Covering the Cost of the Past: Disaster Management in the Most Typhoon-Affected Region in the Philippines

Hazel Jovita, Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan, Philippines

Dyah Mutiarin, Department of Government Affairs and Administration, Jusuf Kalla School of Government, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Bantul, Indonesia

Achmad Nurmandi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Bantul, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This is a quantitative article which aims to analyse what constitutes successful disaster governance by measuring how the previous performance of the disaster management network influence the aspects of governance process -initial agreement, leadership, trust, planning and managing conflict and how these variables are associated to the outcome of collaborative disaster management. The findings highlight the role of public managers in the collaborative disaster management as it revealed that initial agreement is connected with leadership, leadership is associated with trust, and trust, as well as managing conflict, are correlated with the planning process. The findings suggest that the Philippine disaster management network in Region 10 is shaped by its previous performance. However, there is a necessity to institutionalise incentive mechanisms and improve the leadership capacities of the lead agencies in order to strengthen the trust and interdependence among agencies which could lead to more effective disaster management plans and stronger network collaboration.

KEYWORDS

Collaboration, Disaster Response, Governance, Leadership, Natural Hazards, Performance

INTRODUCTION

The dynamic and sometimes complicated relationship between and among agencies suggests the arduous role of public managers. Administrative theories on disaster management emphasize specific managerial challenges during a crisis such as the need for a timely response; the necessity to identify issues related to the coordination among personnel, structures, and responders; and to determine the limitations of command and control (Sementelli, 2007).
Despite the complexity of inter-organizational relationships, understanding the dynamics of these partnerships remains relevant. Theoretically, Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) pioneered the comprehensive approach to cross-sector collaboration with an emphasis on the challenges and constraints in the aspects of collaborative process and structures. Thomson and Perry (2006), Ansell and Gash (2008), Agranoff (2007), Provan and Kenis (2008), Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) and Koschmann, Kuhn and Pfarrer (2012) empirically explored the variables of collaborative management, network theory as well as the various factors and contingencies that lead to successful collaboration. On the other hand, Kapucu (2015), Kapucu, Arslan and Demiroz (2010), Kapucu, Arslan and Collins (2010) examined emergency management response scenarios and postulated theories on what constitutes better and effective disaster response. Almost all of the mentioned scholars emphasized the necessity of collaboration towards better public service. However, only a few studies have been made on collaborative governance during disasters particularly typhoons (Kapucu, Arslan, \& Demiroz, 2010; Djalante et al., 2013; and Nurmandi et al., 2015).

This research aims to provide empirical analysis on what constitutes successful disaster governance in the context of the Philippines. This article examines the question: How do the previous performance of the disaster management network influence the aspects of governance process (initial agreements, leadership, planning, trust, and managing conflict) and how it affects the existing relationships in the network?

Primarily, previous performance as used in this study is based on the self-assessment of the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council or disaster management network members on their execution of the disaster response targets. Hence, previous performance refers to the initial conditions of the cross-sector collaboration. On the other hand, existing relationship pertains to the characteristics of the connection among network members and therefore serves as the outcome of the collaborative efforts in disaster management. This research output could serve as basis for national and local governments to consider institutional changes appropriate to the needs of the implementing agencies. Moreover, the findings propose new and basic knowledge on public administration which are not yet fully explored in the context of disaster management.

Disasters are characterized by unexpected or unusual size and causes disruptions to the communication and decision-making capabilities, require decentralized decision making and intensive human interactions (Kapucu \& Van Wart, 2006). Managing disasters require dynamic processes which are ideal yet demanding for government at all levels. The Greek word “krisis” refers to tensions that call for critical judgments, exercising critique, reflexivity, which would inform decisions reached and actions taken (Antonacopoulou \& Sheaffer, 2014). With transformational leadership ensconced at the top, the next step is to get these very engaged organizational members to look not only at the good of the organization but also at the greater societal good with the temptation of federalizing disaster response put away, leadership must recognize the need for a basic change in relationships within and across governments (Lester \& Krejci, 2007). Thus, collaboration among organizations and government agencies is essential for the development of an effective strategy and better performance during disaster response.

Bryson et al. (2006 p. 44) broadly defined cross-sector collaboration as the process of “linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by the organization in one sector separately.” Cross-sector collaboration acknowledges the limitations and strengths of every sector and the cooperation between and among them complements the functions of each sector. A more specific view on collaborative governance focusing on the inter-relationship between and among government officials and by emphasizing the cyclical nature of collaboration is offered by Ansell and Gash (2008).

Although this study focuses on the governance process attributed by the existing institutional frameworks in the Philippines, this research mainly utilizes the theory of Bryson et al. (2006) on cross-sector collaboration as its framework of analysis. The review of literature points to the important relationships of the initial condition (previous performance), aspects of governance process – initial
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