole thing with me and once I started doing that they were having town hall meetings.

Another group formed, in part, to minimize the stress of residents from the daily grind of recovery and remind people of the culture and what made the community special and worth recovering.

I think at that time people really wanted something like that, something to remind all of us why we live in New Orleans, why New Orleans is special. It really is the arts and culture, the music, and the people obviously...I think it was really nice for people to hug their neighbors that they haven't seen in months, share their stories, share their experiences, and really start dreaming up a future New Orleans.

Beyond the categories of need suggested by the literature, it was discovered that a third category of needs, latent needs, played a role in the formation of some ERGs. The idea of latent needs and their relationship to emergent groups was noted for the first and only time by Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry (1976). They found that an emergent response group they were studying continued to exist past the response phase because its activities were oriented to addressing a need not rooted in the event but had been an enduring need previous to and continuing since the event. This study found that some groups addressed latent needs—needs that existed before a disaster but were either brought to light or made worse by the event. These needs were associated with systemic or endemic issues in the pre-event context of the

community, such as environmental degradation, a failing education system, or rampant crime. When groups formed to address this third category of need they did so in conjunction with a response- and/or hazard-generated need. This finding was true in all cases. For example, a group formed to provide afterschool programs for high school students who were falling behind academically following their experience with Katrina while also providing supervision of the students while parents were busy balancing work and recovery. The group formed with the intent to help fulfill a latent need of assisting with the subpar education system and help parents with recovery. As time went on and the students who experienced the Katrina year graduated and parents stopped needing the extra help so they could address recovery issues. The ERG broadened its mission to just supplementing the education system. Latent needs existed pre-event and are made worse as a result of the event but the post-event situational context allows the need to be addressed in a way that was not possible pre-event. Another driver formed his group in part to address the poverty in one neighborhood.

There is an undercurrent here that pretty much demonizes poverty and the poorest being the undeserving core. That if you demonize them, instead of humanize them it's easy to deny them the needed services. And as I say it becomes exceedingly more difficult the further we get from Katrina and Rita and the further we get from the oil spill to just maintain the level of services that are so greatly needed. Just upwards of 30% of our post Katrina population here live in poverty. And close to 70% of the kids in the public schools here get subsidized lunches because their families are that poor.

Regardless of the task category, the tasks the ERGs included in this study undertook were all related to the recovery of the social, built, natural, and political environments or creating capacity to achieve that recovery. Social groups focused on tasks such as restoring the culture of the community, education reform, and holistic community needs. Groups focusing on the built environment completed tasks related to individual and household rebuilding. Groups focusing on the natural environment focused on environmental restoration and incorporation of

environmental sustainability in to rebuilding efforts. Political groups focused on political activism related to policy form related to the recovery of the city such as levee reform. Finally, some ERGs formed to focus on creating a framework for recovery to take place by doing tasks such as coordinating volunteers, coordinating nonprofit organizations, and donation coordination.

In general, the ERGs begin with one focused task (e.g., clearing debris). Over time as ERGs became aware of other unmet needs they began to expand or extend the tasks the group undertook. The majority of the ERGs in this study evolved their areas of focus from their original tasks. To the extent that there is no longer a need with the population or the geographic location that the group first formed to address or the groups feels they are capable, the group may extend. Extension can occur when the group extends the geographic area they work in from their original location. Two of the groups interviewed not only created a model of extension with New Orleans but put that model into action in states outside of Louisiana. One driver in this study explained how she created different chapters of the group across the country.

We have five chapters... Each state has a chapter director. We are in New York City...in Illinois... California...and in Florida...These chapter directors maintain their own chapters and they focus on what are the issues in their state. Overall, there are... 54%, 55% of the American population these in counties protected by levees. Like I said, before the flood in New Orleans, no one even knew what a levee was.

Another driver explained how her ERG traveled to other parts of the United States impacted by flooding to assist them in opening recovery centers.

In 2008 we went to Cedar Rapids, Iowa because they had a flood and we felt like, we learned some things along the way and we wanted to one comfort them and let them know that there is life after a disaster and give them some tips on what we did and how we did it... We did Hurricane Ike, we went to Bridgeton, Texas and we started volunteer coordination there... Then we went to Minot, North Dakota, after Lake Charlie flooded.

Several other ERGs extended within the GNO area.

We decided, should we close up, because that was our goal, to bring Lakeview back and now that we were really, really starting to get up on our feet and we weren't needed for as much... Well, we've learned a lot so we kind of know what we are doing now all these great resources all over the city. And these networks established. Why don't we look to help in another neighborhood that's really struggling. And that was the Gentilly neighborhood, which is where we are located now.

It started as you know at one high school, two high schools but then we started having larger scale events a lot bigger events becoming more of an organization. You know, we all had similar things you know. What ended up happening was that say my high school would have an event and a friend or a classmate would bring a friend from a different school who wanted to get involved. While you're working you're kind of talking with those people and we really talked about how you can definitely get involved. Here's how, gave them some of the basics on what they might need to do at their school to get a chapter started... I think our team probably had fifteen different schools involved

Well, it's kind of evolved. We ended up with twenty-five centers around New Orleans, Orleans Parish. Those are somewhat, some of them are somewhat dormant today because we have rolled in. For example, Lakeview had five centers, and two years ago we rolled all the committee work that was being done through the [group] into the neighborhood association.

Yet, additional needs sometimes arose in the population or the geographic area whose needs the group formed to address. The group, over time, may expand the tasks that they become involved in but remain dedicated to one geographic region or one specific population. One driver said, "Over time [the group] evolved from gutting, primarily a gutting organization to more of helping homeowners return after losing money or having contractors walk out on them." Other drivers confirmed they too expanded their tasks,

We realized this is so cool, we have so many people on our list, we visited so many people in their homes and had a good experience. So we decided, okay, we want to go back to them. Can you sign up neighbors but also what else do you need? Maybe we can help you with other things. What else would you like to get? What are your needs? And we would refer people to some services.

So I knew home rebuilding was important but I also, we served as kind of a clearinghouse for many health issues. We referred people to mental health services, you know we did everything. We would give people someone who had managed to move back to the neighborhood, many of whom were elderly, there was a really high number of elderly pre-Katrina. You know we would give people drives. We would feed people meals. We would pick up trash off the street. We would do anything. Rebuilding was kind of the major thing we were doing but we wanted to really impact the neighborhood in as many ways as possible. One of the things we did in the second year that we were there was start a community garden. And we still, I think [nonprofit A] still has the community garden program in the neighborhood because there's no grocery stores there, there's no place to get fresh produce. There was also sort of this wealth of knowledge among older people in the neighborhood about growing food because they had all done it before the storm. So we got a couple of people to donate land to us in the Lower Ninth Ward and we put in gardens. You know, we tried, the whole idea was to do whatever needed doing

We held community events to bring the community together to pick people up. We had a laundry mat in a doublewide trailer. Just a place so you could wash clothes. You know, all those things. We had a tool shed where people could come borrow a lawn mower because their lawn mower was still flooded out, or equipment to gut their houses. We had a whole tool shed – a tool lending library. So, as I saw the need, I would just find a way to have the resource there.

In some situations, a group may choose to expand from addressing recovery related tasks to addressing more systemic needs in the area such as poverty and workforce development. One driver explained how while the ERG will still work on rebuilding tasks they will also be expanding to address the issue of creating skilled youth.

We're also trying to expand in terms of our youth employment. So that's kind of our next big thing. We're going to keep the home building but increase the number of job opportunities for local young people. Because, education is one of the things that is improving in New Orleans but we need to continue to work towards that by providing young people with well paying, meaningful jobs that can give them careers. Whether it's the construction industry or not, it's really important to the health of our city.

At the time of their founding, seven groups formed to address solely a hazard-generated need, four to address a solely response-generated need, and nine formed to address some combination of these needs. All but four ERGs have over their lifespan, evolved the type of task



they address from their founding. Today six, address hazard-generated needs, none address solely response-generated needs, nine address latent needs, one addresses a combination, and four are closed or inactive. The evolution of these tasks are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

*Evolution of Tasks*

<b>Number of Groups</b>	<b>Related Task at Founding</b>	<b>Current</b>
2	Hazard-generated	Closed
3	Hazard-generated	Hazard-generated
2	Hazard-generated	Latent need
2	Hazard-generated/ Latent need	Latent need
1	Hazard-generated/ Response-generated	Closed
3	Hazard-generated/ Response-generated	Hazard-generated
3	Response-generated	Latent need
1	Response-generated	Inactive
1	Response-generated/ Latent need	Latent need
1	Response-generated/ Hazard-generated/ Latent need	Response-generated/ Hazard-generated/ Latent need
1	Response-generated/ Hazard-generated/ Latent need	Latent

Throughout their lifespans the ERGs in this study continually worked to address unmet needs in the community. Several of the unmet needs the ERGs formed to address were met. Other times the group discovered additional unmet needs and elected to address them.

**Conclusion**

ERGs formed and institutionalized in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes in the two years following Hurricane Katrina. Factors that lead to ERG formation include community situational

context, unmet needs, and driver resources. This study discovered that emergent groups did not all “emerge” similarly and could in fact be differentiated by the driver of group formation and when group formation occurred in relation to institutionalization. Once formed, groups took on hazard-generated or response-generated tasks while many simultaneously addressed latent needs in the community. The groups consisted of individuals and organizations that varied in terms of their extent of involvement with the ERG and the tasks and activities they addressed related to the ERG. ERGs expanded and extended both their structure and tasks many times in their lifespans to this point. All but four of the twenty ERGs represented in this study are still active today. The factors related to ERG formation is discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE: GROUP FORMATION

The first research question for this study asked: what factors led to the formation of emergent recovery groups (ERGs) post-Katrina. This research found three factors involved in the formation of all ERGs represented in this study. The first section discusses the role of the post-Katrina situational context in group formation. The second section addresses the role of unmet needs in group formation and the third section the role of resources. Themes related to these factors were discovered to be true for the majority of ERGs in this study regardless of how the groups came together.

### **Post-Katrina Community Situational Context**

It is clear from data analysis across all interviews that the post-Katrina environment in the Greater New Orleans (GNO) area had a significant influence on the formation of the ERGs in this study. The elements making up the post-Katrina environment were not the sole reason for group formation for any one of the groups but the atmosphere was a factor for each group. It was not just one of the elements of the post-Katrina environment but the confluence of them that seemed to facilitate group formation. The scope and scale of the damage, blame placement and frustration with government at all levels, the threat of not being able to rebuild parts of the community, and the feelings of a collective responsibility all converged to set the stage for the ERGs in this study to form.

The scope and scale of Katrina was complete and widespread. The amount and breath of damage was enough to overwhelm whatever systems were in place to address recovery. There was immense damage to the physical environment such as homes, other built structures, public infrastructure, and the natural world.

In terms of things that were going on here I mean there was so much going on in every dimension of recovery that you can think of—housing, education,

transportation, economic recovery. You know, every dimension of city life that you can think of. And I think, personally, not to over analyze, but I think when I came back here I really felt overwhelmed. I was not sure where I could contribute initially.

I moved back to a city that was at night, mostly dark, hardly any streetlights up, no traffic lights ... very quiet. Only a small fraction of the city was able to move back because so much of the city had flooded, 80%. That was catastrophic flooding, not just little bitty flooding.

And it was, you know, infrastructure, in disarray, businesses were closed, streets were closed, electricity wasn't on to a lot of the city even a year after the storm. It was, it's kind of hard to describe. It was heartbreaking.

There was a comparable amount of social damage. Residents had had lost friends and family, there was a need for physical and mental healthcare, and other social services. One driver said, "You know every single support system that is built up over generations in a neighborhood, like that's just completely destroyed when something like this happens." Two other drivers said,

We were just trying to figure out how to address all these issues that you have after a major disaster like this and we knew nothing about that. I think that was just a challenge in itself. Just how to do it? How do you bring people back? How do you rebuild a community? You know, mentally, physically and emotionally. How do you do that?

I could actually see just how devastated the city was. I mean half the people were gone. Certain neighborhoods, particularly the Lower Ninth Ward where I ended up working, completely depopulated after the storm, just because every house had been damaged.

As one driver said, "the needs were almost unfathomly long-term". The amount of damage created a recovery situation that was undoubtedly going to be a long-term process.

Many of the drivers of the ERGs included in this study blamed the scope and scale of the damage on the failure of the federal levee system and subsequent flooding, not on the actual storm itself. This blame placement reflects an anger and frustration with the government, at all levels for not protecting residents.

This was a massive engineering screw up and of all people, it was the federal government's fault... a federally caused disaster, caused by humans, not by Mother Nature...It's easier for people to go to sleep at night thinking it was Mother Nature. It's harder for people to, it's less palatable to people to, that they revolt against the idea that it's all the government's fault that these levees were improperly built.

As you know the US Corps of Engineers designed and oversees the construction of levees but our local levee boards were responsible for inspecting and maintaining them. Both of these groups failed in their respective missions and that resulted in levee breaks that drowned over 80 percent of our city over three and a half weeks. Can you even imagine what it would feel like if 80 percent of your city was standing in water for three weeks and the results of that water and the mold and just the devastation?

It was a man-made disaster. It was the failure of the federal flood control infrastructure, the demise of the wetlands, and the shipping channel of the Mississippi Gulf River Outlet serving as a conduit allowing the storm surge to come in adversely.

As one driver said as a result of blame placement there was a, "a tremendous loss in confidence in government". Individuals felt that if recovery were to happen it would not be at the hand of the government.

[Katrina] was kind of the triggering event. I think there was a very profound sense at that time that people had to, that people we were going to be responsible for a city's recovery. Not the government. I don't think that I could over-state that enough.

We just saw that the help wasn't going to be coming from anywhere. If we were going to do it, it was gonna have to be done ourselves. Pretty much, the cavalry was not showing up, so to speak...the government wasn't here to help us. That's for sure.

There was an assumption early on that government would not help, or at least would not adequately help individuals recover. Nor did the government, in drivers' view, do anything to demonstrate that they were capable of doing anything to help residents recover. One prevalent example noted by several drivers was the Louisiana state-run Road Home Program.

I've heard a lot of people say that losing everything they owned was not as hard as having to work with the Road Home... Across the board, it didn't matter who

you were, it's not like famous people or rich people got better treatment than others. Everyone got treated badly in the Road Home Program, [it was an] incompetently ran program.

Related to the inadequate recovery assistance from the government the perception of many ERG drivers that government was threatening not to rebuild some areas of the city. It was reported by several drivers that they felt the government would not provide funds for certain neighborhoods to rebuild. The threat that certain neighborhoods would not be rebuilt was a real fear among residents.

A commonly reported instance was related to the Bring New Orleans Back Commission, an urban recovery planning group working under the direction of New Orleans officials. The Commission released a map to the public, referred to as "The Green Dot Map". The map, as the name suggests, depicted several neighborhoods slated to be turned into green space. More situations such as this instigated the fears of many residents that some neighborhoods would not be allowed to rebuild.

At the time, there was an overwhelming sense of place among those still in the New Orleans area. Residents were holding onto their ties to family, culture, and a sense of community. Drivers reported that post-Katrina there was a collective sense among residents that for the city as a whole to recover all of the neighborhoods had to rebuild. This collective sense contributed to the formation of many of these groups. In particular, the perceived threat from government officials that some neighborhoods would not be allowed to come back (e.g., The Green Dot Map) generated a rallying atmosphere that supported group formation. One driver said, "When they came out with the initial plan of green dots... people got together and said, 'you can't tell us we can't go back to our homes'." Other drivers also noted The Green Dot Map,

Early on, they were talking about making the Lower Ninth Ward green space. That's a decision that should only be made by that community. No government or anybody has the right to do that. But they did that and that created a problem from day one.

Immediately after Katrina...there was some very misguided efforts initially and there was sort of an infamous plan that placed big green dots on several flooded neighborhoods and suggested, that some of these neighborhoods should become green space.

Not only did these threats contribute to the anger towards the government but it also invoked a fear that if residents did not initiate recovery efforts themselves, their neighborhoods; and New Orleans as a whole both would both be prevented from recovering.

Everybody was kind of helping each other because we were all in the same boat. All we really had was each other. So it wasn't like a race to prove who could get done and the fastest. It was, "How can we bring our whole city back?" I mean it was a very, you know, sober mindset as far as the whole city was destroyed. It wasn't, we knew it didn't matter if Lakeview came back if the whole city didn't come back. And I think every neighborhood felt like we all needed to come back. We all needed to baton down the hatches together. You know? And help each other with the sole purpose of bringing our entire city back.

In light of these contributing factors a widespread sense of responsibility and civic engagement developed in New Orleans. The amount of collective effort that was required to address the overwhelming needs required unique actions that in "normal" times would not have been supported by the community. This sense of duty to help recover was not confined jurisdictional lines.

Individuals and groups all over the country and world wanted to assist in the post-Katrina recovery process. Widespread civic engagement created a supportive environment where individuals had the opportunity to find traction and community buy-in for their recovery ideas. Because of the post-event community situational context, ideas that might have otherwise been outside the realm of possibility were accepted and even encouraged. Similar to the notion of

opportunity in the area, the openness to new people and new ideas allowed groups to form to address recovery needs.

After Katrina, I often say one of the silver linings was that you found this humility in the city and particularly among decision-makers. If you had a good idea, bring it forward. Let's hear it. And so there was an openness to doing things at that time that allowed me to probably, to step forward with an idea that I had in which people wouldn't have said quite so readily, "well, where are your credentials?" So those are the opportunities... if you have an opportunity in a different time and place you'd never be allowed to, you know, [because of] credentialing and whatever.

Drivers frequently described their perception that no one else was going to help and often developed a sense of responsibility in reaction. Many drivers reported feeling some sense of responsibility to contribute to either the broad recovery of the city, bringing the pre-flood population back to New Orleans, or in meeting the specific perceived need. Feeling a responsibility to contribute to recovery efforts led individuals to find ways to help. There was such significant consensus surrounding the sense of responsibility to help that it is worth sharing a number of quotations as examples.

- I decided that probably no one else would do it. I'm not a quitter. That can be a strong point, or a weak point. So, I don't quit.
- ... there's no one to tell me that I can't do it. And there's no one else to do it. Why not me? So I just pretty much took matters upon my own self.
- If I was going to stay in New Orleans, if people were going to come back, then I needed to do something to help out.
- I basically found myself in a situation where I felt the right thing to do was to commit to this recovery.
- I just somehow made a conscience decision about an issue I felt very passionately about. And plus, I could make a difference. I still get a little emotional talking about it.
- I started thinking about my needs personally as opposed to the community and how it was suffering. That became a battle within myself.



- I've been enjoying this beautiful city for a long time. You know I get a lot out of New Orleans and as a musician I got a lot out of New Orleans. When I came back from evacuation it was clear to me that I wanted to participate in the rebuilding process.
- The main thing was, for me, I just so strongly felt that I had to do something to stay in the city. My family's been there for seven generations, and I felt like the city had given my family a home, and jobs, and a place to live and play for all those years, and that the city had nothing to give anymore. I felt it was my responsibility to give back to the city.
- Me personally, it was just a personal decision. I hadn't volunteered in about six or seven years and it was something that was missing in my life... I decided to make volunteering a part of my life no matter what, and I started volunteering a minimum of half my time.

This sense of responsibility to help manifested in these individuals forming groups to address unmet needs.

Not only did feelings of individual responsibility to address needs lead individuals to form groups but the sense of responsibility was widespread throughout the entire community. There was a collective sense that individuals working together would be the only way New Orleans could recover. This general sense again encouraged the formation of groups and was pervasive in the data.

- Every neighborhood had their own leaders to kinda popped up. People basically just living there, like us, going, "well, we have to do something." We can't just sit here and live here by ourselves and think it will just bring itself back on its own.
- I do not believe that this effort would have jelled except in response to the crisis and sense of vulnerability. The sense of potential loss. A desire to rebuild and rebuild a healthier city that we all experienced after Katrina.
- A group of us got around a table to figure out what we could do in response to Katrina.
- Some of us got back earlier and just kind of made a commitment early on to come back and rebuild our homes and as we were doing that we started galvanizing a recovery for the neighborhood as well.

- There was just a lot of good will, and a lot of expertise that we saw. A lot of synergy.
- Out of this tragedy so many lessons had been learned and what we realized is that Katrina changed everything, Katrina changed every one of us. It was a shock, a wakeup call and people wanted to be involved, they wanted to do something.

The sheer scope and scale of physical and social damage, the lack of adequate response, dissatisfaction among residents with the government, led to individuals feeling responsible for the recovery process. This post-Katrina community atmosphere created a situational context within which ERGs could form and grow.

### **Unmet Needs**

The post-event community situational context created an environment that propelled the formation of these groups. There was such widespread damage, sense of collective responsibility, and lack of trust in the government to facilitate recovery that it became evident there was a need for groups to form. It was within this context that the drivers of group formation (i.e., the individual or individuals that initiated group formation) observed unmet needs. It was reported by drivers that every single ERG included in this study formed to address an unmet need in the community. This finding is consistent with the findings of the literature (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Forrest, 1978; Form & Nosow, 1958; Fritz, Rayner, & Guskin, 1958; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings, 1978; Wenger, 1992; Zurcher, Taylor, & Key, 1970). Two themes related to unmet needs arose during the course of data analysis including how the driver of the ERG learned there was a need and what population/ location had the unmet need.

Regardless of what the need was drivers learned there was a need and felt that given their personal situation they wanted to work towards addressing the need. They became aware of unmet needs in a variety of ways. The first way they discovered there was an unmet need was

hearing of the need first hand from survivors. One driver wanted to contribute to the recovery of his community but was not sure how he could help until he asked his fellow survivors what they needed.

I needed to get a feel from the people if they even really wanted that [his help]... If you'd told me to name a hundred things about what my purpose was, the community center would not have made the list.

Similarly, another driver held community meetings before he formed a group to ensure that the community members and survivors would be interested in being a part of the group. "We started holding community meetings looking for a shared vision for a community resource center and ultimately fifteen hundred heads of household signed onto a petition in support of the creation of this resource." One driver that was not native to New Orleans explained how helping one local family rebuild their home led to other survivors in the neighborhood asking him for help to the point that group formation occurred.

It was really during the course of working on that one house, which was all I had planned on doing, that in the Lower Ninth Ward I realized the need. People kept stopping by wondering why [we] were building a house and if we could help them rebuild their house.

Another driver reported that others in the community knew he had a professional background in education. After Katrina, survivors sought out his help, "They asked me to come to their school to see if I could help them."

Others formed an ERG after seeing the need in-person or through a media outlet. For example, one person explained that she was trying to find a way to contribute to recovery. Through watching the news she was able to find an unmet need that she thought she could form a group to address.

And so thinking about that, carefully monitoring the news, I began to notice that one of the biggest issues, among the many critical issues, that kept appearing in the news was education. It was just something, it's kind of interesting because

there were so many critical things, but that was one of the ones that resonated with people.

The way in which drivers became aware of the need, the outlet through which they found it, or whether they went looking for the need or the need found them does not seem significant. What does seem significant, however, is that all of those who participated in this research and participated in the founding of an ERG at some point learned there was a need and felt that forming a group would allow them to address the need.

In the process of identifying an unmet need and forming a group, ERGs often narrowed their focus to meeting the needs of a specific population and or a specific geographic area. Examples of specific populations that groups formed to help had needs including residents that experienced contractor fraud, pet owners, teachers, and children.

The people we were helping were teachers and educators... Being a teacher in New Orleans during Katrina wasn't an easy thing to do. Your house probably flooded but a lot of them were displaced just like the students. They didn't have the financials, as a teacher, so a lot of them didn't have the resources to put their houses back together. Meanwhile they were in the classroom teaching so they didn't have time to call their contractors and check in on the progress of their house. So it was kind of it was a difficult time to be a teacher in New Orleans so we wanted to help those who were helping the students of New Orleans.

It was families that had lost their homes. Some of them actually had gotten insurance money and contract workers came and demanded large amounts for deposits because there weren't that many contractors out there. They would work for a week and then not show up. So a lot of these people had lost their insurance money and we'd come in to do free labor so that was mostly what we did. We focused on those families that had been hit twice, once by the storm and a second time by the contractors that took their money.

Another driver, who saw that student's voices were missing from the discussion of reshaping the education system in the area, said, "it suddenly occurred to me that bringing young people into this very active debate about education would be something that I might be able to contribute..." Interestingly, it was not just the needs of different populations of survivors that ERGs formed to

address but also the needs of volunteers. One group discovered that nonprofits in the area would not allow minors to assist with rebuilding because of liability concerns.

There were a lot of groups that started coming to New Orleans and wanted to get involved. There were several nonprofits that were around but a lot of those nonprofits were very concerned with minors participating. They were doing some pretty dangerous work so that a lot of those kids that were coming to New Orleans were finding it actually difficult, from out of town, and then locals had the same problem, being turned away by some of the other organizations.

Another driver was inspired to form his ERG after volunteering himself in New Orleans and finding a need for a group to provide a more holistic volunteer experience for others that were interested in coming down to volunteer, “I went down to volunteer in 2007 and then I saw a need for an organization that would actually provide a volunteer experience that was more than just working on the homes.” With an influx of individuals into the area to work on recovery-related tasks it is unsurprising that they too had needs.

ERGs formed to work in concentrated blocks, neighborhoods, or parishes. The focus on location came about for a few reasons. The first was because the driver felt no one in the area was addressing the needs. One ERG that formed did so because while visiting New Orleans on a service trip the driver saw a need in one specific neighborhood not being met. The participating founder of this ERG said, “So while there were other group using volunteers to build and rebuild houses in neighborhoods all over New Orleans no one was doing it in the Lower Ninth Ward when we started.” Second, the founder, or founders, lived in the area the group formed in and saw the needs first hand. They wanted to contribute to their immediate area so the group focused their efforts there. One driver explained that she was working in the Lower Ninth Ward because, “it just so happens that I was raised in the Lower Ninth Ward and it’s been one of the hardest hit areas.” The geographic areas the groups formed in were a function of where the driver found an unmet need.

The post-Katrina community situational context created an environment ripe with unmet needs that inspired individuals to form into groups to address those needs. These needs varied widely and were present in many groups of people and in concentrated geographic areas. Yet, in order for these groups to form the drivers needed resources.

### **Driver**

Discovering there was an unmet need in the pre- Katrina community situational context was not on its own enough for a group to form. The driver of the group needed resources. Contrary to the pre-existing literature on emergent groups (Kreps & Bosworth, 1994; Forrest, 1978; Neal & Phillips, 1995; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985) this study shows that a single individual initiated the formation of the majority of ERGs (n=15). Yet, the driver of group formation whether an individual or individuals needed resources for their groups to form. The resources of the drivers included time, financial support, knowledge and skills, and the ability to network to find these resources.

### **Time**

Through the course of this research, it became evident that forming a group is a large time commitment for the driver. Two significant factors emerged from the interviews as hallmarks of the ability of the drivers to commit a significant amount of time to the formation of the group and sustain that commitment over the ERG's lifespan. The first was the employment status of the driver. Several drivers were unemployed/retired pre-Katrina. Drivers often reported quitting their jobs to make time to form their group. One of these drivers said, "I gave up my real estate career that first year because... I realized that this is so much of a journey that I'd want to take", and another said, "I quit my other job, I was in it full time." Another driver not only quit her job but also sold her home to finance what would become the group. "I sold that and made a

nice little profit off of it and financed [the ERG] and quit my job.” Another driver even moved to New Orleans from out of state to be able to dedicate the time to form the group “in a three week turnaround, I shut down my home and my life in [state name], and became a fulltime volunteer”.

Second, for the drivers that were living in New Orleans pre-flood, most did not experience significant amounts of direct damage, as a result of the flooding, to their property. In fact, of the sixteen native New Orleanian group drivers only three had severe damage to their property. This situation left the drivers with time to be able to dedicate to the group they would not have had otherwise.

Had I flooded I would have had to spend enormous amounts of time dealing with FEMA, dealing with my insurance company and dealing with my contractor. Meanwhile, probably I couldn't even have been in my own home, based on the amount of destruction. So absolutely, I don't think I could have done it had I been personally harmed like other people.

My story is very unique. I am one of the fortunate ones that did not suffer anything at all. No damages, nothing, because of the part of town, the side of town I live. Unfortunately on the same street I live, my side was completely saved, the other sides of me had water. I guess I was on the high side and they were on the low side of town. My side had nothing so I did not lose anything at all.

Even those that did experience damage to their personal property spoke about rebuilding their own property in conjunction with forming a group to help the entire neighborhood. “Some of us got back earlier and just kind of made a commitment early on to come back and rebuild our homes. As we were doing that we started galvanizing a recovery for the neighborhood as well.” Similarly another driver said, “That's kind of what brought me to doing what I'm doing now. As I went through the process of recovery I realized that there were many things that were, that neighbors could be sharing with each other.” Regardless of the reason, having time allowed drivers to more fully commit and spend their time forming the ERGs.

## **Financial**

Most ERGs needed financial support for the group to form to enable them to begin addressing the need. To the extent that financial resources were necessary, the driver of the group frequently used their personal finances to fund their endeavor. One driver spoke about using her personal finances to fund the tools and equipment that were needed for the group to come together.

At this point I didn't have any money, I'm working on my own money, my own savings. And you know, I had bought tools and equipment. I bought two lawnmowers, and rakes, and mowers for neighbors, people to use and so [once she had those] I was able to coordinate volunteers.

Another driver sold her home to finance what would become an ERG, "I had a house right outside of town; I was able to sell that...and made a nice little profit off of it." One driver used his personal finances to purchase a building that led to the group forming, "I kind of jumped in head first. Took my life's savings and pawned as much as I could." Another driver explained the full amount of personal finances he invested in his group.

Initially it was funded personally. I invested ... I had \$50,000 that I put into this organization to get it started. I ended up draining my savings ... but, at first, I was 29 years old, 30 years old. I didn't have anything, maybe \$30,000 in savings... I drained that as well. It was a lot of personal investment

Another driver even funded the group himself not just during its formation but, over the entire lifespan of the group, "When I ran my organization it was all out of my own pocket... I didn't once think of taking money from the kids that have given up their spring break to come down and help."

Other drivers found pre-existing nonprofits to sponsor them while the driver continued the process of forming the group. For example, one driver explained how the drivers used another nonprofit to financially sponsor them while they formed the group and could take on full responsibility of raising money, "[They were a] fiduciary agent basically... They were an



organization that already existed. We used them as the [financial] umbrella until [organizations name] received status.” Another driver explained how after he had the idea for forming a group he found another nonprofit in the city to sponsor them throughout the group formation process.

And at a pretty early stage I contacted them and met with them and told them what I am doing and they were very helpful as well in building up the organization. They were my sponsor until I had the full 501(c)(3) status and I was able to get donations.

The need for financial support varied from group-to-group depending on the types of tasks they felt they needed to accomplish to address the unmet needs. For example, one group that started just as a website was not concerned with money while forming the group. Others though, such as the drivers that intended to do physical home rebuilding work, needed to find a way to finance their groups before and during group formation.

### **Knowledge & Skill**

Several drivers noted that they had some previous organizational experience. They used this experience while forming the group. Some drivers had nonprofit experience. One driver said, “I had been on boards of directors of nonprofit organizations but had never had any real practical administrative experience until I took over [nonprofit]. That’s how I learned.”

So I had experience with running a nonprofit and what it meant to become a 501(c)(3) and what was needed and so on. So in a sense that was the only path I knew, or the path I did know and so it was, it was sort of the logical path for me, given my background, to create it as a 501(c)(3)c and to run it accordingly.

Several other drivers had experience running a business, which, they noted, afforded them useful skills such as time management and leadership abilities critical to running an effective group.

One driver explained how his business influenced how he ran his ERG, “I have run my own business and I’ve run it fairly tight so that was the only experience that I had. So I ran the nonprofit very tight so that there was like no waste at all.”

Several drivers had a specific skill set that contributed to them having the confidence to address a recovery need that they perceived to be unmet. Some drivers even sought out needs in the community while keeping their particular skills in mind.

I took a long time to figure out what can I do that would really relate to my particular skills. And I thought it's probably not mucking out houses. Not that that's not necessary, but what can I do that would really be unique in a way that someone else wouldn't do? Feel a real need, you know. And so what really, my specialty was disenfranchised voices and bringing them to the public debate. That is what I had been doing for many, many years.

Others had an educational background in the area of the unmet need that they thought would be useful for the tasks the group would be undertaking. One driver said, "I earned a degree, a master's degree in Urban Planning...I had not found an outlet to apply my interest and passion in it until Katrina came along really and I found myself getting involved in this project."

Several drivers had other skill sets, personality traits, or other past experiences that they felt afforded them the skills to be able to form a group. For example, one driver said that despite her lack of experience running a nonprofit, "there were a few things that did prepare me for this work" including,

The speech therapy gave me confidence in my ability to speak to the media and do radio interviews and speak up for the group. I think that was really critical. Funny when someone's having a weakness can turn into a strength. It's remarkable... I was a fitness instructor, a fitness group leader. It's called group fitness instructor and basically getting out and leading exercise. It gave me comfort getting in front of a big group without feeling self-conscious, it helped. I did a lot of volunteer work and I had learned the delicate art of getting people to volunteer.

Another driver noted that he had, "a forte for networking and just started with connecting needs and resources". Some drivers had personality traits that they thought made them able to form a group. "I had absolutely no training. But, I'm an organized, kind of neurotic person". The drivers of ERG formation utilized their personal skills to assist them in forming their groups. Yet, at

times they needed other individuals, with specific skills, to fulfill certain roles for them during the process of group formation.

### **Ability to Network**

When the driver themselves did not have the needed resources or had depleted their own resources group formation began. This is intuitive. If the driver could address the unmet needs by themselves there would be no need to form a group. The driver needed to find other individuals to help join them in forming a group to address the unmet need. One driver summed it up when he explained that the formation of his ERG was a result of, “a number of different threads that were wove together, weaved together to make this happen”, meaning a number of different individuals with unique skills that had to come together for the group to form.

Often drivers enlisted the assistance of their immediate family members to help form the group. This support was often the first type of outside help they utilized. Drivers reported that their family members were the individuals that were physically closest to them. Family members assisted them with specific tasks such as assisting with organizing volunteers, tasks related to the legal aspects of the group, and forming websites for the group. One driver said, “It was just me. My ex-wife was with me for the first season so she did a lot of the organizing of volunteers while I took care of all the financial side of it” while another said, “So it was pretty much my husband and I and my kids and whoever else was around. There weren’t many people.” Another driver employed her son to assist in forming the group.

With the help of my fifteen year old techie...he knew that I wanted to start this group and he said, “well, mom, if you’ll write the check and everything, I’ll create a website and we could put the text on the site and that can be our medium for getting the proper, correct information out there.”... it was just the two of us.

Group drivers found the individuals that began to form the group in numerous ways often relying heavily on their personal pre-existing networks. Some used their connections in the city.

As one driver explained it, she and her husband were already integrated into the community pre-Katrina and she used those connections to establish her credibility while she worked to form the group.

The thing about New Orleans is that it's a small town. And the fact that [her husband] and I had been here for a long time and that we were good citizens and well known to a minor degree. We were sort of normally out there -- professionals in a small city. I mean, I had a lot of credibility just because of that.

Drivers also used colleagues that they knew professionally pre-Katrina to assist in group formation. One driver said, "I've been in the business now for 18 years. Working with people. So I had a network and a net. So it was easier for me to recruit." Another driver said,

I had a network of people that I worked with all over the country who often came together for projects of some similar typed thing... And I knew I could call on these people and that they would be delighted to do what they could for New Orleans. So that was really, so that was one of my great assets, was this circle of colleagues that I knew to help carry this off.

Drivers also reported seeking the assistance of their friends and acquaintances during the process of group formation. For example, one driver explained how once she got the idea to form a group she called everyone she knew that was back in the city to come to the first meeting. "[I] called 30 odd different people and I said look ask anyone you see to come to this meeting, so they did." Similarly another driver said, "I began to think about the idea and it was during the six months after Katrina that I just began writing to my friends, talking to people on the phone, and I tried the idea out almost every place I went." Several drivers explained how the first people to become involved with their efforts to address the unmet need were their friends.

- The first few people on the mailing list were my band and friends.
- Several other students, and a friend of mine, peers of mine at some of the other schools wanted to get involved and volunteer.
- I recruited all my friends. I had never done a nonprofit before or been involved in one in any way. I had one create a website, which was great,

and she took care of that whole end of it, and another friend took care of any donations that came in... so my friends helped me enormously.

A number of the ERGs included in this study were neighborhood-based. When this was the case, drivers tended to use their neighbors as a resource of individuals to help form the group. One driver said, “You kept track while you were away of who was where but in the grocery store you just saw people from all over the place and it was a matter reaching out first.” Another,

It was a few neighbors and people that I heard of in the area, within the community, that were coming back or that had come back pretty quick like myself. I mean, I had not known them before the storm and we all kind of met at the local school, catholic elementary school. [The school] was kind of the hub where the Red Cross was set up and some services. So it became kind of a hub where people would gather and see each other.

Notably, the composition of the groups whose drivers were not from Louisiana was, at first, almost entirely of individuals from their home states. For example, “our activity was mostly seeking local volunteers from our community, or the adjacent communities and going down and working.”

Yet, drivers did not just utilize their pre-existing networks while forming their groups. Drivers reported making new connections in the process of group formation. One driver said of what became the leadership of her group, “I didn’t know any of these people before the flood and we all came together because of the flood”. Another driver explained that she needed individuals to join her group who were prominent members of the community in order for her group to have political clout; thus, she forged new connections with, “key community leaders who sat at tables, universities and in a lot of different civic organizations.”

There were other examples of drivers seeking out specific individuals with specialized skills to assist with group formation. Several drivers gave the example of finding someone to assist with 501(c)(3) paperwork so that the driver could form the group.

There were a few teachers and faculty advisors that were involved in the organization and luckily one of them had experience starting a nonprofit and filing all the necessary paperwork because he was a certified financial planner. So he actually got us through a lot of the paperwork and all that stuff.

Another driver explained how others with particular skills that could contribute found her as she began to form a group.

They came to me. One of them was a Civil Engineer who had seen me and knew I didn't know what I was doing. He knew that I had no engineering background and so he came to me and offered to help out and he found the work very rewarding because it was an opportunity for him to do things and say things he could never have done along by doing it with the group

Another driver found that she needed temporary volunteers before and while she was forming the group. She explained how she found the temporary volunteers,

A Christian organization came in and put up a huge tent and kids and people from all over the country started coming in, pouring in to this camp and living in tents and showering under hoses because there was no place to live. And I heard that they were you know, just putting volunteers anywhere there was need, and anybody could request volunteers. So I went over there and said, "look, well, could I get volunteers to come to my house everyday so I can start cleaning my neighborhood?"

The way in which drivers of group formation found others to join them in forming the group varied. Most often drivers found additional individuals to help form the group through word of mouth.

The calls went out and we saw people places, asked people to come and we just made it so anybody that we saw who would be interested in coming was invited and 120 people showed up that first Monday.

Everyone came together and everyone at that point became part of this effort and then it just spread like wildfire because if you went around the community people wanted to be more involved, wanted to... get more petitions or participate so it was just quite outstanding.

The neighborhood meetings that were occurring all throughout the city provided an opportunity for drivers to find members to form their group. One driver said she, "started going to all the

neighborhood meetings that were happening around town; there were hundreds at the time, and just started letting people know that this was what I was doing.”

Social media and the creation of websites by the driver also served to spread the word about groups coming together. Interestingly, every single ERG included in this study has an online presence in the form of either a website and or a social media page. One driver reflected on how she created a website before she ever even formed the group and then used it as the tool that brought the group together.

Well, the next big step I had to make is I got to be more than just a website and got to be more than just an idea and a mission so I thought, well maybe we can give this website some traction and get people logging on and looking at it if we had something called members.

Relatedly, several drivers utilized local media such as local TV programs, *The Times Picayune*, and radio stations to spread the word that they were forming groups.

And one of the first things I did when I opened my house up was have this press conference I invited Entergy and our city council people, and the mayor and lots of people, hoping that the word would spread and get into the newspapers and those people who I did not have the chance to contact yet or have contact information on. Everybody was reading, no matter where they evacuated in the world, they were reading the Times Picayune to find out what was going on at home. So I was hoping that my neighbors would see that this was happening in our neighborhood and they would contact me. Which they did, eventually.

You know there was days were we would just call a local radio station. We'd put in a word of mouth and we'd have 3,000 people show up to service day...So it was incredibly easy to get volunteers.

One driver explained how after the local paper wrote an article about the work he was doing others in the community saw it and offered him assistance which contributed to him being able to form the project into a group.

The local paper wrote an article about it...and it turns into a two page article...And there was a pastor in a church pretty close by... he read the article and the next day he called me up and he asks do you need help? I said, yea, that

would be great. And he says he has Americorps. He says I can send you four Americorps for two days a week and they will come and help you.

As evidenced in the discussion above, the formation of ERGs is a process; there is not always a clear point in time when the group considers themselves formed. The drivers in this study clearly showed that the groups forming was a process. Most ERGs in this study began with a single individual and extended and expanded until they became a group. Regardless, all were influenced by the post-Katrina situational context, the discovery of an unmet need, and the driver being able to have or access resources for the group.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the factors that lead to the formation of ERGs. The first section reviewed the post-Katrina situational context as it contributed to ERG formation. The second section explained how each ERG formed to address an unmet need. The final section explained how the resources of the driver were critical in the ERGs forming. The next chapter reviews the factors leading to their continued existence



## CHAPTER SIX: FACTORS RELATED TO LIFESPAN

The extension and expansion of emergent recovery groups (ERGs) is propelled by the extent to which they are able to extend and expand structure and tasks at various times. Extension and expansion of structure is intimately tied to the extension and expansion of tasks. Without extending and expanding the structure of the organization new tasks cannot be taken on and without new tasks to take on there is no reason for the organization to extend or expand. It is not completely clear from the data collected if the evolution in structure motivates the group to evolve their tasks or if the converse is true. Either way, it is clear, looking across the ERGs in this study, that the extension and expansion of tasks and structure is what propels the group forward. Without tasks for the group to take on, there is no reason for the group to have any type of structure or for the group to even exist. Extension and expansion can be thought of as intervening factors that facilitate long lifespans of ERGs. Understanding what propels the lifespans of the ERGs requires understanding the factors that propel the extension and expansion of the groups. This study found that three key factors contributed to extension and expansion – integration into the community, access to resources, and the continued presence of a group driver(s). The findings related to the second research question concerning the factors that lead to extended lifespans of ERGs are discussed in this chapter in three sections: 1) integration, 2) resources, and 3) leadership. Factors contributing to lifespan are relevant to all ERGs regardless of type.

### **Integration**

ERG integration can be thought of as the group becoming a part of the communit(ies) in which they work as well as a part of the organizational recovery community. While the individuals that make up the ERG may have been integrated into the community themselves pre-

Katrina, they still went through the process of integrating the group, as its own entity, into the community. Every single ERG reported forming partnerships or affiliations with other organizations throughout their lifespans. Affiliations with other nonprofits (both pre-existing and emergent), government departments, and or other networking groups or coalitions were all critical in the groups becoming integrated into the community. ERGs were able to find other organizations in both informal and formal ways.

An indicator of informal integration of the ERGs into the broad community was acceptance by the community. Community buy-in was something that started to build during group formation but also continued to develop later in the lifespan of the organization. Integration into the community was often reported as being a conscious goal of the ERG. One driver explained, “I mean, we’ve outreached. Outreach has always been a key area of focus for us. So we always, especially in the early years, spent a lot of time speaking before neighborhoods, you know, neighborhood organizations.”

One driver explained how physically locating the group where they worked helped make them part of the community.

The key was, that it [the group] was in the neighborhood. It wasn’t downtown in an office building. It was convenient. It was in a place that people were familiar with their surroundings. People knew us and trusted us and we knew them and trusted them. It was all those that was all essential for making this happen.

Sometimes this community buy-in was achieved simply by the groups having a presence in the community but other times it is about the groups earning acceptance into the community. Several drivers spoke about how it took time for the group to create a positive track record by continually proving to the community that the group was doing what they said they were going to do.

We were not a known quantity we sort of had to be there for a while and show people that we were actually getting the work done that we said we were going to get done and that we meant what we said we were going to do.

The relationship with the community usually happened when you're working on one families home. Other people in the community notice you're doing something and that interaction is made. What is this group? How can I get help? What kinds of things are you doing? That's usually how we integrated into the community...Or they were just happy, they came by and told us they were happy we were there. So it was a positive, it was always a positive experience whenever we interacted with the community that we were working in.

We got to know the people whose houses we were working on and they introduced us to people. It was all sort of very organic that way. Other than [our first client] I didn't know anyone in the neighborhood when I started. But I ended up knowing almost everybody that lives in the Lower Ninth Ward.

There are consequences for groups that do not integrate into the community. As one driver pointed out, groups and organizations that had come in to work in his neighborhood that failed to integrate into the community left.

People come with great ideas, but don't know the community. Instead they try to force those ideas that aren't going to work and you're trying to be nice and let them know where you come from and they apply and they work, that don't work here. And this creates a confrontation. And most of them leave because they think their right.

Becoming integrated into the broader community gave ERGs staying power. They were not just accepted by the neighborhoods they worked in but the community bought into the groups by becoming a part of the group.

Formal integration into the organizational recovery community manifested by ERGs joining network groups. The goal of network groups is to connect groups that are involved in the recovery process for the purpose of sharing resources and supporting one another. Additionally these network groups support work together on shared goals to achieve different aspects of recovery. Network groups consisted of existing nonprofits as well as ERGs. Several ERGs in this study participated in these formal networks. Some network groups included coalitions of similar

nonprofits (e.g., groups that all worked on rebuilding homes). One driver explained the process of a network group of like nonprofits coming together.

We're talking 2 ½ years after the storm we all sort of realized that we were doing the same work and that we should probably get around a table and talk about what we were doing. And that was kind of a big deal because everyone was really sort of proprietary about what they were doing and you know, people in nonprofits are kinda funny, especially back in those days. Because, you know, funding sources were limited and so you didn't want to be, you know, giving away too many trade secrets. Eventually all just sort of realized that there was no reason that we shouldn't be talking about what we were doing and presenting a united front.

Interestingly, this network group was initiated by ERGs that then had pre-existing nonprofits join. This development clearly demonstrates the legitimacy, influence, and inclusion of ERGs into the recovery community.

Long-term Recovery Committees (LTRC) (e.g., groups comprised of a wide range of organizations involved in recovery) also allowed the groups that worked through them to achieve similar ends. LTRCs brought organizations working in different task areas together in an effort to coordinate recovery work in the city. There were also network groups that offered broader support for all nonprofits, both pre-existing and emergent groups (e.g., a forum to come together to talk about challenges groups and nonprofits in the city were facing).

When we first came back we found some others. We meet every Monday morning for coffee and just talk about what we are going through. Sharing resources, knowledge, whatever it is. It has now grown into [organization name]. So we started informally meeting every Monday and then the numbers kept growing and to the point they have an office, they have their own offices, and all that good stuff.

Interestingly, many of these network groups were themselves ERGs. Involvement in these types of network groups supported the personnel of the ERGs and allowed the group to connect with additional resources. A driver of one of the ERGs that was also a formal network group explained, "We would become friends as we would network, and became a community. I

think that was appealing for them, to get support”. This contributed to the groups being able to continue to address the unmet needs. The same driver spoke about the ERGs that joined the network group explaining, “Some of them, by design, they wanted to do what they needed to do, so they had their niche. By and large, most of them felt that the need to collaborate and be in a community of recovery people was a good thing”.

Another driver explained how valuable it was to be a part of a network group, “I think the notion of nonprofits coming together, you know something like the [network group] was invaluable, in terms of information sharing. It was just invaluable.” And, another, “But just one thing that I’d like to stress is that I think over the years we have really accomplished a lot through our partnerships.”

These groups provided a support system for the ERGs as they were working to become integrated into the community and continue to address tasks related to unmet needs. Membership in these groups also reflects that others in the recovery arena viewed these groups, even though they were new, as being part of the nonprofit community. It shows that the pre-existing groups in the area accepted the ERGs as groups that could contribute to the community.

Beyond belonging in network groups ERGs frequently independently formed partnerships with other groups. Many of the partnerships that formed between nonprofits were informal. For example, one driver said, “We formed a lot of partnerships with other organizations. And up to now we have formed partnerships with many many organizations in the city.” Another stated, “We got established in the neighborhood and we sort of developed a lot of partnerships with other organizations...and sort of developed relationships with other organizations in the vicinity.”

Regardless of the degree of formality associated with them they were critical to the ERGS; yet, as important as partnerships were they took time to develop. One driver said, “It was a good year before we sort of had relationships with other organizations.” And, another said, “So yes we did have good partnerships with people eventually but in the beginning it was kind of tough going.” Often these partnerships were developed through community meetings. In addition to network groups ERGs also sometimes formed at a broader range of meetings taking place in the city.

We would meet you know. I mean we would see each other at different city kind of meetings. There would be city meetings on things to address the recovery. We would come together and we would sit and just share and brainstorm a lot. We shared a lot with Broadmoor and they shared a lot with us. What was working for them. You know, what was working for us. What issues they had. What issues we had and how to address them too. It was not competitive at all in those early, early years. Everybody was kind of helping each other because we were all in the same boat. All we really had was each other.

These partnerships were not always sophisticated and were often limited to a one-way provision of a resource to the ERG such as volunteers. As one driver stated, “But pretty much we did not know what we were doing. We just, you know, we just turned to a lot of local churches to send volunteers to help us organize the other street volunteers and just clean up.” Other drivers noted,

Well some of the projects, a group called [organization name]... when I didn't have tools for a specific job they would lend them to me and I would take on people that were on their waiting list. So if there were projects that were easy for my volunteers to do, I would take on things that were on their waiting list.

And other organizations, they call it [organization name] that recruits volunteers, it's a clearinghouse for volunteers in New Orleans. They find people that come to town and want to do service. We're connected to them they can send people to us.

Where informal partnerships existed, it suggests that the ERGs were perceived as legitimate by the group or groups with which they partnered. Interestingly, the ERGs did not

only form partnerships with pre-existing organizations but also with other ERGs. This suggests these groups became well known throughout the city as they were able to find each other.

These partnerships were formed in an effort to share resources and support one another but also to support the overall recovery of the impacted area. Several drivers discussed the importance of groups working together to create a domino effect to impact a positive trajectory of recovery. For example, one driver stated, “So if you can collaborate with other non-profits, and get the community to make it whole again, then job well done.” Other drivers stated,

I believe that it's very important that nonprofits and other organizations work together. Because I see everything in a more holistic way. So I think it's very important that we work together. And I approach all these groups in those ways.

So that began the volunteer coordination and so after I had this press conference I ran into him and he said, I'm really I love what you're doing I think it's going to cause a domino effect. What can I do to help you?

I work with most of them [nonprofits] because I listen to their mission And, if you listen to their mission, all of their missions are good for rebuilding a city or community. It just says you know, our lives intertwine with most. Most of the non-profits... But I've worked with them on some level since '07. You know, here there, I'm helping them with something to sustain themselves.

These ERGs integrated into, and contributed to, the organizational recovery community in the area. Recognition that groups needed to work together for recovery to be achieved indicates that group support of one another contributed to their longer lifespans.

Integration into the organizational recovery community allowed the ERGs to access resources, tangible and financial that were needed for the ERG to extend and expand the tasks they were working on. Integration into the community at large allowed ERGs to be recognizable for individuals that may want to work with the group allowing for tasks to be completed and the structure to evolve.

## Resources

Resources, such as the ones garnered from being integrated into the recovery community and forming partnerships, gave the ERGs the ability to extend and expand the group structure and tasks. Resources, including personnel for the group and funding are required for the group to continue to exist. Continued access to resources allows the group to keep progressing forward.

Institutionalization (using receipt of 501(c)(3) as a proxy) provides a means for the ERG to gather resources for the group. Similar to the way in which integration allowed the ERGs in this study to access resources so too does institutionalization. ERGs pursuit of institutionalization was found to be closely related to the groups interest in accessing funding. Many of the ERGs relied on the personal finances of the group drivers, organizational sponsorship, or individual donations during the group formation process. Yet, financial needs of the group tended to increase beyond what they were at the point of formation. Receipt of 501(c)(3) allows ERGs to access additional sources of funding. Because the groups are considered legitimate organizations by virtue of a 501(c)(3) designation, they are able to apply for grants and access funding through foundations and other organizations. One driver stated, “It was suggested to us that, in terms of foundation-ability and credibility and all the rest that we, would be better off as our own nonprofit.” Another described,

As an organization becomes more successful and you begin to develop in the foundational world, foundation people talk to other foundation people. And, you begin to develop a track record in terms of your statistics of your success and everything else. You start approaching bigger foundations and asking for bigger grants.

Yet, even when ERGs received 501(c)(3) status, it still often took time for the ERGs to be perceived as legitimate by funding organizations.

There were grants that we were applying for, left and right, some small, and some big ... because we didn't have much history. It was really tough to get awarded



any grants. It took a little time to grow that. It took two years for us to be able to get some grant opportunities.

One driver explained how he could not continue personally funding the group. In order for them to fundraise the ERG needed to become a legitimate nonprofit.

But you know there was a lot more work to be done. And, you know, if I wanted to continue the work, you know, I'm not a rich person I needed to sort of do it by forming a nonprofit and fundraising.

Other drivers filed for 501(c)(3) at the suggestion of friends, who saw the potential for the group if they were to become legitimate.

My cousin, who helps me... file the papers. He is involved in a couple nonprofits locally, so he says, "if you want some legitimacy and if you want to get the big donors, you've got to be a 501(c)(3)". So, I agreed.

A friend of ours said to me, "you've got to incorporate, people are gunna want to give you money and they're gunna need tax write offs, this is a good thing that you're doing, you can turn this into an organization".

A driver explained how without 501(c)(3) they could not raise the funds the group would need to address the unmet need.

We realized we would need to place ourselves in a situation where we could raise funds to promote the project. We could do advocacy. To do outreach. All of those things. And to raise money. It was kind of self-evident that we would have to become a 501(c)(3).

Another driver spoke about how receipt of 501(c)(3) allowed him to write grants for the ERG that allowed him to develop programs to address the need, "I got my 501(c)(3). I won a bunch of grants. I had almost 100% success [with getting grants] of almost \$2 million. So I was able to develop these programs."

Additionally, groups reported that individual donors were more willing to donate when the group had 501(c)(3) status. Individuals and other organizations donating felt the ERG was more legitimate once they institutionalized. One driver explained how 501(c)(3) status would

make individuals more likely to donate, “You should eventually apply for a 501(c)(3) because it’s going to be better for you in terms of getting foundation money and grants. And that was the only reason why we cared.” Another driver said,

I guess mostly so that we would be able to raise some money... People are much more willing to give money to recognized nonprofits, legal ones. First of all because of the tax advantage and second of all there’s some security that it’s really doing what it says it does and so on. It was mostly in order to be able raise money.

Some drivers pointed out that even with 501(c)(3) some donors were unwilling to donate to newly formed groups. One said, “Well, I filed because people couldn’t give you money and deduct it unless you were a 501(c)(3) and obviously we needed money especially for [the program].” And another said,

The demographics are such in order to do this work, you need funding. To be eligible for grants you need to be a 501(c)(3) and you really need a three year track record because funders don’t want to fund organizations that aren’t proven. The frustration of Katrina’s aftermath -- The Katrina/Bush Foundation raised all this funding in the immediate aftermath, but if you were not a pre-existing pre-Katrina 501(c)(3), you weren’t eligible for their funding. So no matter how good your work was, if you didn’t have that three year track record, you were not on the radar of the funders.

The most significant reason for filing for 501(c)(3) was for the group to be able to access more funds. Access to funding means that groups can continue to meet the need for which they formed and others that the group may choose to undertake over the course of its lifespan.

Institutionalization was simply a means to allow the group to access resources. One driver summed it up, “the nonprofit is the vehicle, the service delivery vehicle for an organization like ours”.

In addition to greater amounts of monetary resources, diversification of funding also appears to have contributed to the longevity of groups. Groups depended on a variety of different funding sources over their lifespans. Groups tended to start with the personal finances of the

driver and/or funding from a single source (e.g., a single individual donor). As the group became more established they expanded their sources of funds to include a broad individual donations base, grants, and sponsorships from large nonprofits (e.g., United Way). The funds that groups were able to access depended on a variety of factors including 501(c)(3) status, eligibility for grants, the economy, and the length of time since Katrina. Having multiple funding sources allowed the ERGs to be flexible and continue operations even when one stream of funding ended. Having multiple avenues of accessing funding allowed them to extend and expand the tasks they addressed because they were able to fund those new tasks. One driver stated, “Well the first problem – show me the money! That’s for all nonprofits. You have to depend on some money. You don’t know how much. You are constantly finding money.” Others noted,

It has changed. It really depends on which time. There was a time we had very few corporate sponsorships. When the economy collapsed that changed. Some of the corporate sponsorships really went away. And grants, and foundations became more important. And, each individual donor became more important. It just varies depending on what time it is. I think it’s very important that we now start to get more individual donations. And that will diversify our funding structure.

Churches were pouring money in and sending donations. And then there were grants. And so we started writing grants too. We never got any government money. We never went after any government money. We totally went – our money came through the private sector and through the state base and that’s how we were able to sustain ourselves. And then, like two or three years ago... a local foundation came up with a nice chunk of money for us. For two years to help people finish their houses. So it kind of came through that, you know... And when that dried up, we turned to fundraisers.

It's just changing, right? I think initially for us, we couldn't really, at least for me I couldn't see past a [the original program] ten years ago. That was the main ... that was the core project. Now, because we've had some success, we have started taking some of those proceeds and reinvesting into the land...Again, I'll just reiterate that I think the [the original program] is the vehicle, but there are other things that are spinning off from it now that are really exciting. I hope that energy continues.

ERGs consistently reported finding sufficient funding a challenge. Groups reported that funding and the amount of funds being directed to New Orleans for recovery related tasks dwindled over time. As other disasters occurred around the world, media attention and funding were directed away from New Orleans. In fact, only one ERG reported having greater funding now than when they first formed and filed to become a recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Nevertheless, the majority of groups were able to maintain the funding necessary to work toward addressing unmet needs, allowing the group to continue to exist. In the event that the funds could not be raised, the group changed their approach to addressing the need or they disbanded the group. The ability of these groups to overcome the widespread challenge of finding sufficient funding speaks to their ability to be flexible and extend and expand the group.

The second resource that all ERGs included in this study needed was personnel. Depending on the structure of the organization and the types of tasks the group undertook personnel is needed to run the ERGs. Personnel, as discussed in Chapter Four, can be thought to include anyone that is part of the group's structure typically including some combination of a driver's pre-existing social networks (e.g., family, friends, colleagues, neighbors) and post-storm connections (e.g., Americorp volunteers, service learning students, local long-term and short-term volunteers, non-local long-term and short-term volunteers). Receipt of 501(c)(3) in many cases, also allowed the ERGs to expand and extend their personnel either because it gave the group the funds to hire staff or because it legitimized the group. One driver said that once he received status he could then write grants to find the staff he needed to for the group, "Well, as money was coming I knew I could pay them I started bringing people in"; or, as another explained, "By this time we had gotten funding and were able to hire an executive director."

Another driver explained how filing for 501(c)(3) legitimized the ERG, making people willing to volunteer with the group.

There were other benefits of having it as a nonprofit...mostly, the biggest reason was just so that people who wanted to volunteer would know that we are a nonprofit. We've actually gone through the process to be a legal entity. That we've gone through the paperwork to accept donations. And some volunteers won't volunteer unless you have that. If you're just an organization wanting to do good work some people want to see the paperwork even if they're not donating money. So that was the main reason to set it up properly like that.

Maintaining a personnel base allows the ERGs to have the workforce to address the tasks at hand and populate the structure. The ability of ERGs to maintain and grow this personnel base through integration and institutionalization allows the group to expand and extend the structure and the tasks. Several drivers also reported a need to find individuals that have a very particular skill or serve a particular purpose for the group. Finding individuals with special skills to join the group was done when the ERGs first formed but also later in their lifespan. One driver said,

And then to work toward that goal there was a very kind of conscious effort with this most recent election, which just took place, to go out and recruit people with certain qualities. Whether they are folks with a business background, or ties to the ...you know, areas of special needs, such as landscape architects or people with strong nonprofit background, things like that. It was less of a bottom up and more of trying to recruit more directed vs. strategic recruitment for the board this time.

Like with funding, the drivers in this study did not report finding personnel to be a challenge when they first formed. The ease of finding help was due to the influx of volunteers to New Orleans immediately post-Katrina. The ready availability of and access to volunteers allowed groups to extend and expand in the years immediately following Katrina to address the unmet needs in the community. One driver explained how she was easily able to find volunteers soon after the storm.

I quickly realized that many of the volunteers that were coming into the city to help were over at City Park at a place called Good News Camp and they would

dispatch from City Park – that’s where they slept, that’s where they stayed. So I went over there and I got additional volunteers to come over and help.

Another driver explained how with all the civic engagement in the post-Katrina situational context, finding individuals to join the group was easy.

There were people, again, there was just so much engagement at the time. It was very easy to get people involved in something, especially something that was positive. It was very easy. We had lots of volunteers. Once I received status, I brought some of those neighborhood folks into my board, really. They became my board.

The volunteers, it was incredibly easy to get them. You know there was days were we would just call a local radio station. We’d put in a word of mouth and we’d have 3,000 people show up to service day. Because it was, like I said, after Katrina it was really apparent that a lot of people really needed help. And almost everyone needed, I shouldn’t say almost, everyone knew someone that needed help. Even if you lived on the North Shore or outside of New Orleans you had family, friends, or whatever the situation was. So everyone that didn’t flood or even those that did, wanted to help people that were like them or those less fortunate, because they didn’t flood. So it was incredibly easy to get volunteers.

Several ERG drivers reported using the internet to find volunteers. One driver noted, “It was mostly through the internet. The website got picked up by search engines. I think my ex-wife did some social media through Facebook at the time.” Another stated,

Our IT community communications person seeking volunteers from the internet got volunteers from various places in the country—Midwest, from southeast, so while most of our volunteers were local we had volunteers come from other areas and we would meet in New Orleans.

Some groups noted that finding volunteers and other personnel has become more of a challenge as time moved further from Katrina. Volunteers that had come from outside the impacted area found they had to return to their “real lives” and local volunteers moved back towards more normalcy in their lives. The influx of out of state temporary volunteers slowed as the recovery left the focus of mainstream media. As one driver said, “Now a days it’s a little bit harder to get local volunteers.” Another said,

I've had, not good volunteers. I've had great volunteers. In a capitalist society, how long can you volunteer? So there were times when they'd do amazing work, but then they had to leave... to make money, to find their life where ever they left it at. And each time that would happen it was a terrible blow because they were doing so much.

One group even closed down because they could no longer find interested volunteers, "We closed down...in 2012, because it was, people were no longer interested in volunteering there in once they saw lots of other problems had occurred since then."

Groups that adapted to the changes in personnel have been able to continue while those that could not survive without the extreme influx of volunteers shut down. Continued access to financial support and personnel to populate the ERG structure including individuals with specific skill sets allowed the groups to continue to exist. Without access to resources the ERG could not meet the unmet needs they formed to address nor could they evolve to meet additional needs.

### **Group Driver**

Every ERG included in this study appeared to have a strong group driver(s), throughout the lifespan of the ERG. As discussed in Chapter Four, it was more often the case that one person was responsible for the formation of the group. This person, in most cases, remained the driver of the ERG throughout its lifespan. It would appear that this leadership contributes to the longevity of the organization. Throughout the course of the interviews, it became apparent through the rampant use of the pronoun "I" that those being interviewed, i.e., ERG drivers, perceived that they were the clear leaders, drivers, and doers of the ERGs. They perceived themselves as steering the organization, being the keeper of the vision for the ERG, being responsible for day-to-day operations, and propelling the organization forward. They took on tasks related to bringing about their vision for the group, ensured necessary resources are

obtained, and took ultimate responsibility for task completion. For example, one driver explained her critical role in the organization.

Oh, God. Every day is a challenge, but really just making sure that we have enough stuff coming in to keep us operating. And somehow, I think we're just blessed that this happens because pretty much all of us wear so many hats, so it's really hard. I wish I had the time so all I did was grant work, but I also have to help with events. I have to help with volunteer scheduling. Getting groups to come. Alternative spring break groups. At the same time that you need the money to run the [program], you also need the people. And then the buck stops here. The others are depending on me to make sure that it does keep running...Well, we have a board, but they basically depend on me to guide them.

Yet, even when acknowledging that they were the leader and driver of the groups they still recognized that they alone did not make up the group and that others were critical to the functioning of the ERG. As one driver stated,

[The ERG] is not me and my husband. If you look at our website, you'll see we have five board members and a long, long list of advisers with board member. That's what keeps [ERG name] from being not me. Anyone that knows [ERG name] and knows me knows that while I lead it, it is not ... [ERG name] is not [driver's name]. It makes me laugh when people think it is. It takes one person to start something and it takes one person to lead something but one person cannot create an important change.

In addition to the primary driver, several ERGs included in this study had other individuals within the group that took on leadership type roles. These other manifestations of leadership were mostly reported in terms of the clear division of labor within the core of the ERG. An expansion of leadership, meaning more individuals taking on leadership roles seemed to occur when the ERGs began to expand and extend their tasks and structure.

Of the groups that are still active, only three ERGs no longer have the same driver as it did at formation. The drivers of these ERGs cited fatigue, age, and personal health as motivations for stepping down. The groups were able to continue because the original driver was able to identify a new individual to take over and lead the group. The original driver felt a great amount



of trust towards the new leader. One driver said of his replacement, “[she] was going to take over, I mean she had worked with me all along and she knew as much as I did.” Another driver said, “I’m called the founder because I was the one that was here with the original idea but [name of new driver] was called the co-pilot”. The new leader takes on the same role within the organization that the driver of group formation. Both groups that are now completely closed did so because the driver of formation left the group, further supporting the notion that leadership is necessary for the group to sustain itself. The continued presence of a clear driver/leader of the organization was prevalent among the ERGs included in this study.

The ERGs included in this study demonstrate that the groups evolve over the course of their lifespan. ERGs are propelled or held back overtime through the extension and expansion of the structure and tasks of the organization. In order for the ERGs to effectively extend and expand over their lifetime it is necessary for them to be integrated into the community and to have resources and a group driver.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the factors related to the continued existence of ERGs. First, ERGs become integrated into the community resulting in the groups building partnerships that allow them to access resources. Receipt of 501(c)(3) status allows the ERG to raise money and be perceived as legitimate by others. Finally the a clear driver/leader is needed throughout this process to steer the group. The next chapter will provide a discussion of the results of this study.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

The small body of existing literature on emergent groups predominately focused on groups that formed to address needs associated with response. Additionally, the minimal research that does exist on emergent recovery groups (ERGs) has thus far failed to present a clear framework for understanding these groups. There was a need for research on ERGs to fill in gaps in the literature, clarify points, and explore the factors that lead to the formation and continued existence of ERGs. There was suggestion that groups may have emerged to address both response and recovery needs in the post-Katrina New Orleans area; thus, there was opportunity to contribute to the literature on emergent groups by studying the formation and lifespans of ERGs in this area.

Post-Katrina New Orleans was, in fact, an ideal setting to study ERGs as there impacts from Katrina overwhelmed the existing systems both in response and recovery. The immense need seen throughout the Katrina-impacted area led to a number of ERGs forming. This study examined twenty ERGs that formed to serve in post-Katrina Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes and was able to identify factors that lead to the groups to form, the characteristics of the groups throughout their lifespans, and factors that led to their continued existence. This chapter analyzes these findings and discusses their implications.

### **Advancement in Knowledge Regarding Emergent Groups**

The findings of this study both supported and added nuance to the existing emergence literature on a number of topics. This research did confirm that group formation is a social process (Kreps & Bosworth, 1994; Forrest, 1978; Neal & Phillips, 1995; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). This social process can be thought of as the coming together of multiple individuals that find one another through various ways (i.e., word of mouth, geographic proximity, and pre-

existing social networks). Yet, unlike the existing literature, it was found that the initiation of group formation was most often (n=15) driven by a single individual. The role of the individual driver was found to be critical to group formation as well as group structure and tasks throughout their lifespans.

This research confirmed three of the four hallmarks of emergent groups presented in Chapter Two (i.e., groups did not exist pre-disaster, developed a post-disaster structure, and formed to address an unmet need). Yet, the fourth hallmark, the ephemeral nature of emergent groups, was unsupported by this research. The ERGs represented in this study were not ephemeral. In fact, they lasted for years with some still in existence more than eight years after they formed.

The ephemeral nature of emergent groups during response is well-supported in the literature (Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Smith, 1997; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985; Voorhees, 2008). The idea that their lifespan would be short is logical as the tasks they undertake take less time to address (i.e., search and rescue is inherently short in duration), but needs, and, hence, tasks related to recovery may endure over long periods sustaining the life of ERGs. Additionally, it is worth noting that there was not a sense of time pressure and urgency in meeting the unmet needs that ERGs formed to address as had been observed in the literature regarding the groups that form during response (Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a). While participants certainly felt the tasks they were undertaken were needed and significant, there did not seem pressure to accomplish those tasks immediately. This difference could be attributed to the fact that recovery tasks ERGs formed to address were not necessarily “life-saving”.

Consistent with these findings was that the tasks ERGs form to address were inherently more long-term in nature (i.e., rebuilding a whole neighborhood takes several years). The length

of time required to address the task allows them the time to develop an organizational structure (and actually requires that they do). While they are addressing the original need, ERGs may also become aware of other needs, associated with recovery or not, that the group is now in a position to take on by virtue of the structure they have developed or are able develop. Expansion of tasks and structure was often observed in this research and allowed many ERGs to continue past the point of meeting the original need.

### **Factors for Formation**

It was established in the literature review that there were two broad categories of factors related to group emergence—the post-disaster environment (Dynes, 1970; Quarantelli, 1987) and the perceptions of the individuals that form the groups (Dynes & Quarantelli, 1968; Form & Nosow, 1958; Forrest, 1978). The literature had not distinguished if these conditions were related only to response groups or to ERGs as well.

The findings of this study suggest that the aspects of the post-disaster environment that lead to emergent *response* group identified in the disaster literature are similar to those that lead to ERG formation, i.e., situational context and unmet needs. It is clear in both the literature and in this data that the actual post-disaster community environment facilitates the emergence of ERGs. Post-Katrina the destruction was severe and widespread; there was not adequate assistance to meet the needs; and, there were threats that some residents would not be able to return. This context encouraged groups to form. Yet, it was not simply that this situational context existed but that individuals, both local and non-local, perceived this situation and felt an individual or collective responsibility to address unmet needs.

This research also supported the finding from previous emergent group literature that individuals may form an ERG if they perceive a need regardless of why the need exists (Dynes

& Quarantelli, 1968; Forrest, 1978; Form & Nosow, 1958; Fritz, Rayner, & Guskin, 1958; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a, 1984b; Stallings, 1978; Wenger, 1992). This research contributes to the literature, however, in finding that drivers tended to identify and focus in on a specific need related to a specific population or geographic area within the multitude of unmet needs when they first formed. The literature has not previously communicated that ERGs often form to target one or more populations in one or more specific geographical locations. It was found that there were clear themes regarding who had the unmet needs (e.g., volunteers, survivors, and recovery organizations) and where the unmet needs were (e.g., specific geographic location). In many ways the ERGs are purposeful in their formation. Formation of ERGs is not necessarily an ad-hoc, improvised, spontaneous occurrence as the previous literature might have led one to believe. There is intention, planning, and targeting of specific populations and/or places with specific needs during ERG formation.

Generally speaking these two categories, post-disaster community situational context and group formation to address unmet needs, held true in this research. There are a number of aspects of the post-disaster situational context in these parishes that facilitated the emergence of these groups. There was a perception of needs within that context and groups formed to address the needs. This research also found a third factor related to the formation of ERGs—a group driver/drivers.

The individual(s) that became the group driver(s) initiated addressing one of these unmet needs. The literature has not previously identified that there would be a single person (as was the case with the majority of the ERGs in this study) or a few individuals that propelled the formation of the group with other individuals joining in their mission overtime. Only five of the twenty ERGs in this study formed in the way that the literature had suggested, i.e., a group of

people organically found each other and decided to address an unmet need as a collective. This research found that the driver(s) of the ERGs initiated the formation of the groups and also drove the entire process of formation. Drivers often used their personal resources, including their pre-existing social networks, personal integration within the community, and finances to form the group.

The pre-existing literature gave the impression that the individuals that formed emergent groups found themselves in the immediately impacted area and were therefore exposed to the needs (see for example: Dynes, 1970; Stallings, 1978; Taylor, Zurcher, & Key, 1970). This study found that there were multiple ways drivers came to discover unmet needs. Some of the individuals heard about the need through survivors, others through the media, and some experienced the needs themselves.

In addition to discovering an additional factor propelling the formation of ERGs that the literature had not noted previously, it should be noted that the finding from this study did diverge from the previous emergent group literature in other, perhaps, important ways. Some of the specific contextual factors noted in the literature were not specifically brought up by the participants in this study even while some of them were implicit in what they did say. For instance, participants noted that needs were not being adequately addressed by pre-existing organizations in keeping with Auf der Heide (1989) and Stallings & Quarantelli (1985; 1987); yet, the reasons they had those perceptions were not explicitly explained to be related to, for example, pre-existing organizations being impacted themselves as had been suggested by Parr (1970) or too few organizations in the area to assist with needs pre-disaster as had been suggested by Parr (1970) and Quarantelli, Dynes, and Haas (1966).

Thus, some of the specifics of how ERG drivers in this study described their perceptions of the situation and the aspects of the context that led them to form groups post-Katrina were different from the literature but generally speaking these same two factors were important in the formation of ERGs. This study also found that a third important factor spurred on the formation of ERGs—individual or multiple drivers; and, the role of this factor was one of the key reasons the researcher developed a typology to reflect the distinctions in the formation of different ERGs.

### **Types of Emergent Recovery Groups**

Through the course of analysis it became clear that groups differed by the number of people that drove formation (i.e., a single driver or a group) and by when the group formed in relation to attempting to institutionalize by filing for 501(c)(3). Both of these differences led to the development of the typology presented in Chapter Five. The act of institutionalizing, while sought as a means to meet different ends (i.e., being recognized/perceived as legitimate to facilitate fundraising) also, by default, positioned the group to have a more enduring lifespan. When a driver started the group by institutionalizing, it indicated that the formation of the groups were intentional, significantly more so than the literature would lead us to believe. These aspects of ERG formation have not been previously noted by the literature.

### **Tasks**

The existing literature had only categorized the range of tasks that emergent groups undertake to address unmet needs in response i.e., damage assessment, operations, and coordination (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). This study found that unmet needs ERGs formed to address more appropriately fit into three categories, already identified in the disaster literature including hazard-generated needs, response-generated needs, and latent needs. Two of these categories, hazard-generated and response-generated needs are well-known concepts in the

disaster literature and are often used to explain what happens after disasters. However, the concepts have not previously been used to describe the tasks of emergent groups. This study was able to apply existing theoretical concepts to our understanding of emergent groups.

This study also suggests that the wording of one of these two concepts might be revisited. The concept of hazard-generated need has the same meaning in response as it was found to in recovery—there are a range of needs that are the direct consequence of the impacts produced by a the interaction of a hazard with people, property, and the environment. Response-generated has meaning in recovery too. The conceptual label is applied to those needs that must be addressed by virtue of many people and organizations being involved in similar work—needs that must be addressed across those involved like coordination, collaboration, communication, information management, and resource management. The phenomenon being labeled by the concept also happens during recovery making the actual label a bit problematic, i.e., the needs are not just “response” generated but also “recovery” generated. The findings of this study suggest there is a need for a more appropriate label for the phenomenon that “response-generated” is currently being used to capture in the literature.

The third category, latent needs, has not been prevalent among the existing research (see for example: Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976) but was found to be quite prevalent among the ERGs in this study. The extent to which the category of latent needs is seen in other disasters is unknown as is the extent to which this category is present for response emergent groups.

The tasks the ERGs undertook to meet the unmet needs varied greatly but were all intended to contribute directly to the recovery of the social, natural, built, and political aspects of the community that had been impacted by the disaster or indirectly by creating capacity to achieve that recovery. As supported by the literature (Dynes, 1970; McEntire & Drabek, 2002;



Quarantelli, 1984a; Stallings, 1978; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985), this study found that networks emerge during recovery. In fact, two of the ERGs represented in this study were emergent network groups. The literature had found that, pre-existing groups/organizations join these networking groups (see for example: Drabek, 1983; Drabek, Tamminga, Kilijanek, & Adams, 1982); yet, this research found that ERGs do as well. Not only do ERGs join network groups, but many of the drivers of ERG formation were involved in creating them.

Consistent with the literature, the ERGs in this study developed their group structure in the way that was necessary to address the task they formed to address (Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1984b). Over the lifespan of the ERGs, they extended and expanded the tasks and group structure to fit the tasks they wanted to/did undertake. Evolution in structure occurred throughout the lifespans of the ERGs in this study.

### **Group Structure**

The literature found that the longer an ERG exists the more likely they are to formalize a structure (Campbell, 2009; Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1984b). The ERGs in this study demonstrated that they developed an organizational structure over time. The ERGs in this study were found to have a clear division of labor and chain of command as evident by the presence of a driver and the formal positions within the core. Yet, despite their clear organizational structure, ERGs still remained flexible throughout their lifespans. It seemed as though the ERGs had to remain flexible. As the needs they addressed extended and expanded, they had to be able to change the structure of their groups to address the needs. This changing structure was also influenced by ERGs not knowing where their funding and personnel would come from in the future and as the situational context around them changed.

Quarantelli (1984b) described the structures of ERGs in terms of core members, supporting members, and nominal members. This research provided further support to the crux of what Quarantelli (1984b) had suggested while also identifying nuances that warranted relabeling and reorganization of his conceptualization. Chapter Four offered a revised graphic and a summary table regarding ERG structure as observed in this study. It categorizes those involved with ERGs in a tier formation including core, workforce, and affiliates. This new way of thinking about ERG structure also demonstrates the relationship between the tiers, the responsibility those within each tier have to the group, and the duration of their involvement in the group.

The existing literature noted that ERGs tended to have around 100 members (Quarantelli, 1984b, 1986; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). Throughout the course of this research it became clear that the number of individuals involved in ERGs vary greatly. So too is how ERGs understand who within their group structure is considered a member. There were multiple ERGs in this study that report having 20,000+ individuals involved in the group annually even while most would not be considered members in the sense the term was used in the existing research.

The existing literature noted that the members of emergent groups tend to be from the local, impacted area (Dynes, 1970; Quarantelli, 1986b; Wenger, 1992). Interestingly, this research revealed that ERGs do not just form within the impacted community but also external to the impacted area. Individuals from states, and countries, far removed from Louisiana formed groups in their communities to then travel to work in the impacted area. Additionally, the vast majority of those who became involved in the organization as workforce or affiliates were from out of state. Local residents only joined those groups after they had formed and had become integrated into the community. The groups that were formed by individuals in the local impacted

area were also greatly dependent on non-local volunteer labor to accomplish the tasks the groups set out to do.

There are two potential reasons the non-local nature of these groups were found in this research and not previous works. First, the majority of research on emergent groups has focused on response. It may simply be the case that non-locals (broadly defined) do not typically become involved unless they come from the impacted or immediately surrounding area because tasks are completed before they would have time to converge in conjunction with the ephemeral nature of the groups. While non-local individuals were found to be involved in emergent response groups post-Katrina (Rodriquez, Trainor, & Quarantelli, 2006), their involvement may very well have been due to the unique scope and scale of the event which allowed, and even required, that individuals from outside the impacted area become involved.

Second, national media attention post-Katrina may have increased the awareness of the needs outside of the impacted and surrounding areas. Disasters do not typically receive as significant or enduring an amount of media attention (Fischer, 1998) as was observed post-Katrina. The individuals included in this study from outside Louisiana all reported finding out about the vast amount of need post-Katrina from media. This was demonstrated not only by the individuals from out-of-state that became drivers of ERGs but also in the massive influx of out-of-state and out-of-country volunteers. Even now, eight years later, volunteers from outside of Louisiana travel to the greater New Orleans area to assist in the continued recovery work these ERGs are undertaking.

### **Advancing Knowledge About Lifespan**

It is clear that although the literature continually describes emergent groups as ephemeral (Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Smith, 1997; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985;

Voorhees, 2008) there are groups in recovery that are long-term. Reading across the literature the lifespans of emergent groups were characterized by four hallmarks, origination/formation (Campbell, 2009, Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1984b; Ross, 1980; Saunders & Kreps, 1987), legitimization (Quarantelli, 1970, 1984b; Ross, 1980), institutionalization (Campbell, 2009; Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976; Quarantelli, 1984b; Ross, 1980), and suspension (Saunders & Kreps, 1987; Taylor, Zurcher, Key, 1970). There is an assumption that emergent groups do not all achieve each hallmark nor is there linearity to them (Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985). The same hallmarks and related assumptions were found to be associated with the lives of ERGs in this study.

This study expanded our understanding of the formation process to include the period of time in which the driver begins to act and the process of group formation begins. The pre-existing literature has widely acknowledged group formation as a process (Kreps & Bosworth, 1994; Forrest, 1978; Neal & Phillips, 1995; Stallings & Quarantelli, 1985) but this research found that this process starts earlier than the literature has suggested (i.e., with the interest of the driver(s)). This study found that groups often institutionalized (i.e., had an identifiable organizational structure, using receipt of 501(c)(3) status as a proxy measure), by default. This status was most often sought by ERGs with the intent to achieve another hallmark the literature had identified known as legitimization. ERGs sought 501(c)(3) status and in so doing had to identify an organizational structure and method of operation but the reason they pursued 501(c)(3) status was because they wanted their ERG to be formally recognized under the eyes of the law so that the ERG would be perceived as legitimate by others and, hence, fundraising and volunteerism would be facilitated. The association between institutionalization and legitimization had not been identified in the existing literature nor had the idea of “formal legitimization”

introduced. The literature had defined legitimization as the group earning recognition from others (Ross, 1980). This study found that this type of legitimization was also sought and eventually, over time, earned. This type of legitimization might be termed informal. Thus, this study revealed support for all of the hallmarks associated with emergent group lifespan but suggested that one of the hallmarks, legitimization, has formal and informal aspects.

This research has been able to add to understanding the lifespans of ERGs in one more key area. Specifically, it was found that how and when these characteristics are achieved seem to be a function of the ERG's ability or inability to extend and expand their tasks and structure. The way in which these points are reached is through the extension and expansion of the ERGs, in terms of their structure and or tasks. Extension and expansion can, and often do, occur continuously throughout the lifespan of the group, even during formation. It became clear while reflecting during analysis that the same extension and expansion that occurred throughout the lifespan of the ERGs mattered during formation too. This is evident in the case that group formation was a function of the driver not having enough resources by themselves. The ERGs expanded and extended to take on tasks related or unrelated to the task that the group first formed to address and adapt the structure of the group as necessary to support these changes. It is in the absence of extension and expansion that the group suspends their work. The idea that emergent groups may evolve their goals is not completely new (see for example: Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Gillespie, Mileti, & Perry, 1976; Stallings, 1978). But there has been little previous discussion on how or why these groups do this.

### **Connecting Factors Across Formation and Lifespan**

Continuing analysis of the result revealed an additional and significant finding from this research—the striking and significant similarity in the factors driving both formation and lifespan post-formation. Factors that were found to contribute to group formation include the post-event community situational context, the presence of unmet needs, and having a group driver and their various resources including the ability to network. Factors that were found to promote the continued existence of ERGs include a group driver, resources, and integration. The researcher reflected on these two sets of factors and came to realize that the factors in both sets actually contribute to both formation and lifespan. The researcher also discovered that extension and expansion was not just propelling lifespan but also group formation—extension and expansion was discovered to be an overarching theme characterizing formation and institutionalization and was the determining factor in whether a group went inactive or closed. The extent to which all of the factors (i.e., situational context, unmet needs, a group driver, resources in the form of skills, personnel and financial support, ability to network, and integration) are present at any given time prompt, facilitate, or hinder extension and expansion of the group which in turn prompts, facilitates, or hinders formation, formal and informal institutionalization, and suspension.

The role of the situational context as a factor in group formation was prominent in the data. The role of situational context was less explicit in the data regarding lifespan of ERGs post-formation; but, it seems, that situational context must influence their continued existence. While not explicitly explored in this study, the continued presence of unmet needs and the continued action of ERGs to address these unmet needs suggests that the situational context continued to produce unmet needs. And, the personal and collective responsibility felt during the group formation period seemed to continue throughout the lifespan of the group; and, presumably,

something in the situational context kept the sense of responsibility going. Drivers frequently noted that as time has passed since Katrina there has been a subsequent reduction in media attention, funding, and volunteers coming to the New Orleans area. This changing situational context is a struggle for them and may ultimately threaten their existence. Future research will have to explore what it is about the situational context that allows the groups to continue to exist beyond unmet needs being present in that context.

The data clearly evidenced that groups formed to address an unmet need in impacted areas and/or specific populations in those areas. It became clear through continuing analysis of the data that the extension and expansion of tasks that groups were undertaking was fundamentally a reaction to unmet needs. At times, the ERGs extended to undertake tasks related to other recovery-related needs or they extended beyond the recovery need they had formed to address to address latent needs (e.g., poverty or workforce development) and/or response-generated needs. Sometimes the unmet needs the group expanded to address were targeted at additional populations; other times they expanded to other geographic areas (e.g., neighborhoods, disasters in other states). Throughout their entire lifespans, the ERGs in this study continued to find unmet needs and in doing so found a purpose to continue to exist.

It is not enough for the situational context and unmet needs to be present. The data demonstrated there must be a person or a group of people that identify that there is an unmet need, want to address the unmet need, and think that they have the ability or that they could have the ability to do something to address that need. The role of the driver(s) extends and expands over the lifespan of the group. The driver(s) starts by initiating and forming the group. They then become responsible for the group over its entire lifespan, taking on the role of continually propelling the organization forward and ensuring that the day-to-day needs of the organization

are met. Over the lifespan of the group it may be the case that the original driver is replaced. It does not matter who is driving the group, just that there is a group driver throughout the entire lifespan.

Resources, skills, personnel, or funding, were also discovered to be an issue that played a key role at formation and over the course of an ERGs lifespan. The ability of the driver(s) to form a group to address the need is surprisingly dependent on the personal resources of the driver(s). Throughout the group formation process the ERG the driver(s) leverages their personal resources—skills and funds—until they are maximized. The lifespan of the ERG from that point on depends, largely, on the organization's ability to secure the skills, bodies, and money it needs to continue to undertake the tasks they formed to address or extend and expand to undertake new ones. Depending on the tasks related to the unmet need the ERG undertakes there may be a need for individuals with special skill sets to become a part of the group. The existing literature has noted that groups may require individuals with specific skill sets to join the group (Dynes, 1970; Forrest, 1978; Quarantelli, 1966, 1984a, 1984b, 1987). This study found that not only are special skill sets needed throughout the lifespan of the groups as tasks extend and expand but also during group formation. Several drivers noted in this study that because they had a special skill set they felt that they could address the unmet need. Additionally, skills related to creating and running a group may be needed. Several drivers in this study noted that they had previous experience working for nonprofits or running businesses. They applied the skills they had learned in those experiences to forming the group and over the course of the ERG's lifespan. And, it was most commonly the case that the driver(s) of group formation financed the group leading up to and at the point of formation; yet, as the group continues its life, the driver(s) stops funding the group



themselves and attempts to obtain funding of various sorts from diverse sources. Their ability to do that effectively was found to be connected to receipt of 501(c)(3).

The literature has previously noted that groups do use prior social-networks over the lifespan of the group (Dynes, 1970; Neal, 1983; Quarantelli, 1966, 1987). Yet, the extent to which these networks were used, when they were used, and how they were used was not made clear. This research found that when the driver(s) of group formation first begin to form the group the driver(s) relies on their ability to tap into networks to extend and expand the group. Their ability to identify people who could provide resources and form/play off of relationships to get them facilitated the ERG's formation. Driver(s) utilized their ability to network at neighborhood meetings, media, the internet, or word-of-mouth as well as with their neighbors, friends, family, colleagues, and business partners. At some point in its lifespan, the group takes on an identity of its own that goes beyond the driver(s). The ERG must be a part of networks of recovery organizations and/or other community organizations to get information, resources, advice, and other support to sustain itself over the course of its lifespan.

Becoming a part of these networks requires integration into the community. Integration can be understood as when something has become a part of a whole. Initially, during formation, driver(s) relied on their knowledge of the people and places where they formed their group—this was true of local and nonlocal drivers of formation. They played on their integration to get resources needed to form the group. Yet, at some point, the group—not the driver—needed to be integrated within the community it served (e.g., population, neighborhood) and the recovery community. This integration was key to achieving informal legitimization.

The evolution and similarity in factors meaningful to ERG formation and their continued existence are demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4

*Factors in Emergent Recovery Group Formation and Lifespan*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Group Formation</b>	<b>Lifespan</b>
Situational Context	External factors in the community post-event initiate and support group formation	Unknown
Unmet Need	The group forms to address one or more unmet needs related to recovery	Groups extended and expanded where, what type of needs, and whose needs they met
Group Driver	An individual or individuals initiates the formation of the group.	The driver continues to provide leadership throughout the lifespan of the group.
Networks	Ability to network – the driver must have the ability to find others to join and support the group.	Group is networked - The networks of the driver and the members of the group evolved into the group itself becoming integrated into the community and the group having its own network.
Integration Resources	The driver begins to form the group using their pre-existing integration in the community where the group forms.	Integration results in more personnel and money but is also a result of the group existing and being active in the community.
<i>Personnel</i>	Needed people to be in the group to be able to form a structure	Needed people to continue to become involved in the group as the tasks that the group take on extend and expand
<i>Skill sets</i>	The driver must have the skills necessary to form a group and/or skills related to the tasks the group will take on or the driver must find others that do.	Individuals with skills that benefit the group must be continually involved in the group.
<i>Financial</i>	Needed money to either pay people to be in the group or to gather the supplies that would start the group (i.e., \$ to start a website)	The group seeks financial support from a diverse array of sources throughout its lifespan to support the

These factors operated within the post-event community situational context triggered by Katrina. Within this context there were a broad range of unmet needs. Yet, the situational context and unmet needs alone were not enough for ERGs to form and continue to exist. An individual or a group of individuals needs to initiate and drive group formation. Throughout the lifespan of the group this driver(s) continue to propel the ERG. The driver cannot or does not do this alone.

Others that have specific skill sets need to become involved to assist the group over its lifespan. In order for ERGs to be able to continue to function, they also need financial support. To maintain financial stability and find individuals to continue to populate the group the networks of the individuals in the group are utilized. Eventually, the group becomes its own entity and itself integrates into the community, further facilitating the group's access to resources. These factors appear to be highly interrelated—often achievement of one seems to depend on the presence of another. It is impossible suggest an order in which the factors must be present because most of these factors need to, and are, involved and/or transpiring simultaneously.

This research discovered that both group formation and continued existence are a function of the driver and the group's ability to extend and expand over a sustained period of time. It is the continual process of extending and expanding that drive the lifespan of the group. The factors that prompt, facilitate, or hinder extension and expansion include, situational context, unmet needs, driver(s), resources, networks, and integration. The extent to which these factors are present influence when and how ERG formation, institutionalization, and legitimization are achieved as well as, and perhaps, most importantly, whether they go inactive or suspend. Some of the factors identified through this research have been mentioned with respect to ERGs before and the idea that some ERGs may evolve is not new; yet, until this study, there had been no clear articulation of a) the influence of extension and expansion on ERG formation and lifespan, b) the range of factors involved in group formation and lifespan, or c) the strong relationship between the factors and extension and expansion.

### **Implications for Theory and Practice**

The emerging discipline of emergency management has a vested interest in understanding how humans and their institutions, interact, and cope with hazards, vulnerabilities,

and associated consequences (Jensen, 2013). Therefore, those in the discipline have an inherent interest in ERGs as a coping method associated with disaster recovery. The discipline also has an inherent interest in emergent groups in terms of educating students. Jensen (2012) outlined the areas of emergency management that students should be taught. Recovery was one of these areas as well as a number of topics related to recovery that should be taught were included (Jensen, 2012). If educators are teaching recovery and view this functional area as integral to an emergency management education at all degree levels (Jensen, 2013) then students should be taught about ERGs.

Sensitizing students to the concept of ERGs would benefit students that continue on to be involved in the aftermath of a disaster—in whatever capacity they become involved (e.g., emergency management professional, elected official, business owner, pastor). Knowledge about ERGs will allow them to understand that emergent groups form to address recovery-related tasks, how they form, why they form, and what they do. With the findings of this research, the characteristics of ERGs and the factors that contribute to them forming and support them throughout their lifespan can be better taught.

Emergency management, as an emerging academic discipline, has given itself the responsibility to conduct both basic and applied research (Jensen, 2012). This study represents basic research. (There are certainly implications for practice, which will be discussed in the section that follows). Yet, the primary contributions of this study are theoretical. Previous to this study, the existing emergent group research was spread out, unclear in what the research was on (i.e., response or recovery emergent groups), and was not synthesized or integrated. This lack of clarity among the existing literature portrayed ERGs as a complicated phenomenon. Yet, the findings of this study suggest that ERGs are really quite simple.

This study has helped to clarify how ERGs come to form, what they look like, and what allows them to endure. Specific findings in a variety of areas, such as the types of ERGs, the types of needs groups form to address, and the structure of ERGs help to clarify many of the elements of the existing literature. This study has also helped to clarify the hallmarks of ERG's lifespans, an understudied aspect of emergent groups. Also, within the context of recovery, this study has suggested that the factors that initiate and support ERG formation are the same factors that are needed for the group to sustain over a long period of time and vice versa. For these reasons the findings of this study represent a significant addition to the existing literature on emergence.

Essential to the claim that this study makes a theoretical contribution is its grounding in the pre-existing work on the topic and its clearly articulated, sound methodological approach. Too often in the disaster literature on emergent groups the research was not developed out of the prior work on the topic. And, too often, there was no articulation of the methods used to arrive at the findings presented or the articulation of methods was incomplete or unclear.

On this basis, future research can be conducted. This study has not only found more nuance and developed a deeper understanding of some elements of the existing literature but it has also re-framed the way ERGs can be approached. Identification of what factors lead to formation and continued existence is significant on its own but to make the connection that those factors are relatively the same throughout the entire lifespans of ERGs provides a basis for future research. Future research can test these factors and expand them where necessary. Understanding that there are distinct hallmarks of ERGs lifespans provides a framework within future research can take place. This re-framing will also support model building and other theoretical work helping to lay the foundation for a future theory of ERGs.

There are limitations that must be kept in mind when considering what this study has contributed. To the extent that Hurricane Katrina was a unique event, the findings of this study, or elements of the findings, may be contingent on the nature of Katrina. Additionally, the participation in this study was low as was the researcher's ability to find additional research participant's beyond those who either agreed or refused to be a part of this research. The fact that this research was conducted eight years post-Katrina provided valuable insight into ERGs that have long lives but groups that may have formed closer to Katrina and did not last were not well represented. Longitudinal studies on ERGs have the potential to provide a much more detailed understanding on how these groups evolve over their lifespan.

Additionally, it was discovered over the course of this research that there were a number of groups that formed post-Katrina solely online. Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to track down contact information for the founders of the groups that still had an online presence and as a result could not interview them. Thus, the researcher is not sure that the factors she identified apply to virtual ERGs. Yet, Torrey et al (2007) did explore the "connected giving" that occurred as a result of newly formed online blog and discussion forum communities post-Katrina; and, while the authors did not approach the study of these social media groups with the theoretical framework of emergence, their findings related to the groups resonated with those from this study. For example, several of the online ERGs had a distinct leader and driver of the group while others had decentralized leadership. The groups formed because, "They saw gaps left by large, institutionalized organizations that could be filled by a peer-to-peer approach" (Torrey et al., 2007, pg. 1). Much like importance of a driver(s) found in this study Torrey et al., (2007) found, "these communities were not sustained without the moderator's continued participation" (pg. 1). Clearly, there is some overlap in these online ERGs and the in-person

ERGs included in this study. Yet, the researcher's inability to conduct interviews with representatives of virtual ERGs in the context of this study's research questions points to an area of future research that should be explored.

If the findings of this study prove not to be unique to post-Katrina New Orleans ERGs, then there are significant implications for practice. Recovery, in practice, has been the most neglected component of emergency management practice (Rubin, 2009). And, the federal government has historically largely ignored recovery and any policy or other role they might play (Smith, 2011). Only recently has the federal government developed and become involved in recovery (see for example: United States Congress (2006) the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, Federal Emergency Management Agency (2011) the National Disaster Recovery Framework, and President Barack Obama (2011) Presidential Policy Directive-8). The increased attention being paid to recovery is a positive development; however, it ought to be followed by training materials and guidelines to help practitioners at all levels and in all sectors bring the emerging recovery vision being articulated in policy to life.

One of the key components of the emerging vision is that recovery practice be coordinated, flexible, and responsive to needs. Professional emergency management organizations, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and state offices of homeland security/emergency management must be providing training on how practitioners can help these components of the vision come to fruition. And, one issue that should be addressed in this training is ERGs.

Armed with training on this topic, practitioners involved in the recovery process can assume ERGs will form following a disaster if the situational context is such that unmet needs form. The sub-dimensions associated with the post-disaster community situational context can

provide practitioners with an idea of when the situation may be prime for citizens to exhibit emergent behavior. Practitioners should be aware of the characteristics of ERGs and seek to include them in recovery network groups. They can seek out emergent groups and help to get them networked and integrated so they can supplement the efforts of those organizations that existed before the disaster. And, pre-disaster, practitioners can support the development of recovery network groups that could be activated as needed and ensure that group members seek out ERGs early in the post-disaster period.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the findings of this study in terms of where this study offered support and nuance to the existing literature and where new findings were established. The significance of findings related to the factors that lead to ERG formation and the factors that contribute to continued group existence were addressed. Implications of these findings on theory and practice were discussed. The next chapter will conclude the study and offer suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have contributed significantly to the body of literature on emergent groups. As the literature review demonstrated, the existing work on emergent groups had a number of conceptual and methodological issues. This study has articulated significant findings in a number of areas based on a sound methodology that help to address some of these deficiencies. This study has advanced our knowledge in the following areas.

First, this research found three main factors leading to emergent recovery group (ERG) formation. The first, the post-Katrina community situational context, was found to include the scope and scale of the event, blame assignment, inadequate recovery systems, threats of preventing areas to rebuild, opportunity, an individual sense of responsibility, and a collective community atmosphere. Second, the driver(s) of group formation became aware of an unmet need. Finally, the driver(s) of group formation needed access to the resources related to group formation including time, financial means, personnel, skill sets, and the ability to network.

Second, this study found four types of ERG formation that differ by the driver of group formation and group formation in relation to institutionalization. Tasks that ERGs formed to address were found to be centered around three types, hazard-generated, response-generated, and latent needs. This study proposed a three-tiered structure of ERGs including the core, workforce, and affiliates of the group.

Third, this researched answered the question of what factors contribute to ERGs having a long lifespan. It was found that there are three developmental characteristics associated with ERGs, formation, legitimization, and suspension. This research found that after groups formed they continued to extend and expand their tasks and structures as they institutionalized and integrated into the community and were able to gain access to additional resources.

Furthermore, through data analysis it became clear that factors associated with ERG formation were the same as the factors related to the long lifespans of the ERGs in this study. Future research should purposely look at these factors to determine if they hold true and are found throughout formation and lifespan. It was also established that the ERGs extended and expanded their tasks and structures throughout their entire lifespans to be able to access the resources necessary to address a broad array of unmet needs. This too should be more purposefully researched.

This study has built on and contributed to the pre-existing literature. It has followed clear methods, defined terms, discussed limitations, and provided a framework for future researchers to work from. Yet, in light of these findings future research is needed. Further empirical work on the characteristics of emergent groups is needed on a range of topics as is the eventual articulation of a theory of emergent structures (Tierney, Lindell, & Perry, 2001).

This study has learned about ERGs from the perspective of their founders. While they are arguably the most knowledgeable regarding the inner workings of these groups future research from the perspectives of ERGs from political officials, emergency management officials, the community, pre-existing organizations, could benefit a broader understanding of these groups. Specifically, future research could be utilized to better understand how these groups are networked within and integrated into and received by the community.

Emergent groups have largely been written about as a local phenomenon (See for example: Dynes, 1970; Quarantelli, 1984b; Wenger, 1992; Wenger & James, 1994), noting a relationship between proximity to the impact site and the formation of emergent groups (Kreps, 1978; Neal, 1983; Quarantelli, 1966). Yet, this research demonstrates that when it comes to ERGs this is not always the case as three of the groups included in this study were started outside

Louisiana with one of them starting in a country outside the United States. Additionally, this research found that many of the personnel that populate the structure of ERGs, particularly in the workforce tier, were non-local individuals. Future research should examine this phenomena.

Research has yet to be done on the recent influence of the internet on how ERGs communicate. Every group in this study had some type of online presence (e.g., e-mail list serve, social media, and/or a website). Many drivers discussed the way they leveraged their online presence to assist in forming and throughout the lifespan of the group. Future research should purposefully look at how an online presence influences ERGs formation and over the course of their lifespans.

Relatedly media has been noted to influence the lifespans of emergent groups (Quarantelli, 1987) and was confirmed by this study. Since the majority of the pre-existing research was conducted, the 24-hour news cycle, social media, and other technologies have dramatically changed the way we communicate. The influence of the media on the formation and lifespan of ERGs ought to also be explored.

Emergent groups have rarely been studied in countries outside the United States (See for example: Neal, 1985; Scanlon, 1999). Research should look at differences between developed and developing nations, specifically how the prevalence of emergent groups varies by different response and recovery structures/systems (Quarantelli, 1986).

While there is no consensus among scholars regarding what a catastrophe is, Quarantelli (2000) and Barnshaw, Letukas, & Quarantelli (2008) suggest that Katrina is considered a catastrophe. There has been some suggestion in the literature that larger disasters lead to more emergent groups (Kreps, 1978; Neal, 1983; Quarantelli, 1983, 1995, 1980) and the suggestion that catastrophes (i.e., larger events than disasters) will lead to an increased number of emergent

groups (Quarantelli, 1983, 1995). Because the ERGs in this study were formed to assist in the wake of what some consider to have been a catastrophe, the nature of the event may or may not have influenced the findings of this study. Research comparing different size events should be conducted to better understand this issue.

Overlaying all of these opportunities for future research is the need to clarify differences between the functional areas of emergency management (i.e., mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery) – where groups vary and where they are similar. Outside of this study there has been minimal attempt to make this clarification (see for example: Quarantelli, 1984a, 1984b). Future research should consider this approach.

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## APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

The researcher engaged in preliminary data collection within the context of a qualitative methods class at North Dakota State University. Anticipating the potential for using the collected data in future research, the researcher sought and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before conducting interviews.

The interviews were conducted by phone and ranged from one hour to two hours in length. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded using Rubin & Rubin (2005). This initial data collection and analysis reassured the researcher of the value of using these methods for exploring these research questions and confirmed the researcher's interest in this topic area. The data collected was analyzed as part of the course and resulted in the discovery of concepts and themes in the four interviews.

Initial data collection did lead to a change in the second research question. Originally, the second research question was developed to examine how emergent recovery groups were able to navigate the post-Katrina recovery system in New Orleans. Following the initial interviews and after consulting the existing literature, the researcher decided that a more appropriate question would be to identify the conditions that led to the institutionalization of emergent recovery groups. The nascent nature of the literature on emergent recovery groups led the researcher to believe that foundational information was needed regarding the conditions related to the institutionalization of emergent groups in recovery before their navigation of the recovery system could be meaningfully understood. The researcher re-explored the data collected and found that it provided rich and detailed information related to this new research question.

This new research question was presented and approved at the thesis proposal hearing. The researcher subsequently received an IRB amendment. Throughout the data collection

process it became clear to the researcher that it was not the structure of the group as related to institutionalization that needed to be studied but what made them continue to have long lifespans. This change did not require a second IRB amendment or a change in related documents.

*Institutional Review Board**Office of the Vice President for Research, Creative Activities and Technology Transfer**NDSU Dept. 4000**1735 NDSU Research Park Drive**Research 1, P.O. Box 6050**Fargo, ND 58108-6050**Federalwide Assurance #FWA00002439*

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Jessica Jensen  
Emergency Management  
Putname Hall 102D

Re: IRB Certification of Exempt Human Subjects Research:  
Protocol #HS13176, "Understanding Nonprofits in Post-Disaster Communities: New Orleans,  
Louisiana"

Co-investigator(s) and research team: **Samantha Montano, Christopher Whitsel, Laura Gould**

Certification Date: 2/28/13                      Expiration Date: 2/27/16

Study site(s): **New Orleans, LA**

Funding: **n/a**

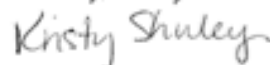
The above referenced human subjects research project has been certified as exempt (category # 2) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects*). This determination is based on the protocol and consent (received 2/28/2013).

Please also note the following:

- If you wish to continue the research after the expiration, submit a request for recertification several weeks prior to the expiration.
- Conduct the study as described in the approved protocol. If you wish to make changes, obtain approval from the IRB prior to initiating, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an immediate hazard to subjects.
- Notify the IRB promptly of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
- Report any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to the participants and the IRB.
- Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB standard operating procedures.

Thank you for your cooperation with NDSU IRB procedures. Best wishes for a successful study.

Sincerely,



Kristy Shirley, CIP, Research Compliance Administrator

**NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
 office: Research 1, 1735 NDSU Research Park Drive, Fargo, ND 58102  
 mail: NDSU Dept. #4000, PO Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050  
 p: 701.231.8995 f: 701.231.8098 e: [ndsuirb@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsuirb@ndsu.edu) w: [www.ndsu.edu/irb](http://www.ndsu.edu/irb)

RECEIVED  
 Date Received  
 DEC 04 2013  
 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

IRB Protocol #: **HS13176**

**Protocol Amendment Request Form**

Changes to approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. Reference: SOP 7.5 Protocol Amendments.

Examples of changes requiring IRB review include, but are not limited to changes in: investigators or research team members, purpose/scope of research, recruitment procedures, compensation strategy, participant population, research setting, interventions involving participants, data collection procedures, or surveys, measures or other data forms.

**Description of Implementation**


Protocol #: **HS13176** Title: **Understanding Nonprofits in Post-Disaster Communities: New Orleans, Louisiana**

Review category:  Exempt  Expedited  Full board

Principal investigator: **Jessica Jensen** Email address: [ja.jensen@ndsu.edu](mailto:ja.jensen@ndsu.edu)  
 Dept: **Emergency Management**

Co-investigator: **Samantha Montano** Email address: [samantha.montano@my.ndsu.edu](mailto:samantha.montano@my.ndsu.edu)  
 Dept: **Emergency Management**

Principal investigator signature, Date:  12/4/13

 In lieu of a written signature, submission via the Principal Investigator's NDSU email constitutes an acceptable electronic signature.

**Description of proposed changes**

1. Date of proposed implementation of change(s)\*: **12/4/13**  
 \* Cannot be implemented prior to IRB approval unless the IRB Chair has determined that the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.
2. Describe proposed change(s), including justification:  
**After extensive review of the current literature and the results from the first set of interviews that were conducted it became clear to the researcher that a change in research questions would be appropriate. As such the research question: How do these organization operate within the recovery system? will be replaced with: What factors help explain emergent recovery group's institutionalization post-Katrina?**



Due to the high number of interviews the researcher plans on conducting she will be using a transcription service bound by law keep interview data confidential. The files will be deleted by the transcription company following the researcher's approval of the transcription document.

Interview guide, Invitation E-mail, and information sheet were amended to reflect the change in research question.

Within the body of the invitation e-mail, a line has been added stating that the researcher will follow up with them by phone in case they do not receive the invitation email. A script for these follow-up calls is now attached.

3. Will the change involve a change in principal or co-investigator?

No - skip to Question 4

Yes:

- *Include an Investigator's Assurance (last page of protocol form), signed by the new PI or co-investigator*
- *Conflict of Interest disclosure. Does any investigator responsible for the design, conduct or reporting of the project (including their immediate family members) have a financial, personal or political interest that may conflict with their responsibility for protecting human participants in NDSU research? (SOP 6.2 Conflict of Interest in Human Research, Investigator and Research Team)*

No - As PI, I attest that I have conferred with my co-investigators and key personnel and confirmed that no financial, personal or political interests currently exist related to this research.

Yes - Describe the related financial, personal or political interests, and attach documentation of COI disclosure and review (as applicable).

Financial, personal or political interests related to the research (the sponsor, product or service being tested, or a competing product or service) may include:

- compensation (e.g., salary, payment for services, consulting fees)
- intellectual property rights or equity interests
- board memberships or executive positions
- enrollment or recruitment bonus payments

(Refer to NDSU Policy 151.1, External Activities and Conflicts of Interest, and NDSU Policy 823, Financial Disclosure - Sponsored Projects for specific disclosure requirements.)

*Note: If the change is limited to addition/change in research team members, skip the rest of this form.*

4. Will the change(s) increase any risks, or present new risks (physical, economic, psychological, or sociological) to participants?

No

Yes: *In the appropriate section of the protocol form, describe new or altered risks and how they will be minimized.*

5. Does the proposed change involve the addition of a vulnerable group of participants?

Children:  no  yes - include the *Children in Research* attachment form


Prisoners:  no  yes - include the *Prisoners in Research* attachment form

Cognitively impaired individuals:  no  yes\*

Economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals:  no  yes\*

\*Provide additional information where applicable in the revised protocol form.

6. Does the proposed change involve a request to waive some or all the elements of informed consent or documentation of consent?  
 no  
 yes -  Attach the *Informed Consent Waiver or Alteration Request*.
7. Does the proposed change involve a new research site?  
 no  
 yes

 If information in your previously approved protocol has changed, or additional information is being added, incorporate the changes into relevant section(s) of the protocol. Highlight (e.g. print and highlight the hard copy, or indicate changes using all caps, asterisks, etc) the changed section(s) and attach a copy of the revised protocol to this form. (If the changes are limited to addition/change in research team members, a revised protocol form is not needed.)

Impact on Participants (Previous, Current, or Future)

1. Will the change(s) alter information on previously approved versions of the recruitment materials, informed consent, or other documents, or require new documents?  
 No  
 Yes -  attach revised/new document(s)
2. Could the change(s) affect the willingness of *currently* enrolled participants to continue in the research?  
 No  
 Yes - describe procedures that will be used to inform current participants, and re-consent, if necessary:
3. Will the change(s) have any impact to *previously* enrolled participants?  
 No  
 Yes - describe impact, and any procedures that will be taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants:

-----FOR IRB OFFICE USE ONLY-----

Request is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exempt, category #: <u>2</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Expedited method, category # ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Convened meeting, date: ____
<input type="checkbox"/> Expedited review of minor change	
IRB Signature: <i>Kristy Shuley</i>	Date: <u>12/5/13</u>
Comments:	

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction Script: *Before we begin, I wanted to make sure that you are comfortable with a few things related to this project. Are you comfortable with the fact that you have been selected for participation in this research due to your role in your nonprofit; that your participation in this project is voluntary; that you can let me know if you want to stop participating anytime; that while your confidentiality is not guaranteed, we will not use your name or your organization's name in the final write-up of the data collected for this research; and, that our conversation is going to be digitally recorded? Do you have any questions before we begin?*

### Practitioner Interview Guide

1. Tell me about Hurricane Katrina.
2. How does your organization relate to Katrina?
3. Tell me about the process of establishing your organization as a legal nonprofit.
4. Describe your organization today.
5. What else do you think I should know, that we have not discussed, that would be relevant to this study?
6. Do you have any questions for me?
7. Do you know of any other founders or people that have held long-term positions at any other emergent nonprofits in the area that I could contact to be a part of this study?
8. Is it okay if I contact you if I have any follow up questions?

For Interviewer Only:	INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT LOCKED
Date:	Time:
Interviewee Name:	Interviewee Code:
Organization Name:	Organization Code:

## APPENDIX C: FOLLOW-UP PROBES

### Potential Follow-Up Probes:

1. Tell me about Hurricane Katrina.
  - Things happening in the city
  - Where were you?
  - Damages
  - Relationship to what was happening
  - How response went
  - How recovery went
  - Personal role
  - Personal participation – Why?
  - Where were you getting your information from?
  - Power deferential
  - Environmental issues
  - Location of things that were going on (specific neighborhoods)
  - Role of government
  - Social issues
  
2. How does your organization relate to Katrina?
  - Tasks and activities
  - Similar groups
  - Involvement in umbrella groups
  - Partnerships
  - Why was your nonprofit necessary?
  
3. Tell me about the process of establishing your organization as a legal nonprofit.
  - Structure overtime
  - How was the group formed
  - What ties the group together
  - Finances/ Other resources
  - Challenges for the group
  - Core members
  - Constituency
  - Membership over the lifespan of the organization
  - Who decided to institutionalize the group
  - When did the group institutionalize
  - Navigation of the legal system
  - Partnerships/ Help while formalizing
  - Relationship with the community

4. Describe your organization today.
  - Structure
  - Current tasks and activities
  - Membership
  - Resources
  - Future goals
  - Relationship with the community
  - Relationship with external groups

## APPENDIX D: INVITATION E-MAIL

NOTE: This invitation will be sent by email. It will look as follows:

---

North Dakota State University  
Department of Emergency Management  
*Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency Management*  
Department 2351  
P.O. Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050  
(701) 231-5595

Dear [Potential Participant Name],

Your help is needed for a study that will explore nonprofit organizations that formed to support recovery from Hurricane Katrina. You are being contacted because I understand that you are either the founder of the nonprofit for which you work or you have worked for the nonprofit since its inception.

To date, there has been minimal research on the role of nonprofits in disasters much less how nonprofits form to address disaster needs and what sustains them. This lack of research exists despite the critical role that nonprofits play in disaster recovery. I would like my research to begin to address this void.

I am eager to hear the story of your organization's formation and recovery role; and, I hope that you might be willing to share that story with me. If you are willing, I would like to arrange a time, date, and location to chat that are convenient for you.

I hope that you might be willing to share your thoughts. The results of this study can inform the education of students, the decisions of policy makers, and the practice of emergency management.

Please take a look at the information sheet attached and feel free to contact me at [samantha.montano@my.ndsu.edu](mailto:samantha.montano@my.ndsu.edu) or (207) 838-0708. You can also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Jessica Jensen, with questions at [ja.jensen@ndsu.edu](mailto:ja.jensen@ndsu.edu) or (701) 231-5886 with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you to schedule an interview and thank you for your time in review of this request.

Best Regards,

Samantha Montano

APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SHEET



North Dakota State University  
Department of Emergency Management  
*Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency  
Management*  
Department 2351  
P.O. Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050  
(701) 231-5595

“Understanding Nonprofits in Post-Disaster Communities: New Orleans, Louisiana”  
INFORMATION SHEET

*Research Study.*

You are being invited to participate in a research project entitled “Understanding Nonprofits in Post-Disaster Communities: New Orleans, Louisiana”. This study is being conducted by Samantha Montano, from North Dakota State University, Department of Emergency Management.

*Purpose of Study.*

The purpose of this research is to explore the nonprofits that formed post-Katrina and their role in disaster recovery.

*Basis for Participant Selection.*

You are being invited to participate in this research project because your organization formed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina to address recovery related issues in Orleans or St. Bernard Parish. Additionally, it is understood that your organization was not affiliated with a pre-existing organization when formed.

*Explanation of Procedures:*

Should you choose to participate, we will arrange a time of your choice for an interview. The interview will take approximately one hour unless you have more time and information to share.

The interviews will be conducted by phone at time convenient for you. A digital recorder will be used to capture our conversation to assure that I accurately use the information you provide.

*Potential Risks and Discomforts.*

There should be no potential discomfort or physical, social, psychological, legal, or economic risk to you due to your participation in this study.



*Potential Benefits.*

There is little disaster literature on nonprofits that emerge in communities post-disaster. This research intends to start building this body of literature. Your participation in this project will increase the information available to educate students and faculty in emergency management higher education programs as well as policy makers and other nonprofit organizations.

*Assurance of Confidentiality.*

While we cannot guarantee your confidentiality, there are several considerations which will be given to those who participate. What is shared by a participant in an interview will not be shared with any other interview participants. In the final research write-up no names of individuals, their job titles, or the names of their organization will be attached to any quotations used.

The interviews will be digitally recorded. Digitally recorded interviews will be uploaded on to the interviewer's personal computer. The sound file will then be transcribed and codes assigned for identifying personal and geographical characteristics. I will be the only person in possession of the paper listing the codes and their link to participant information. Once the recordings, transcriptions and codes are no longer relevant to my research they will be destroyed.

In the interview transcriptions, field notes, and the final product, codes rather than identifying characteristics (personal or geographic) will be used. Your personal information will be kept confidential. Your name and your organization's name will not be used in any reports. Aliases will be substituted instead (i.e. Joe Smith at organization A)

*Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study.*

Your participation is voluntary and you may quit at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your present or future relationship with North Dakota State University or any other benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time.

*Offer to Answer Questions.*

You should feel free to ask questions now or at any time. If you have any questions, you can contact me, Samantha Montano, at (207) 838-0708 or [samantha.montano@my.ndsu.edu](mailto:samantha.montano@my.ndsu.edu) or Dr. Jessica Jensen, at (701) 231-5886 or [ja.jensen@ndsu.edu](mailto:ja.jensen@ndsu.edu). If you have any questions about the rights of human research participants, or wish to report a research-related problem, contact the NDSU Institutional Research Board (IRB) Office at 866-449-8591 or by email at [ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu).

APPENDIX F: PHONE SCRIPT

# NDSU

North Dakota State University  
Department of Emergency Management  
*Center for Disaster Studies and Emergency  
Management*  
Department 2351  
P.O. Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050  
(701) 231-5595

FOLLOW UP PHONE CALL TO INVITATION EMAIL SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Samantha Montano.

I am conducting a research project on the formation of nonprofits post-Katrina and their role in recovery.

I am calling you today to follow-up to an email I sent [X Date] inviting you to participate in this research study. Participation would involve being interviewed over the phone on a date and at a time of your convenience about how your nonprofit formed and what it has done related to recovery from Katrina. The interview would take approximately one hour.

I would like to determine if you would be willing to participate in this study, but before asking I want to inform you that your participation is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your present or future relationship with North Dakota State University or any other benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide to participate you will be free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation at any time.

Would you be willing to participate in this study?

*If yes, the researcher will inquire what date and time would be convenient for a phone interview. Once a date and time are arranged, the researcher will thank them for their participation and time and tell them she will resend the original invitation email and information sheet about the study.*

*If no, the researcher will thank them for their time and ask if they could suggest another organization that might be interested in participating in this study.*