RESULTS

- DRO’s humanitarian and service-oriented culture was enacted through communication practices and resulted in crisis collaboration with all organizations.
- DRO’s crisis response relationship with other organizations:

**EMU MPD’s bureaucratic and closed culture was enacted through communication practices and resulted in crisis collaboration with similar organizational cultures and bureaucratic crisis coordination with others.**

**EMU MPD’s crisis response relationship with other organizations:**

**THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION CULTURES ON INTERORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION IN CRISIS RESPONSE**

**LAURA PECHTA, PHD**

**INTRODUCTION**

- Previous studies have neglected to examine how different organizational communication cultures of crisis response organizations involved in Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) may affect crisis collaboration efforts.
- **Theories**
  - Crisis coordination (Quarantelli, 1997) vs. crisis was enacted through communication practices and resulted in crisis collaboration with all organizations.
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  - Crisis Coordination (Quarantelli, 1997) vs. crisis was enacted through communication practices and resulted in crisis collaboration with all organizations.
- **Purpose** – Explore and describe two crisis response organizational cultures and identify how different communication practices may influence crisis collaboration.

**METHODS**

- **Instrumental case study** over five months in 2011
  - Regional chapter of disaster response organization (DRO) – “Providing disaster relief for disaster victims”.
  - Emergency Management Unit of Metropolitan Police Department (EMU MPD) – “To protect the citizens of the city from acts of terrorism or criminal activity”.
- **Qualitative Data Collection**
  - 42 hours of participant observation
  - Interviews – Informal, semi-structured
  - Documents – Meeting agendas, handouts, websites, emails, crisis disaster response plans
- **Data Analysis** - Analytic memos, analytic coding, constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

**RESULTS**

- **Comparison of Crisis Response Types: EMU MPD and DRO within the context of an EOC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>EMU MPD</th>
<th>Regional Chapter DRO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Response Feature</td>
<td>Crisis Coordination</td>
<td>Crisis Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal of crisis response</td>
<td>Concern for meeting individual organizational goal</td>
<td>Realization of interdependence of organizations; results in sharing of resources and tasks to avoid redundancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks and resources</td>
<td>Organizations focus on “expert area” of crisis response; can lead to competing for resources or redundancies</td>
<td>Continuous flow of communication and willingness to share information between organizations and the collaborating group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Lack of sharing of information between organizations or one way from EOC to crisis response organizations</td>
<td>Power and status among collaborating group members as equal so participation and consensus decision-making is encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
<td>Top-down orders (command and control) from crisis manager or incident commander to organizations</td>
<td>To the collaborating group; sees other organizations as partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Trust/Loyalty</td>
<td>To their individual organization; sees other organizations as competitors</td>
<td>To the collaborating group; sees other organizations as partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Member’s organizational culture; organizational boundary spanning of members is rare</td>
<td>Collaborating group culture is unique and strong; organizational boundary spanning of members is common</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSIONS**

- **Theoretical Implications**
  - Different crisis response worldviews are cultural artifacts of organizations.
  - Cannot assume a crisis coordination or collaboration structure can be easily imposed on all organizations to improve communication and working together.
- **Practice Implications for EOC Managers**
  - Focus on internal process and external environments to improve crisis collaboration.
  - Internal – Be aware of how EOC’s crisis coordination culture affects members; Create shared understanding of crisis collaboration.
  - External – Be aware of how individual organizational cultures affect EOC crisis collaboration; Encourage boundary spanning.

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the author done while completing her PhD work. They do not represent any work in her current position or the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.